

Joy Establishing Reflection

Philippians 1:1-8

Remembering the beauty of a Jesus centered vision and adventure.

Isaiah 63:7 I will recount the steadfast love of the Lord, the praises of the Lord, according to all that the Lord has granted us, and the great goodness to the house of Israel that he has granted them according to his compassion, according to the abundance of his steadfast love.

To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are at Philippi.

Philippians -> residents of Philippi

- Philippi becomes a Roman Colony (miniature Rome).
 - Jewish community virtually non-existent (no synagogue).

Paul first visited the city in 49-51AD.

Acts 16:10 And when Paul had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go on into Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.

Paul meets Lydia

Acts 16:14-15 One who heard us was a woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple goods, who was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to pay attention to what was said by Paul. **15** And after she was baptized, and her household as well, she urged us, saying, "If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay." And she prevailed upon us.

Lydia's heart is opened to the truthfulness of Jesus!

She becomes the first believer in the area. She is the first follower of Jesus (Christian) in Europe. As well as her household. Her home becomes the first location of a gathering of believers (church) in Philippi.

Acts 16 continues to tell us about the movement of the gospel in Philippi. A slave girl who has a spirit of divination is set free.

Acts 16:25-26 About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them, **26** and suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken. And immediately all the doors were opened, and everyone's bonds were unfastened.

vs. 30-34 Then he brought them out and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" **31** And they said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household." **32** And they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. **33** And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their wounds; and he was baptized at once, he and all his family. **34** Then he brought them up into his house and set food before them. And he rejoiced along with his entire household that he had believed in God.

vs. 40 (CSB) After leaving the jail, they came to Lydia's house, where they saw and encouraged the brothers and sisters, and departed.

10-12 years later (Date written 60-62AD, most likely later in 62)

Paul is under house arrest in Rome and writes a letter to the church in Philippi.

Acts 28:16, 30-31 And when we came into Rome, Paul was allowed to stay by himself, with the soldier who guarded him. **30** He lived there two whole years at his own expense, and welcomed all who came to him, **31** proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness and without hindrance.

Philippians 1:13 so that it has become known throughout the whole imperial guard and to all the rest that my imprisonment is for Christ. **4:22** All the saints greet you, especially those of Caesar's household.

- Was the church still meeting in Lydia's home?
- Was the jailer present with his family serving and worshipping with other brothers and sisters?
- Was the young woman who had been set free delighting in her Jesus centered family?

2 observations are made from a natural reading of the text.

1. Paul has a deep affection for the church in Philippi.
2. Women (from the beginning) are a vital part of the health and leadership in the Philippian church.

Paul has concerns when thinking about and praying for his friends (brothers and sisters) who are the church in Philippi.

Throughout his letter we will see the themes of disunity, suffering, and resistance (those who resist the truth of Jesus).

Suffering

Loyalty to the Emperor was everything in the Roman Empire.

The primary titles given to the Emperor were

κύριος (kúrios) meaning lord or master.

σωτήρ (sōtēr) meaning a savior.

Nero (54-68) dripped with arrogance as the people worshiped him

2:11, This is why Jesus Christ is Lord is such a significant and revolutionary declaration.

Took on the form of a slave (servant), becoming human, died on the cross, and given the name above every name.

A letter from Paul - all of Paul's letters have a very similar template for the greeting.

1. Sender's name
2. The name of the person to whom the letter is sent.
3. The greeting

A letter of friendship and encouragement.

This is one of six where Timothy is included in the greeting.

However this inclusion has a subtle and distinct difference.

Paul's status as an apostle is not separating him from Timothy.

This is intentional.

Both Paul and Timothy are slaves (servants) of Christ Jesus.

There are on equal footing because of Jesus.

δοῦλοι (slave / servant) is also used very intentionally.

"one who is owned by and subservient to the master of the household."

- A slave in Rome was not a free person and "belonged to" another.

The word was also well known to those who read the Greek translation of the Old Testament.

Servant of Yahweh

Slave of the Lord

This term was used to convey the relationship between God and his people.

God's people were dependent on the Lord.

Yahweh is higher and lifted up.

It also signified honor -> Moses, a servant of Yahweh.

Paul and Timothy are slaves (servants) of Jesus. He is their Lord.

We are free in Christ Jesus to live out our allegiance as a servant (slave) in the service of God and of his people.

Galatians 5:13 (CSB) For you were called to be free, brothers and sisters; only don't use this freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but serve one another through love.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 (CSB) Don't you know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, **20** for you were bought at a price. So glorify God with your body.

The only status mentioned in this letter is that of a servant (slave).

Of Jesus Christ -> 1st of at least 61 mentions of Christ.

Jesus is everything (life, breath, etc...)

Saints -> **Daniel 7:18** But the saints of the Most High shall receive the kingdom and possess the kingdom forever, forever and ever.'

God's holy people.

Set apart by the Holy Spirit for God's purposes.

How? Because of Jesus Christ.

Living as those who belong to Christ

Forever identified with Christ.

Overseers & Deacons

Another unique aspect to Paul's letter to the Philippians.

Apart from Timothy and Titus, this is the only place Paul does this.

Why?

- *Observation #1* -> both are plural. There is no single leader in Pauline Churches.
- *Observation #2* -> together with / along with. Leaders you are within the community, you are not above or outside, but part of the whole.
- *Observation #3* -> this is not a role of status. This is a description of those who serve the church. Care for / look after. Possible connection to 4:2-3 asking these two women to find agreement (Unity).

The simple and common greeting is transformed by Paul to have a gospel (Jesus centric) impact.

Grace and Peace

All that we experience from God is grace.

The New Covenant has been provided with abundance (nothing is deserved, nothing can be achieved).

When we experience God's grace through Jesus, we are at peace (shalom).

As Saints (God's holy people), we are experiencing (together), God's grace and peace through Jesus.

In the light of grace and peace gratefulness and joy spark (ignite).

Purpose

1. Paul is sharing his deep gratitude for friendship, partnership, longevity of relationship, and generosity (gift from Epaphroditus).
2. Paul is sharing what he expects to take place from his present imprisonment.
3. It is a letter of exhortation -> my friends continue to persevere and remain unified even when there is some relational breakdowns, opposition to the gospel, and false teaching.

Question: When was your heart opened to the truthfulness of Jesus? Reflect...Is there joy in this memory?

If you are still searching, are you willing to open your hands and heart to what Jesus wants to reveal to you through his word and through our study of Philippians?

Who are those who have cultivated the truth of Jesus in your life? Have you taken an active role in cultivating the truth of Jesus in others? Is there joy in these relationships?

What is your attitude concerning the church? Do you embrace and miss it with the affection of Christ Jesus? Is there joy in the family of Second Mile?

Is there joy in being a servant (slave) of Christ Jesus?

Is there joy in being God's holy people? Does your life display joy because you are forever identified with Christ?