

7/19/26

Philippians 1:1-18

Paul the apostle and the Philippians had a love relationship going ever since the inception of the church.

They had been in contact with Paul at various times as well as being very involved with the ministry of Paul.

The epistle is an expression of joy in the fellowship of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

1:1-2 The salutation and Greeting.

1:1 The salutation.

- 1) The two men are identified by their names at the very onset of the letter, “Paul and Timothy.” vs. 1a
 - a) The name “Paulos” means small or little one.
 - 1)) Paul is the author of the letter as is the case in his other letters.
 - 2)) Without any doubt named after the first King of Israel.
 - b) Timothy “Timotheous” means He who honors God.
 - 1)) The joining of the two is not to indicate that Timothy was co-author, but simply that he was with him and perhaps the amanuensis.

- 2)) Timothy had joined Paul in the Second missionary journey and was present at the founding of the church. Acts 16:1-12
 - 2)) Timothy returned after. Acts 19:22; 20:3-6
 - 3)) Timothy would be sent back again to Philippi. Phil. 2:23
- 2) Paul and Timothy are both identified in the same manner, “bondservants of Jesus Christ.” vs. 1b
 - a) The word bondservants “doulos” means a slave of Jesus by choice for life.
 - b) The background to this was the Old Testament of servants who after the six year of paying their debt, could choose to serve their master for life.
 - c) The process consisted in taking the servant to the door post of the house and pierce their ear with a hammer and awl for an earring, to indicate he chose to serve his master for life.
 - d) Immediately on the Damascus Road Paul said to Jesus, “Who are You Lord.” Acts 9:5
 - 3) The letter is addressed to a particular group, “To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, with the bishops and deacons.” vs. 1c-d

- a) The word saints “hagios” means to set apart and qualified “in Christ Jesus”, the God-Man, the Incarnate Messiah of God.
 - * Everything in the Mosaic Law spoke prophetically of the coming Messiah, the sacrifices, the furnishings and the Priest, etc.
- b) The key is “in Christ”, they had trusted Christ to save them from their sin and change their lives.
 - 1)) In Christ appears 48 times in Paul’s letters.
 - 2)) In Christ Jesus appears 34 times in Paul’s letters.
 - 3)) In the Lord appears 50 times in Paul’s letters.
- c) The saints in Philippi had been set apart for the purposes and Kingdom of God.
 - 1)) God said, “Israel is a peculiar treasure unto me above all people.” Ex. 19:5
 - 2)) Peter says the church and believers are a chosen generation, royal priesthood, peculiar people that you should show forth his praise... 1Pet. 2:9
- 4) The salutation is also addressed to the leaders, “To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, with the bishops and deacons.” vs. 1d

- a) The word bishops “episcopos” means the overseers of the church, to insure things were done right and Biblically.
 - 1)) Bishops or overseers expressed their function, an “elder” their office and age, but the word bishop and elders are used interchangeably. Acts 20:17, 28; 1Tim. 5:17; 1Pet. 5:1-3
 - 2)) The requirements for their service are clear, their home. 1Tim. 3:1-13; Tit. 1:5-9
 - b) The word deacons “deacones” means one who carries out the commands of others, literally a waiter on tables.
 - 1)) The deacons were the ones who served in various matter of the church.
 - 2)) The men in Acts are identified as deacons by most, to relieve the elders from work, such as Philip and Stephen. Acts 6; Rom. 16:1
- 1:2** The greeting.
- 1) The greeting is two-fold, “Grace to you and peace”.
 - a) The word grace “charis” was the usual Greek greeting with the beauty and favor.
 - * It depicts the unmerited favor of God extended to mankind for Salvation and in this context for ongoing transformation.

- b) The word peace “irene” was the usual Hebrew greeting with the idea of tranquillity and wholeness in life.
 - * It depicts the joining together of something previously broken or as man’s relationship to God through the fall, but in this context, it is the peace available to the believer for life.
- c) Peace always follows grace because it is the result and benefit of grace.
 - * Both greetings are to be understood in view of restored fellowship with God in Christ.
- 2) The greeting is on behalf of the two person’s of the Trinity, “from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.”
 - a) God the Father is the source.
 - b) Jesus Christ is the channel.

