

Book of Philippians

Part 1

Philippians 1 NIV

1 Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus,

To all God's holy people in Christ Jesus at Philippi, together with the overseers and deacons:

2 Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

- The Apostle Paul wrote this letter to his close friends, the Christians in Philippi, from his Roman house arrest described at the end of Acts (Acts 28:30-31) as he waited for his court appearance before Caesar (around the year 61 AD).
- The church in Philippi was founded by Paul some eleven years before this letter on his second missionary journey (Acts 16:11-40). This was the first Christian Church established on the continent of Europe.

Vs. 1b

To all God's holy people in Christ Jesus at Philippi, together with the overseers and deacons:

Paul addressed the letter to three groups.

1. **God's holy people;** NKJV - **Saints in Christ Jesus.** All those in Christ are Saints.
2. **Overseers;** NKJV - **Bishops.** This speaks to those with leadership responsibilities.
3. **Deacons** - Those who had recognized positions of service. (Acts 6)

Vs. 2

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

- It was Paul's custom to give this greeting to all the churches he wrote to, which tells me two things. First, the Grace and Peace of God are needed in the life of every believer. What good is it if we start our walk with Jesus with His Grace and then forget how much we need it. Second, His Peace is the result of His Presence in our lives.
- The Apostle Paul's greeting marries the cultural greeting of the Gentile with the customary greeting of the Jews. The Greek custom of greeting was with Grace, and the Hebrew custom of the Jews was Shalom (Peace). Both are needed in the life of every Christian.

Vs. 3-6

3 I thank my God every time I remember you. **4** In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy **5** because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, **6** being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

- The Church in Philippi was such a blessing to Paul that when he remembered them it caused him to stop and give thanks to God.
- There were many who opposed Paul
- There were many who caused Paul grief
- The Church in Philippi was a delight to Paul
- Of all the churches that Paul started it's believed that the Church in Philippi was his most loved. Where other churches like Corinth were known for disorder, tolerating sinful behavior and challenged Paul's authority as an Apostle. And Galatia was known to quickly fall from grace (5:4), the work of the Spirit and leaning upon the flesh (3:3). Philippi was solid and a strong supporter of Paul and *"the Gospel from the first day"* (**Vs. 5**)

- This leads to **Vs. 6**

“being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.”

- What a powerful promise we have in Vs. 6 that the beginner will also be the finisher. That the good work Christ started in us he will continue. The one who pursued you, is diligent to keep you. The one who showed his love towards us will continue till the end...
- This idea of God finishing his good work parallels and rings true right along side with

Ephesians 2:10

“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.”

Vs. 7,8

7 It is right for me to feel this way about all of you, since I have you in my heart and, whether I am in chains or defending and confirming the gospel, all of you share in God’s grace with me. **8** God can testify how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus.

- Paul is in prison yet he is happy. Paul is in chains yet he isn’t complaining. The first time Paul was in Prison in Philippi (Acts 16) God miraculously rescued him when the prison doors came open because of a mighty shaking. This time Paul might be singing in the night but God is doing something different. He is using Paul’s time in prison to pray and write a letters (Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians and Philemon) that will have great affect on these Churches and Churches around the world for centuries to come. Paul’s faith isn’t stifled in the midst of difficulty it burns bright. The devil may think he has finally silenced the Apostle to the Gentiles when in fact God uses this time to amplify it...

- Difficulty doesn't mean defeat. God's presence in the midst of difficulty is the divine proof that "He is with us."

Vs. 7b "all of you share in God's grace with me."

- The Grace of God that was on the Apostle Paul was not special Apostle Grace; it is the same Grace on every believer...
- The same Grace of God that was on Paul is available for you and is on you...

Vs. 9-11

9 And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, **10** so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, **11** filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ—to the glory and praise of God.

"The Philippians are remembered as having a lot of love, and they showed it to Paul. Yet Paul didn't hesitate to pray that their love would abound still more and more." (Guzik)

- Of all the gifts that we have to offer to God. The most valuable gift we have is our love. I'm thankful we can serve God with the best of our intelligence. I'm thankful we can offer to God our money, our talents and our charisma. But I believe the one commodity He desires most, is our whole hearted love and commitment.
- This is what impressed the Apostle Paul the most about the church in Philippi and his prayer was that they would abound more and more in it... with knowledge and depth of insight...

Vs. 12-18

12 Now I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that what has happened to me has actually served to advance the gospel. **13** As a

result, it has become clear throughout the whole palace guard and to everyone else that I am in chains for Christ. **14** And because of my chains, most of the brothers and sisters have become confident in the Lord and dare all the more to proclaim the gospel without fear.

