

7/12/26 * Used sermon IDX 1/12/17

Be Thankful, It Is Refreshing
Phil. 1:3-8

Paul the apostle was always giving thanks to God for everything and whatever situation he found himself in, so it is no surprise to find Paul giving thanks to God for the Philippians.

Are you thankful to God for your family, particularly the people around you that are a part of your life, especially those in the family of God, the church?

We want to look at Paul's thankfulness for the Philippians that is characterized by three things. Phil. 1:3-8

- I. The proclamation of thankfulness. vs. 3-4
- II. The explanation of thankfulness. vs. 5-6
- III. The motivation of thankfulness. vs. 7-8

I. The proclamation of thankfulness. vs. 3-4

A. Paul's thankfulness was based on his remembrance of the Philippians. vs. 3

* "I thank my God upon every remembrance of you."

- 1. How God had guided them.
 - a. Paul was thankful to God for hindereing him to preach in the regions of Galatia and Bithynia and directed he, Silas and Timothy to Troas by the Holy Spirit.

- b. Paul was thankful to God for the vision at Troas of the man from Macedonia to go over and help them and having called them to Macedonia.
 - c. Paul was thankful to God for guiding them to the river meeting some women.
- 2. How God had prepared the hearts of the people.
 - a. Paul was thankful to God for opening the heart of Lydia to believe the gospel.
 - b. Paul was thankful for the deliverance of the demon possessed girl.
 - c. Paul was thankful to God for their beating and incarceration that led to the salvation of the jailer and his family.
 - d. Paul was thankful to God for the birth of the Philippian church.
- 3. How God had moved on the Philippians heart to remain in fellowship with Paul through the last ten years or so.
 - a. They had been the only church to sent him a financial offering when he left Macedonia. Phil. 4:15
 - b. They had sent another financial gift when Paul was in Thessalonica. Phil. 4:16
 - c. They for the third time sent financial help to Rome along with Ephphroditus to help Paul. Phil. 4:10, 18
 - d. They gave out of their deep poverty for the poor saints in Jerusalem. 2Cor. 8:1-5

- e. They were very concerned about the outcome of his trial and praying for him, to which he attributed partly as the reason for his soon release. Phil. 1:7, 19
- 4. The mind is an amazing organ, everything I experience is recorded and filed and can be recalled by some association by sight or hearing and relived in the video of my mind with all the emotions and feelings, be they bad or good.
 - a. This had been a very enjoyable experience for Paul.
 - b. Paul remembered Timothy's tears. 2Tim. 1:4

B. Paul's thankfulness was expressed in prayer. vs. 4

- * "always in every prayer of mine."
- 1. Paul expressed his thankfulness to God before he ever gets to his petition in verse nine, this is his usual order. Rom. 1:8; 1Cor. 1:4; 2Cor. 1:11; Eph. 1:6; 1Thess. 1:2; 2Thess. 1:3; Philemon 4
 - a. Often we are so prone to enter right into asking for our needs without acknowledging all Jesus has done for us.
 - b. Thankfulness is the catalyze against presumptuousness.
- 2. Paul was always praying for the Philippians.

- a. The word for prayer "deesis" used of specific need in prayer in contrast to general prayers.
- b. The word at times is translated supplication or request as in our text.
 - * He later tells them to be anxious for nothing but in everything by prayer and supplication "deesis". Phil. 4:6
- c. Supplications are to be made for those in authority to ensure a quiet and peaceable life. 1Tim. 2:1-2
 - 1) Jesus taught that a prayerless life is a powerless life and failure!
 - 2) Prayer is not a changing of God's mind or to oppose His reluctance, but lining ourselves up with God's willingness to work as He wills!
 - a) Paul attributed his deliverance to their prayers for him. Phil. 1:19
 - b) Paul attributed the peace of God that surpasses all understanding to prayer. Phil. 4:6

C. Paul's thankfulness was for all the Philippians. vs. 4

- * "making request for you all with joy."
- 1. Paul was praying for all the Philippians.
 - a. The word all "pas" means the entire church body, not some elite group.
 - b. Paul was not some idealist that was ignorant to difficult people.