1:3-8 The thanksgiving of Paul for the Philippians.

- 1:3** The remembrance of Paul of the Philippians.
- 1) Paul was grateful, “I thank my God.”
 - 2) Paul had fond memories of the Philippians, “upon every remembrance of you.”
 - a) He remembered the work of God in them.
 - b) He had received their response to the gospel with no regrets.

- 1:4** The devotion of Paul to the Philippians.

- 1) Paul was constantly interceding for them, “always in every prayer of mine making request for you all.”
 - * The word request “deesis” is not for general prayer, but means seeking, asking, petitioning and intreating God for them.
- 2) Paul delighted in praying for all of the Philippians, “with joy.”
 - a) The Philippians were his spiritual children.
 - b) The Philippians were in the family of God, as Paul.

1:5 The thanks of Paul to God was for their perseverance in the gospel.

- 1) Through their new birth by repentance, “for your fellowship in the gospel.”
 - a) The word fellowship “koinonia” means to have in common, join partnership, here in an active sense not passive.
 - b) They agreed with God that they were sinner in need of salvation according to the gospel.
 - c) They agreed that Jesus died on the cross to forgive them, describing their oneness in the gospel, the good news of Jesus Christ.
- 2) Through the years, “from the first day until now.”

- a) The time had proven them to be true genuine believer in their consistent walk by “abiding in Christ”, about ten years to this point.
- b) They had participated with Paul by praying for him and imparting finances, as well for the poor saints at Jerusalem. Phil. 1:19; 2:30; 4:10, 15-16; 2Cor. 8:1-5
* I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth. 3Jn. 4

1:6 The confidence of Paul regarding their salvation.

- 1) The declaration of Paul, “being confident of this very thing.” vs. 6a
 - a) The word confident “phroneo”, means to think or judge what one’s opinion is.
 - b) But remember Paul is speaking under inspiration of the Spirit, absolute truth.
- 2) The confident of Paul was in their ongoing fellowship in the gospel of salvation, but it was based on what Jesus was able to do, “that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ.” vs. 6b
 - a) Jesus began the “good work” of salvation, not them and He would finish it.
 - 1)) The word complete “epiteleo” means to bring to end and accomplish, a future active indicative tense.

- 2)) Jesus is the author and finisher of our faith. Heb. 12:2
- 3)) We are to occupy till He comes. Lk. 9:13
- 4)) Jesus is able to present us faultless with exceeding joy. Jude 24
- b) Jesus will continue it “until the day of Jesus Christ.”
 - 1)) The phrase the “day of Christ” appears only six times in the New Testament with slight variation. 1Cor. 1:8; 5:5; 2Cor. 1:14; Phil. 1:6, 10; 2:16
 - 2)) The phrase identifies the Lord’s return for His church at the rapture. 1Thess. 1:10; 4:17

1:7 The fitting care and love of Paul.

- 1) Paul qualified what he just said about them, “just as it is right for me to think this of you all.” vs. 7a
 - a) They were born again, children of God.
 - b) They were in the family of God.
- 2) Paul quantifies his love for them, “because I have you in my heart.” vs. 7b
 - a) This was an expression of the place they held in his heart, the seat of his affections, intellect, emotions and will.
 - b) It was not just a superficial relation or expression to impress them, but were in his thought.

- 3) Paul's persevering love is declared,
 "inasmuch as both in my chains and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, you all are partakers with me of grace." vs. 7c-d
 - a) His love for them was even as he was in chains in a Roman prison.
 - b) His love for them was as he defended the gospel at Rome.
- 4) Paul declared the Philippians were one with Paul in his imprisonment and defense of the gospel, as they prayed for him.
 - a) They also had sent him money and people at this time.
 - b) The word defense "apologia" is used of an attorney in defense of a client and confirmation "bebaiosis" a legal term for the factual proof to convince the judge!
 - c) Anyone who associated with Paul could be charged or be suspected also!
 - d) The Philippians were all being part of his imprisonment and trial by grace with him, being in the same family of God.