15 It is true that some preach Christ out of envy and rivalry, but others out of goodwill. **16** The latter do so out of love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel. **17** The former preach Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing that they can stir up trouble for me while I am in chains. **18** But what does it matter? The important thing is that in every way, whether from false motives or true, Christ is preached. And because of this I rejoice. Yes, and I will continue to rejoice,

- Here Paul answered a concern of the Philippians. He wanted them to know that God's blessing and power were still with him, even though he was in prison. He was in chains but he was not defeated. He was not out of the will of God, and God's work still continued.

“When Paul was first with the Philippians, there were amazing examples of the sovereign power of God, culminating in a divine jail-break and their vindication before civil magistrates (Acts 16:11-40). We are not surprised that the Philippians wondered where the power of God was in Paul's present imprisonment.” (Guzik)

- We don't know what exactly happened leading to Paul's imprisonment here, but what we do know it emboldened others to also proclaim the Gospel without fear.

Paul says, there were two kinds of people preaching the Gospel:

1. Those who preached out of envy and rivalry
2. Those who preached out of goodwill

A.W. Tozer wrote this powerful piece rebuking the attitude of competition that is common among those in the ministry:

“Dear Lord, I refuse henceforth to compete with any of Thy servants. They have congregations larger than mine. So be it. I rejoice in their success. They have greater gifts. Very well. That is not in their power nor in mine. I am humbly grateful for their greater gifts and my smaller ones. I only pray that I may use to Thy glory such modest gifts as I possess. I will not compare myself with any, nor try to build up my self-esteem by noting where I may excel one or another in Thy holy work. I herewith make a blanket disavowal of all intrinsic worth. I am but an unprofitable servant. I gladly go to the foot of the cross and own myself the least of Thy people. If I err in my self-judgment and actually underestimate myself I do not want to know it. I purpose to pray for others and to rejoice in their prosperity as if it were my own. And indeed it is my own if it is Thine own, for what is Thine is mine, and while one plants and another waters it is Thou alone that giveth the increase.” **(from The Price of Neglect, 104-105)**

Vs. 18

But what does it matter? The important thing is that in every way, whether from false motives or true, Christ is preached. And because of this I rejoice. Yes, and I will continue to rejoice,

- Paul’s resolve on this is clear, He wasn’t focused on building his own kingdom, He was focused on building The Kingdom.
- There is nothing that blesses my heart more than to getting a text message on Saturday night or Sunday morning from a fellow Pastor in Pueblo that says “Preach the Word today my friend”. Or “I’m praying for you that God would move powerfully in your service”.
- Friends the Kingdom of God is waiting for men and women to rise up in Christ by the Holy Spirit and rally together to advance the Kingdom of God on the earth.

- We ought to root one another on, we ought to pray for each other, we ought to hope the very best for every Christ following, Bible believing church in Pueblo, CO. We are on the same team and we are in this together, for Jesus!

Vs. 19-26

19 for I know that through your prayers and God's provision of the Spirit of Jesus Christ what has happened to me will turn out for my deliverance. **20** I eagerly expect and hope that I will in no way be ashamed, but will have sufficient courage so that now as always Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death. **21** For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. **22** If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labor for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know! **23** I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far; **24** but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body. **25** Convinced of this, I know that I will remain, and I will continue with all of you for your progress and joy in the faith, **26** so that through my being with you again your boasting in Christ Jesus will abound on account of me.

This passage challenges two doctrines:

1. The Doctrine of Soul Sleeping
 2. The Doctrine of Purgatory
- The idea that Paul could consider death a present gain argues against the idea of "soul sleep" that believes that when a believer dies they are simply dead in the grave in a state of unconsciousness until the resurrection of the dead occurs.
 - Paul's statement to die is gain also argues against the idea of "purgatory" which says that the believing dead must be purified through suffering before coming into the presence of God.

- For Paul to say “to live is Christ and to die is gain” tells me that every believer in Christ is in a win-win situation. We should not fear death. Though some may fear dying, no Christian should fear death.

Vs. 27-30

27 Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, I will know that you stand firm in the one Spirit, striving together as one for the faith of the gospel **28** without being frightened in any way by those who oppose you. This is a sign to them that they will be destroyed, but that you will be saved—and that by God. **29** For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe in him, but also to suffer for him, **30** since you are going through the same struggle you saw I had, and now hear that I still have.

Vs. 27

Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ.

The word conduct: Live as citizens. Paul told the Philippians to be good, patriotic citizens of the kingdom of God.

Vs. 29

For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe in him, but also to suffer for him,

- The Philippians didn’t need to fear that their present trial meant that God abandoned them.
- They needed to understand that not only was their salvation a gift that was granted to them but so also was their ability to suffer for Christ.

Closing:

Communion