

I don't know what to choose

Notes on the Bible readings

● Paul wrote this letter to the Philippians around 20-25 years after the resurrection. He had already visited Philippi; he knew the people he was writing to and was fond of them. Throughout the letter, Paul recognises that life as a Christian isn't easy. In Philippi, people struggled with low life expectancy, disability, and slavery. Paul calls for unity in the Spirit, regardless of their standing in society – it is the 'faith of the gospel' that unites them. This call to be found 'standing firm in one spirit' questions the social order of the day, where each person is out for themselves and knows their place in the strict social hierarchy.

● Today, we are still living within social rules and hierarchies that tend to value one person over another. We still struggle with issues of life and faith, and with 'doing the right thing'. Throughout all of this, Paul's call for us to stand together and encourage each other, as we face the difficult decisions of life, is as valid today as it ever was.

Choosing hats

Watch or read the section of the first Harry Potter film/book where the 'Sorting Hat' is first encountered. Imagine a hat that recognised people's qualities, and allocated them to houses whose names are: 'Love', 'Faith', 'Hope' and 'Peace'. Which 'house' do you think you would be allocated to, and why?

Questions for reflection

- ▶ Does this image appear to be more about clarity, or confusion?
- ▶ When was the last time you really struggled to make a choice?
- ▶ How is it helpful to know that Paul struggled with choices, like we do?



A prayer for others

*Eternal, ever-living, ever-present God,
in the struggles and joys of this day, we pray:
for those who are overburdened, weighed down, demoralised,
fearful or desolate because of what life has thrown at them...
For those engulfed in pain and anguish, facing illness and death...
For those troubled in mind and spirit, who find no peace or calm...
For those alone and lonely, without friend or comfort...
For those frightened and bewildered, who see no direction or
purpose in their lives...
Eternal, ever-living God, bless them all in this and every hour,
in this and every step of life's journey. Amen.*

A prayer for our journey of life

*Lord, give us a way to go,
a path to follow,
a purpose to fulfil
and meaning to our deeds.
Amen.*

A personal prayer

*In trial and tribulation, God of comfort, be near me.
In loss and devastation, God of grief, grieve with me.
In uncertainty and confusion, God of the way, show me a path.
In want and in need, God of provision, provide for me.
In times of sluggishness and laziness, God of patience, wait for me.
In comfort and in joy, God of love, let me not forget you.
Amen.*

Live your faith

Send a message (e.g. by letter, text, email, phone) to a person, group or cause dear to you that needs support and encouragement at this time to stand firm in the face of obstacles and challenges.