1:8 The confirmation of the words of Paul.

- 1) Paul called God as one to testify of the truth of his words he has spoken, "For God is my witness." vs. 8a
 - a) The word witness "martus" means one who in a legal sense give testimony to facts that are true.
 - b) This is a present indicative.

- 2) Paul gives a summary statement of what he said, "how greatly I long for you all with the affection of Jesus Christ." vs. 8b
 - a) To how greatly he longed for them all.
 - b) To the affections of Jesus towards them, pure, selfless, tender and sacrificial.
 - * The word affections "splanghnon" speaks of the inward parts like the heart, liver and kidneys, a figurative term for the seat of emotions or feeling, such as "with all his heart and soul".

1:9-11

The prayer of Paul for the Philippians.

1:9

The prayer of Paul was for their love.

- 1) This was Paul's personal prayer for them, "And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more."
 - a) The word love "agape" is a foreign kind of love, God's Divine love. Jn. 3:16; 1Jn. 3:1, 14, 16, 18, 23; 4:7
 - 1)) Jesus gave example. Jn 13:15
 - 2)) Jesus commanded this love to the disciples. Jn. 13:34
 - 3)) Jesus declared it to be the sign by which His discipleship would be known. Jn. 13:35
 - 4)) Agape love is the supreme evidence of the Spirit life. 1Cor. 13; Rom. 5:5; Gal. 5:22

- 5)) Agape love is the fulfilling of the law.
Rom. 13:8
- 6)) Agape love is the bond of peace. Col. 3:14
- b) The agape love of God is not to be static or mediocre, but abound “perisseuo” means to exceed a fixed number or measure, over and above.
* This is in the present active tense.
- c) Paul qualifies the abounding, “more and more”.
 - 1)) The word more “mallon” means to a greater degree.
 - 2)) The repetition implies to not stop or be satisfied with the present manifestation of agape love.
- 2) The love of God “agape” has a qualifier, “in knowledge and discernment.”
 - * Agape love is not based on some emotional sentiment of feelings of emotion, but truth, otherwise it is not divine love!
 - a) The word knowledge “epignosis” means precise knowledge referring to God’s word, the Scriptures.
* Knowledge without love is puffed up.
1Cor. 8:1
 - b) The word discernment “aisthesis” means to be able to have perception and insight to make the best judgment or choice.

- * It is qualified by the word “all”, for the various situations and circumstances of life!
- c) The choice is not so much between good and evil, but between good and the best, being mature and wise! Heb. 5:14
- d) That is why it is the responsibility of the church to perfect the saints. Eph. 4:12
 - 1)) Study to show yourselves approved...
2Tim. 2:15
 - 2)) All Scripture is given by God... 2Tim. 3:16-17
 - 3)) Meditate upon the word day and night and you shall be prosperous and have good success. Josh. 1:8
- 1:10** The reason for their increase in love in knowledge and discernment.
 - 1) First, “That they may approve the things that are excellent.” vs. 10a
 - a) The word approve “dokimazein” is used to test metal.
* To know and choose the best.
 - b) The word excellent “diaphero”, means to differ or distinguish the superior that will please the Lord.
 - 1) The good from the bad.
 - 2) The more excellent from the mediocre.
 - 3) The best from the good.
 - 2) Second, “That they be sincere and without offense.” vs. 10b

- a)** That their lives before God were true and genuine, as oppose to false or fraudulent.
- 1)** The word sincere “elikrineis”, comes from two words; the splendor of the sun and to judge.
- a))** The practice was to judge under the strongest light to examine flaws, this was done to garments.
- b))** It also can mean to be shaken in a sieve to purify a substance.
- 2))** The Latin equivalent means without wax, meaning true and genuine, unmixed.
- a))** Marble pieces would be examined as the sun beat on them, if any part melted, they knew pieces of marble and wax had been used to cover up a chip.
- b))** Their yielding to the love of God as mature believers would make them un-hypocritical and true in their love before man and God.
- b)** That their lives be lived out responsibly before people, believers and unbelievers.
- * Walk worthy unto all pleasing. Col. 1:10
- 1))** The phrase without offense “aproskopos”, means having nothing to strike against, to not cause to stumble those weak in the faith.