- c. Paul was clearly aware of the problems people in the church could create, even as he had experienced in Corinth.
- 2. Paul recognized the privilege and the power of God to change any man to bring about an attitude of joy in his thanksgiving not a duty.
 - a. The angel told the shepherd, “Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people.” Lk. 2:10
 - b. What was the joy? Salvation, Paul’s joy was based and focused on the outcome of God’s will not on the difficulty or even the suffering in the process.
- 2. Paul presents us with a very key word in his letter, “joy” and for that reason some have called the epistle, “The epistle of joy” Phil. 1:18, 25, 26; 2:2, 16, 17, 18; 3:1, 3, 4:1; 4, 10
- * Joy may be present due to a circumstance and situation, but it is not dependent on the situation or circumstances but rather on our relationship to Christ!

Illustration

Matthew Henry, the famous scholar, was once accosted by thieves and robbed of his purse. He wrote these words in his diary: (Church of Ireland #6578) “Let me be thankful first, because I was never robbed before; second, because, although they took my purse, they did not take my life; third, because, although they

took my all, it was not much; and fourth, because it was I who was robbed, not I who robbed.”

Application

1. Are you thankful to God on the remembrance of what He has done in your life or do you think He owes you?
 - a. We are commanded to give thanks in everything, that is the will of God in Christ Jesus. 1Thess. 5:18
 - b. We are to be abounding in thanksgiving. Col. 2:7
 - c. We are obligated to thank God for those who come to Christ. 2Thess. 2:13
 - * We are to, “enter His gates with thanksgiving and enter His courts with praise; be thankful unto Him, and bless His name.” Ps. 100:4
2. Is there real joy in your prayers of thanksgiving or is it mere formality and complaining?
 - a. The absence of joy often is due to focusing our remembrance on disappointments, tragedies and hurts that eclipse all the blessings of God.
 - b. The result being resentment, bitterness and a pessimistic lifeless existence! Eph. 4:30-32
 - c. The truth is that if we tallied up all our disappointments and the blessings, the blessings would far outweigh our disappointments!
3. Joy is a virtue of the only fruit of the Holy Spirit, apage love. Gal. 5:22
 - a. We rejoice in Christ Jesus. Phil. 3:3

- b. We are to rejoice always because the Lord is at hand. Phil. 4:4-5

This is the proclamation of thankfulness!

II. The explanation of thankfulness. vs. 5-6

- A. Paul was thankful to God for their oneness in the gospel. vs. 5
 - * “for your fellowship in the gospel.”
 - 1. The word fellowship “koinonia” means communion, sharing, sharing in common.
 - a. The way we usually think of fellowship is of getting together and having a good time, but it really indicates a mutual shared interest and oneness.
 - b. The word is used for the financial contributions. Rom. 15:26
 - c. The word is used for the Lord’s communion table. 1Cor. 10:16
 - d. The word is used for the communion of the Holy Spirit and believer. 2Cor. 13:14
 - e. Three times it appears in Philippians.
 - 1) Of the gospel. Phil. 1:5
 - 2) Of the Holy Spirit. Phil. 2:1
 - 3) Of the sufferings of Jesus. Phil. 3:10
 - 2. What does Paul mean by fellowship in the gospel?
 - a. Through fellowship he implies one with God, all being believers, the visible church body on earth in service to God’s

kingdom by virtue of having been transferred from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of God’s dear Son.

