



# 58A PENTECOST 17A BIBLE STUDY

Make my joy complete

## Abstract

[Draw your reader in with an engaging abstract. It is typically a short summary of the document.]

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# 58A Pentecost 17A Bible Study

Make my joy complete

Sunday, September 27, 2020 | 17<sup>th</sup> Sunday After Pentecost | Proper 21 | Year

*Old Testament & Psalm, Option I*

*Old Testament* Exodus 17:1–7

*Psalm* Psalm 78:1–4, 12–16

or

*Old Testament & Psalm, Option II*

*Old Testament* Ezekiel 18:1–4, 25–32

*Psalm* Psalm 25:1–9

*New Testament* Philippians 2:1–13

*Gospel* Matthew 21:23–32

## Philippians 2.1-13

Living faith like it matters means having the same mind as Christ – who, leaving behind his former identity and taking on that of the lowest in society, let himself be humiliated on a cross.

**This week's resources explore:** being interested in the interests of others.

## Welcome and opening prayer

### A prayer of thanksgiving

I'm grateful, Lord God, that you love me and care for me,  
that Jesus lived and died for me.

I'm grateful that you are interested in me,  
even me with all my faults and failings.

Thank you for sharing my life and my living,  
for being within my hopes and dreams.

Thank you for giving me purpose and meaning.

Thank you for showing me how to live a life of goodness and truth, a life of caring and sharing.

Thank you for your generosity and abundance  
even if I fail to see it.

Thank you, God, for being you  
and thank you for making me, me.

**Amen.**

### Introduction

'Paul asks the Philippians to regard others as better than themselves, and to look to the interests of others, rather than their own – following the example of Jesus, who took the form of a slave and died a slave's death...for others...for us. We are fortunate that we are not asked to go to similar lengths, but Paul asks us to have the same mind as Christ.'

## Reading

### Philippians 2:1–13

2 If then there is any encouragement in Christ, any consolation from love, any sharing in the Spirit, any compassion and sympathy, 2 make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. 3 Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. 4 Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. 5 Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus,

6 who, though he was in the form of God,  
 did not regard equality with God  
 as something to be exploited,  
 7 but emptied himself,  
 taking the form of a slave,  
 being born in human likeness.  
 And being found in human form,  
 8 he humbled himself  
 and became obedient to the point of death—  
 even death on a cross.  
 9 Therefore God also highly exalted him  
 and gave him the name  
 that is above every name,  
 10 so that at the name of Jesus  
 every knee should bend,  
 in heaven and on earth and under the earth,  
 11 and every tongue should confess  
 that Jesus Christ is Lord,  
 to the glory of God the Father.

Shining as Lights in the World

12 Therefore, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed me, not only in my presence, but much  
 more now in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; 13 for it is God who  
 is at work in you, enabling you both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

## Exegesis

Continuing on from where we ended last week, Paul encourages the Philippians using what seems to be an early Christian poem or hymn (vv.6-11). It has two stanzas. The first is about humility, the second about exaltation. And it clearly and unequivocally identifies Jesus with God. He was 'in the form of God' (v.6) but also distinct from God who 'highly exalted' him (v.9). 'Jesus Christ is Lord, to the Glory of God the Father' (v.11).

Paul explains that living faith like it matters means being willing to be completely humiliated, stripping off your former identity and being cast down to the lowest social class (which in this context is slavery). Status was everything in the Roman world, but Paul says that it counts for nothing with God. And he ends not with a call to repentance, but with a call to humbly 'work out your own salvation'. Here, 'your own' is plural – Paul is writing to the church in Philippi. It has an individual aspect to it, of course, but it is about a community working out their salvation with each person playing their individual part in that collective story. If Paul's letters are about the church as a community, why are we often reluctant to engage with them in this way, preferring to use them to signal only personal morality issues? But remember too that in respect of each of Paul's letters we know only part of the story, as we never hear from those to whom he wrote – and even some of Paul's side of the story is missing.

## Picture Pointers

Where do you see yourself in this image?  
When do you find joy in helping others?  
If the keyhole in this image represents 'key support' what does that look like in your church community?

## Live your faith

Think of someone you don't normally engage and do something specific and positive to help meet the needs of that person.

## A sending out prayer

May we go, Lord God,  
to meet the needs of others  
and share the love we have from you.  
Amen.