- a))** They were to give no offense to the Jew, Greek or church of God. 1Cor. 10:32
- * This also involves meats and vegetables, “a stumbling “skandelon” stone to others, weak in the faith. Rom. 14:13, 20-21; 1Cor. 8:12-13
- b))** The evidence of their agape love was to do everything to not stumble a person, but edify a person.
- 2))** Knowing their lives were to be motivated by love to preach the gospel, becoming all things to all men to win some.
- a))** “Do all things without complaining and disputing.” Phil. 2:14
- b))** “that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world.” Phil. 2:15
- 3)** Third, the length of their accountability, “till the day of Christ.” vs. 10b
- a)** The phrase indicates the rapture of the church, “the day of Jesus Christ”. Phil. 1:6, 10; 2:16
- 1)** The day of the Lord Jesus. 1Cor. 1:8
- 2)** The day of the Lord. 1Thess. 5:4
- 3)** That Day. 2Tim. 1:12

- 4) “For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ.” Tit. 2:11-13
- 5) At the Rapture we will all go before the Bema Seat of Christ. 1Cor. 3:13; 2Cor. 5:10; Rom. 14:10
- b) The phrase also indicates the beginning of the Day of the Lord.
- 1) This is a prominent theme in the Old Testament, God’s wrath being poured out on the earth, under the rule of the Anti-Christ. Joel 2:2; Amos 5:20
- 2) There are many events during this period from the attack of Russian on Israel, till the White Throne Judgment at the end of the Millennium.

1:11 The personal benefit of the love of God.

- 1) Living in the Spirit, “being filled with the fruits of righteousness.” vs. 11a
* Walking in the Spirit!
- 2) Depending and abiding in Jesus, “which are by Jesus Christ.” vs. 11a
* The one doing it is Jesus, I am a vessel.

- 3) Giving God all the credit, “to the glory and praise of God.” vs. 11b
- a) Let your light so shine before men... Matt. 5:16
- b) We are created in Christ Jesus unto good works. Eph. 2:10
- c) The Fruit of the Spirit is agape love. Gal. 5:22

1:12-18 **The progress of the gospel.**

1:12 The explanation of Paul about his imprisonment.

- 1) The apostle Paul addressed them as members of his family, “But I want you to know, brethren.” vs. 12a
- a) They belonged to the family of God.
- b) This term appears six times in the letter.
- 2) The apostle Paul told them the hand of God was behind his imprisonment, in fact his next assignment, “that the things which happened to me have actually turned out for the furtherance of the gospel.” vs. 12b
- a) The statement “the things which happened to me” refer to his arrest at Jerusalem and two year imprisonment in Ceacarea on the Mediterranean. Acts 23-26
- * Without doubt the Philippians thought the gospel was now hindered and Paul bound!

b) But Paul informed the Philippians that the gospel was still advancing.

1)) The word furtherance “prokope” is used of an advancing army as a result of the engineers cutting a path, removing obstacles.

2)) The gospel was making an advance through him in prison, as his next mission assignment by Jesus.

1:13 The evidence of the advance.

1) The Praetorian guard of Caesar was first, “so that it has become evident to the whole palace guard.” vs. 13a

a) The palace guard “praetorian” was the special guard of Rome for Caesar.

b) It was instituted by Augustus.

c) It comprised of 10,000 hand picked Italians only.

d) Later it increased to 16,000 by Vitellius.

e) They served for 12 years and later 16 years, retiring with a pensions.

* All of these knew Paul was there not for some political crime, but due to his faith in Christ!