- b. The context is participation in the service of the gospel as a witness and vessel to reach unbelievers with the good news of salvation, as Paul was doing in Rome.
- c. The evidence is throughout the epistle.
 - 1) In verse 7 at the end, he says they were all partakers or joint partners with him of grace in the defense and confirmation of the gospel. vs. 7-d
 - 2) In verse 19 by their prayers for Paul.
 - 3) In verse 27-30 by suffering for Christ and the gospels sake.
 - 4) In chapter 2 by sending Epaphroditus to serve Paul. Phil. 2:25
 - 5) In chapter 4 by sending Paul money and supplies. Phil. 4:10, 15-17
- B. Paul was thankful for their perseverance in the gospel. vs. 5
 - * “from the first day until now.”
 - 1. Their perseverance was in being one with the gospel and continuing from the first day until the very day he was writing to them.
 - a. Paul knew that not all continued to walk but in fact loving the world they returned to it, as Damas.
 - b. Paul had experience persecution at the founding of the church. Acts 16

- c. Paul was hearing some were preaching hoping to add afflictions to his imprisonment in chains. Phil. 1:16
- d. Paul points out the Philippians were experiencing suffering. Phil. 1:27-30
* Epaphroditus was the bearer of the letter with a gift. Phil. 2:25-28; 4:18
- 2. Their perseverance in the gospel implies personal responsibility to walk by faith.
 - a. Human responsibility is a biblical truth and doctrine found throughout the Scriptures, but only half of the truth.
 - b. The other half is divine enablement, Paul will deal with in the next verse.
 - c. The Scriptures declare statements as:
 - 1) “Whosoever will come”.
 - 2) “The spirit says come”.
 - 3) “If any man open that door, etc”.
- C. Paul was thankful for their preservation in the gospel. vs. 6
* “being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ.”
- 1. Paul puts his finger on his true confidence regarding his salvation and all other saints, “being confident of this very thing.” vs. 6a
 - a. Paul here points out the divine agency and enablement regarding salvation.

- b. Paul had confidence in God to complete the work of salvation till the day of Christ.
- c. Paul uses the word confidence “peitho” which means to persuade or be assured. perfect the Philippians in which Phil. 1:14, 25, 21, 2:24; 3:3, 4
- d. Paul declared the Philippians were “in Christ” 48 times, “in Christ Jesus” 34 times and “in the Lord” 50 times.
- 2. Paul’s confidence was focused on God the Father Who works salvation through the person of His Son, not man, “that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ.” vs. 6b
 - a. To begin that good work of salvation.
 - 1) God initiates by His love for lost man through hearing the gospel. Rom. 10:14, 17
 - 2) God by His grace and illumination of the Holy Spirit convicts a sinner of sin to understand their need of salvation.
 - 3) God then gives each person the choice to choose or reject the Gospel.
 - 4) God is the focus, the nature of the work is good “agathos” perfect in kind to produce pleasure, satisfaction and well-being.
 - b. To complete that good work of salvation “in you”, till the day of Jesus Christ. 2Tim. 1:12

- 1) The words “begin” and “complete” are terms used for religious rites and sacrifice.
- 2) The word complete ”epiteleo” means to bring to an end, this is the future active indicate.
- 3) Jesus will continue it “until the day of Jesus Christ.”
 - a)) 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
 - b)) The phrase identifies the Lord’s return for His church at the rapture. 1Thess. 1:10; 4:17
- 4) The work is spiritual from within, not religious from without. Rom. 12:1-2
- 5) Jesus said, “And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw **all peoples** to Myself.” Jn. 12:32
- 6) All are drawn, but not all repent, but reject salvation.
- 7) Jesus said also, “No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him.” Jn. 6:44a
- 8) Man’s salvation is not based on something so tenuous as man’s abilities, but God’s. Eph. 2:8-9

3. Paul’s confidence was based on a complementing truths of Divine initiation and human responsibility to respond.
 - a. God calls and enables man to respond, God does not force man or violate his free-will.
 - b. God in his own sovereign wisdom understands the balance of the two truths.
 - c. God allows Paul to mention both truths, the divine agency and human responsibility as being one in chapter two without any great dilemma. Phil. 2:12-13
 - 1) These two irreconcilable truths have divided man from the beginning.
 - 2) These truths have been embraced to extremes at the exclusion of the other, ending up in heresy.
 - 3) They are complementing truths, parallel line in this side of heaven that will never cross, till we get to heaven.

