



THRIVING – Beyond Limitations 6th September 2020 Mark Wiltshire

This Study Guide provides a summarised study with additional discussion questions based on the scriptures mentioned in the sermon.

Connect:

1. Read [Isaiah 44:3-4](#)
2. What was God saying through Isaiah?
3. What will happen if we base our lives on the truth of God's Word?

Engage:

- The book of Isaiah is like a miniature version of the Bible:

For example:

Bible: 66 Books – The Old Testament has 39 books and the New Testament 27

Isaiah: 66 Chapters...

Part 1 is 39 Chapters: Chapters 1-39 'summarise the Old Testament'

*Part 2. 27 Chapters: Chapters 40-66 'summarise the New Testament' and the Mid **chapter 53, is all about Jesus!***

4. Read and discuss [Isaiah 53:5](#)

“Thriving is not just surviving, but flourishing in the favour of God.”

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5. This new series 'Thrive' will be built around Paul's letter to the Philippians. What is the central emphasis across the letter (there are 2)?

Framework:

- History behind setting up church in Philippians:
 - City of Philippi (Named after Philip II). Significant in the Roman world.
 - **Acts 16:** Macedonian call (God closed/opened doors on Pauls 2nd Missionary Journey), Silas and Paul working together with others
 - Timothy (Mother Jewish / Father Greek) joins group
 - **No synagogue in Philippi** – minimum 10 men required to start one!
 - **1st Church in Europe** – from a riverside prayer group
 - **Birtherd with an earthquake!** (Key people involved were a businesswoman, Roman NCO, clairvoyant slave girl)
 - God gathers **diverse people!**
- 6. Can everyone thrive?

“This letter is **from Paul and Timothy**, slaves of Christ Jesus. I am writing to all of God’s holy people in Philippi who belong to Christ Jesus, including the church leaders and deacons. May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ **give you grace and peace.**”

Philippians 1:1-2 (*Greetings from Paul*)

7. Why are Grace and Peace important together?
8. Israel talked of peace (shalom) in art, literature, scripture, and yet they experienced so much conflict. Why is that?

“Once you are living in Grace, you will experience Peace.”

John Stott

9. When can we thrive?
10. Are there limitations to where we can thrive?
 - In adversity?
 - In chaos?
 - In drought?
 - Under pressure?
 - Through change?

“When we thrive, we don’t need to force something to happen. We just need to be positioned in the right place and attached to the right source.”

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- “To Thrive” Definition (*Merriam Webster Dictionary*)
- 1 : to grow vigorously : flourish
- 2 : to gain in wealth or possessions : prosper
- 3 : to progress toward or realize a goal despite or because of circumstances

11. Are you choosing to ‘Thrive’ or ‘Strive’?

12. Let’s compare Thriving to Striving:

Thrive – “Flourish”

- **Builds internal strength:** development, flourish, ‘growing’ vigorously. ([Psalm 1:3](#))
- **Draws in nourishment:** well rooted / grounded, naturally resilient. ([Colossians 2:7](#))
- **Naturally develops fruit:** life prospers organically and regularly. God brings what we need. ([John 15:5](#))
- **Finds space to rest:** and recover, time to refresh, en’joy’able. ([Psalm 23:2](#))
- **Influences all round:** impacts others, flexible, adaptable, able to survive in with change. ([Matthew 5:16](#))

Strive – “Hard Work”

- **External effort:** outward emphasis, appearance, ‘gain’ through toil.
- **Driven to achieve:** results dependent, attend to every detail.
- **Struggles to find fruit:** ‘fruit gathered’, competitive thinking, never enough.
- **Non-stop drive,** need to succeed, long term pressure, anxious, risk of burnout.
- **One-directional:** stop start, may damage others, less flexible, risk of collapse.

13. Read and discuss [Ecclesiastes 2:22](#)

14. How are you living your life?

15. Are you driven by circumstances or are you thriving in God?

“When one person thrives, everyone is impacted. It starts with me – it effects not only my life, but the lives of all those around me.”

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16. Read [Philippians 1:3-5](#)

17. What are you giving thanks to God for?

18. What can you pray “joyfully” about, even when it’s tough?

19. Are you in partnership in spreading the Good News?

- “Partnership” (Greek: koinōnia): fellowship, communion, togetherness
- *Note:* Paul was in Partnership even though he was imprisoned!

20. Read [Philippians 1:6](#)

21. What is the special work God is doing in you?

22. Do you expect God to work in and through you despite your challenging circumstance?

“Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.”

Isaiah 43:19

- To “Thrive” is God’s gift to each of us. God will make a way, a way that nobody else can make. Striving will not help!
23. What is the ‘new thing’ God is challenging you about?
24. How should you respond?
25. Can you truly perceive what God is showing you?
26. What new thing is God wanting to do in you, and in us all together as a fellowship of believers at BCC?
27. What change do you need to see happen in your situation in order to really “Thrive”? *(Also take the time to pray in regards to this question)*