**Day 1 – Gospel-shaped perseverance**

*Life is full of ups and downs. Today we look at how to keep persevering and living for Jesus as we go through these different circumstances.*

Read Philippians 3:12 - 16

1. What reasons does Paul give for believers to press on and persevere?
2. What does this remind us about what God has done and our salvation?
3. What does this tell us about our responsibility?

Read 3:17 – 19

1. Who were the Philippians to look to in order to help them press on?
2. Who are we to look to?

Read 3:20 – 4:1

1. Where do believers belong?
2. What does this mean for how to live and what we listen to that influences our ideas and thoughts?
3. Re-read 4:1. Paul shows real love and longing for the Philippians. What difference does this make on the command that Paul gives at the end of v.1 (compare it with a situation where this command was just given without the caring relationship in place).

Read 4:2 – 3

1. What was the issue that Paul is addressing?
2. If believers are to stand firm, what does this mean, according to these verses?

**Day 2 – Gospel-shaped living**

Read Philippians 4:4 - 7

1. What command does Paul give to the Philippians (and to all believers) in v.4?
2. Is joy something that we can just force upon ourselves? Is it something that needs to come from inside us?
3. In what situations are we to bring requests to God?
4. What different elements are mentioned in bringing requests before God?
5. What should bringing requests before God stop us doing?
6. What different results will there be if we are bringing things before God and giving them to him?

Read 4:8 - 9

1. What are the Philippians to think about (list them)?
2. When God is so amazing, why do they need to be told to think about these things?

*We are the same as the Philippians. We can easily think about things that are not true or noble or the rest. The world we live in wants to bring our eyes down and stop us thinking about God.*

1. List the things that stop you thinking about God and the list that is given in Philippians 4:8 – 9.
2. What can you do this week when you find yourself not thinking about the list from Philippians 4:8 – 9?

**Day 3 – Gospel-shaped partnership**

*Today we see a challenge in how Paul views his circumstances as well as how he is encouraged. Remember that Paul was writing this letter to the Philippians from prison (1:14) and there were those who were preaching Christ out of selfish motives (1:15).*

Read Philippians 4:10 - 13

1. In what circumstances is Paul content in?
2. How does Paul describe how he came to be content?
3. How does Paul feel about other believers concern for him?

Read 4:14 - 22

1. What did Paul require from the Philippians?
2. How did he view their gift?
3. What did their gift lead Paul to do?
4. How can we be involved in this gospel-shaped partnership? What gift can we give (skills, time, money)? Who can we give it to? Spend time thinking and prayer through this, discussing it with parents and others and working out how to make it practically happen.

**Day 4 – Overview of Philippians**

Read Philippians 1 – 4 again (yes, the entire book again).

1. Look at to Week 2 and Day 1. Think through what God has been teaching you through the book of Philippians.
2. Write down what has encouraged you as you have travelled through the book.
3. Write down what has challenged you.
4. Write down what difference it has made to you already.
5. Write down how you are going to live differently as a result of what God has taught you through the book of Philippians.
6. Read through what you have written, thank God for what he has taught you and ask him to change your heart with what has challenged you and to implement what he has put on your heart to change.

**Day 5 – Nehemiah responds to bad news**

*In the services after Easter, we are going to be looking at the book of Nehemiah. We are going to use these Bible readings over the next couple of weeks to get into the book, get a feel for it and hopefully help us as we look at it as church family together.*

*Nehemiah is set around 450BC during a period where Israel had returned from exile. It focusses on the rebuilding of the walls around Jerusalem and the covenant (agreement) between God and Israel.*

*Given the nature of the book, we will be looking at longer sections that we did in Philippians.*

Read Nehemiah 1

1. What situation did the Jewish remnant find themselves in?
2. How did Nehemiah respond to hearing this news?
3. How does this show where Nehemiah’s trust is?
4. What was his attitude towards God at hearing bad news?
5. What did Nehemiah realise about the Jewish nation?
6. What promise of God did he hold on to and remember?
7. How do we feel and respond when we hear bad news affecting God’s people? What can we learn from Nehemiah here? What can we learn about God from these verses?
8. How will these truths about God make a difference to us today?
9. What was Nehemiah’s job/position?
10. Who did this give him regular access to?

**Day 6 – Nehemiah trusts God and acts**

Read Nehemiah 2:1 - 10

1. What did the king notice about Nehemiah?
2. This gave Nehemiah an opportunity to speak. How did he feel about this?
3. When the king asked Nehemiah what he wanted, what was Nehemiah’s immediate reaction?
4. How do we see God at work in v.6 – 9?

*In Nehemiah 2, we see the link between trusting in God and acting. We see Nehemiah knowing God is in control but also being courageous in acting.*

1. We often go to one extreme or the other – act without trusting God or trusting God but not acting. Which extreme are you more prone to go to? Say sorry to God and ask for him to help you trust him whilst also acting. This week why not try to rely on God in prayer whilst acting on what God is wanting you to do?
2. Is everything positive for Nehemiah? (Look especially at v. 10.)

Read Nehemiah 2:11 – 20

1. What practical steps does Nehemiah take?
2. Why do you think Nehemiah does not let others know what he is doing (v.19 may help to answer this)?

**Day 7 – The building begins (together)**

*There are a lot of weird names to us in this section today but stick with it as there are some incredible things we can take out of the passage.*

Read Nehemiah 3:1

1. Look at the language used to describe when and how the rebuilding work starts. What does this imply about how the people felt about the rebuilding?

Read Nehemiah 3

1. Who gives the lead in the building of the wall?
2. Count how many different gates there are. Count how many different districts are mentioned. What does this tell us about the organisation and collaboration needed?
3. In v.5 who comes across as doing the right thing? Where has pride got the nobles?
4. What has been achieved by the people working together?
5. What can we learn from Nehemiah 3 as a church family?
6. What stops us working together as a church family for God’s glory – is it pride or something else?
7. How well do we work across generations? What could we do to help improve that?