2) The other people second, “and to all the rest, that my chains are in Christ.” vs. 13b-c

a) The reference “and to all the rest” indicates all people who Paul had had contact with during his imprisonment.

b) The apostle Paul understood his chains to be in Christ, he was the prisoner of Christ, not Rome’s. Eph. 3:1; Phil. 1:7, 13, 14, 16

c) The chains were short to tie both wrists, sort of handcuffs.

d) The Praetorian guard was changed every six hours and heard and witness all who came to Paul to discuss church matters, about false teaching and the gospel..

e) The apostle Paul was in there for two years and could have witnessed to 2,480 guards. Acts 28:30-31

1)) He closes the letter with greetings from Caesar’s household. Phil. 4:22

2)) Paul always desired to preach at Rome and declared he was ready to preach. Rom. 1:15

3)) At Ephesus Paul said, “I must also see Rome.” Acts 19:21

4)) God’s word is not bound. 2Tim. 2:9

1:14 The effect of Paul’s imprisonment on the Christians.

1) They had been encouraged by Paul’s example in prison, “and most of the brethren in the Lord, having become confident by my chains.” vs. 14a

* The word confident “peitho” means to be persuaded, induced to believe by the words of Paul in his imprisonment.

- 2) They had become and spoke the word of God, “are much more bold to speak the word without fear.” vs. 14b
- a) The word bold “tolmao” means to not dread through being afraid, but more courageous to a greater degree.
 - b) The implication was that they had become indifferent or complacent out of intimidation by the state.

1:15 The sad reality of man’s hearts.

- 1) The brethren were not all like Christ, “Some indeed preach Christ even from envy and strife.” vs. 15a
 - a) Their motives were wrong.
 - b) Some were preaching Christ out of envy.
 - * They were jealous of Paul and begrudged him for whatever reason.
 - c) Some preached Christ out of strife.
 - * They opposed Paul and made their quarrelsome spirit known.
- 2) These were Christians, “brethren” who according to the Scriptures were in a state of carnality. 1Cor. 3:1-2
 - a) These are caught up with party splits with those who side with them, whatever the issue may be.
 - b) These are followers of men, I am of Cephas, Paul, or the only ones who are of Christ.

- 3) There were brethren who were Christ-like, “and some also from goodwill.” vs. 15b
 - a) Their motives for preaching the gospel were for the love of Christ and the Kingdom.
 - b) Their motives were for the love of Paul.

1:16-17 The commentary of the two groups.

- 1) The first group were not sincere in their preaching out of love, but their hate of Paul, “The former preach Christ from selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my chains.” vs. 16
 - a) The term selfish ambition “eritheia” means to canvass for office, to get support from people for their own pursuit.
 - b) The word affliction “thlipsis” literally means to add friction, in other words they were hoping their preaching would add hurt to Paul in his imprisonment and when he went to trial.
- 2) The second group were preaching out of love, “but the latter out of love, knowing that I am appointed for the defense of the gospel.” vs. 17
 - a) The word love is “agape” God’s divine love for God, the gospel and Paul.
 - b) Realizing that Paul was there by no coincidence, but assigned by the will and hand of God.

* Paul was appointed as a soldier of Christ. 2Tim. 2:3-4

1:18 The apostle Paul's conclusive commentary.

- 1) The only concern and cared of Paul was that the gospel was being preached, "What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is preached." vs. 18a-c
 - a) The motive of a person preaching Christ does not make the gospel affective or ineffective.
 - b) Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God. Rom. 10:17
 - c) God honors and promotes His word above His name. Ps. 138:2
- 2) The only response of Paul was to celebrate, "and in this I rejoice, yes, and will rejoice." vs. 18d-f
 - a) He rejoiced for the preaching at the present time.
 - b) He would rejoice for the preaching in the future time.
 - c) He was not angry, upset or depressed, he knew his call as he was in a Roman prison!
 - * Paul told the Corinthians, "For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to boast of, for necessity is laid upon me; yes, woe is me if I do not preach the gospel!" 1Cor. 9:16