Illustration

George Matheson, the well-known blind preacher of Scotland, now with the Lord, says: “My God, I have never thanked thee for my 'thorn!' I have thanked thee a thousand times for my roses, but never once for my 'thorn;' I have been looking forward to a world where I shall get compensation for my cross as itself a present glory. **Teach me the glory of my cross; teach me the value of my 'thorn'.** Show me that I

have climbed to thee by the path of pain. Show me that my tears have made my rainbow.”

-Moody Monthly #6579

Application

1. Are you thankful to God for the believers who come here and are faithful in their fellowship in the gospel, week after week, month after month and year after year?

a. To give of their time and energies in spite of their busy schedules to clean, vacuum, scrub the toilets, care for your children and serve you.

* We all fit somewhere in the body. 1Cor.12

b. To give of their finances faithfully and consistently so we can have a place to meet that it be presentable, to have a shepherd to feed the flock and reach out to the community.

* To be done on Sunday, from the heart, as God has prospered and always willingly and without calling attention to oneself. 1Cor. 16:2; 2Cor. 8:12-14; 9:7-8

2. Are you thankful to God for the evidence of “perseverance” in your life that causes you to be more confident in God, more responsible and accountable in your own partnership of salvation till the day of Christ? This preservation gives confident assurance?

a. God Predestination is according to His foreknowledge, He know who is going to be save or lost, reject or repent. 1Pet. 1:2; Rom. 8:29-30

- b. God is all knowing, so to elect us before the foundation of the world is no contradiction, but an affirmation of His foreknowledge. Eph. 1:4
- c. A favorite verse of Calvinist is, “Now when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and glorified the word of the Lord. And as many as had been **appointed** to eternal life believed.” Acts 13:48

- 1) The phrase “appointed or ordaining to eternal life” focuses on man’s “free will” more than God’s Predestination as Paul shows the Jews own rejection, judging themselves unworthy of eternal life, for God has never predestined anyone to damnation, but that all come to repentance. vs. 46
- 2) Predestination in Scripture is always based on God’s foreknowledge. Rom. 8:29; Eph. 1:4, 5, 11, 12; 1Pet. 1:2
- 3) The fact is the word ordained or appointed “tasso” is found eight times in the New Testament and has a variety of meanings and none of them carry the meaning of a **decree** from God or of anything that is unchangeable or eternal.
- 4) Liddell and Scott Greek dictionary offers a number of alternate meanings, but “ordain” or “foreordain” **is not one of them.**
 - a)) The word is translated “addicted”, the house of Stephanas had addicted themselves to the ministry. 1Cor. 16:15

- b)) Three other times it is translated “appointed”. Matt. 28:16; Acts 13:48; 22:10; 28:23
- c)) Once “determined”. Acts 15:2
- d)) Once “placed under”. Lk. 7:8
* These are all from the NKJV.
- e)) Many Greek experts suggest the word in Acts 13:48, should be translated determined or decided like in Acts 15:2, suggesting the Gentiles had disposed themselves or determined to believe. (Hunt:210)
- d. God tells us that we are to look unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith, he is the author and developer as well as being a conqueror through sufferings. Heb. 12:2a
- e. God through Paul tells the Galatians that they were foolish to think they could begin in the Spirit and think they could be perfected in the flesh. Gal. 3:3
- f. God says through Paul, “unto Him Who is able to do exceedingly, abundant, above all that we can ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen. Eph. 3:20-21
- g. God will present us faultless with exceeding joy. Jude 24

This was the explanation of thankfulness!

III. The motivation of thankfulness. vs. 7-8

- A. Paul’s thankfulness was based on his love for them. vs. 7a-b
* “just as it is right for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart.”
 1. Paul said, “I have you in my heart”, for this reason it is right to think that God will finish a good work in you.
 2. Paul was willing to postpone heaven for them. Phil. 1:23-25
 3. Paul cared about their concern for him. Phil. 2:17-18
 4. Paul was concerned about them. Phil. 2:19
 5. Paul warned them about the Judaizers. Phil. 3:2
 6. Paul confronted individuals regarding their carnality. Phil. 4:2
 7. Paul was thankful for their love to him. Phil. 4:18-19
- B. Paul’s thankfulness was based on their love for him. vs. 7c-d
* “inasmuch as both in my chains and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, you all are partakers with me of grace.”
 1. They had been partakers with Paul in the grace of his imprisonment defending and confirming the gospel by prayers, finances and people.

2. The word defense “apologiai” is a judicial term used of a lawyer who talked his client off from a charge.
 - a. We get our word apology from it.
 - b. We are to give an answer “defense” to every man who asks us a reason for the hope that is in us, with meekness and fear. 1Pet. 3:15
3. The word confirmation “bebaiosis” is a legal term for the factual proof to convince the judge!
 - a. Ephaphoditus had been sent to aid Paul in any way he could.
 - b. Epaphroditus had come near to death as a result of his service of love. Phil. 2:25, 27, 30
 - c. The Philippians were praying for him. Phil. 4:19
 - d. The Philippians had sent finances. Phil. 4:14, 18

C. Paul’s thankfulness was based on the love of Christ. vs. 8

1. Paul declared what he was about to declare God knew it was true, “For God is my witness.” vs. 8a
 - a. The word witness “martus” means one who testifies in a legal sense the truthfulness of his words.
 - b. God bore as an eye-witness of the genuineness of Paul’s words.

- c. Paul often declared God as his witness of his words in his letters!
2. Paul declared he loved them with the love of Christ, “how greatly I longed for you all with the affection of Jesus Christ.” vs. 8b
 - a. The affections “splangchnon” speaks of the inward parts like the heart, liver and kidneys.
 - b. The figurative term is used for the seat of emotions or feeling of compassion and tenderness.
 - c. The phrase “with all his heart and soul”, would be a good modern equivalent
3. Paul expected no less from them in their lives and pleaded that they live by the same love. Phil. 1:9; 2:1-4
 - a. The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit. Rom. 5:5
 - b. Love is the fruit of the Spirit. Gal. 5:22

Illustration

Hudson Taylor was interviewing some young people who had volunteered for the Lord's service. He asked several practical questions to find out how well qualified they were for the life they were anticipating. And why do you wish to go as a foreign missionary?" "I want to reach others across the sea because Christ has commanded us to go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature," one replied.

Another said, I want to go because millions are dying without ever having heard of Jesus, the only One who can save them.” Others have similar answers.

* Hudson Taylor looked at them thoughtfully for a moment and then said, “All of your motives are good, but I fear they will fail you in times of severe testing and tribulation especially if you are confronted with the possibility of having to face death for your testimony. The only motive that will enable you to remain true is stated in 2Corinthians 5:14, Christ's love constraining you will keep you faithful in every situation.” -Our Daily Bread #3224

Application

1. Are you thankful for the love of others towards you in the affections of Christ?

- a. As they put up with you, forgive you in spite of your self-centeredness.
- b. As they pray believing God can change you.
- c. Their love is not their own, but Christ's.
 - 1) “Hatred stirs up strife but love covers all sins.” Prov. 10:12
 - 2) The fervent love of Christ covers a multitude of sins through the believer. 1Pet. 4:8

2. Are you thankful in the love of Christ towards others?

- a. Do you express love and impart the benefits of God's agape love to them?
- b. We are to be known as the disciples of Christ by our love. Jn. 13:35

- c. We are to give thanks in everything for this is God's will in Christ Jesus being motivated by God's love in order not to quench the Spirit.

1Thes. 5:18-19

- * Let's be thankful by yielding to God's love and be refreshing to all those around us!

This was the motivation of thankfulness!

Conclusion

Paul's thankfulness for the Philippians was characterized by three things.

- I. The proclamation of thankfulness!
- II. The explanation of thankfulness!
- III. The motivation of thankfulness!