

Affection, Prayer, and Abounding Love

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I will follow anywhere near or my Lord send me here am Lord send me. I will serve you faithfully. Here am I send me Lord. I want your perfect will. Be my faithful God. I will never be afraid. You are close. Here am I send me. Here my Lord send me. I will serve you faithfully here am Lord send me my filus Use me Lord I pray Lord send me here my Lord send me I will serve you faithfully here am Lord send I will serve you faithfully. Here am I send me. Amen.

You will please go ahead and turn with me to Philippians chapter 1. Philippians chapter 1. We continue in our Philippians series by looking at a relationship defined not by physical proximity but rather a deep abiding affection that persists throughout trial and separation. In Philippians chapter 1, we're going to start with beginning verse 7 and ending with verse 11. The Apostle Paul expresses a profound sense of unity and partnership in the gospel. This was not a casual friendship. The Philippians held Paul fully in their hearts and he felt that constant love in return despite the chains of his imprisonment.

What is remarkable is that this same commendation can apply to us today. By engaging with Paul's letter and his teachings and living a life dedicated to the gospel, we too can become partakers of grace, demonstrating a life so transformed and changed that others are moved to thank God for us. Going out of this church and to our sphere and influence our community and that we would receive that commendation from them if God is working their lives that they will thank God that you were sent on behalf of the Lord.

So to understand Paul's heart, we must understand the word he uses here. He's going to be using the word think in these passages which is if you look at the original language this word occurs 10 times in this short letter and what it means is to adopt a certain mindset a certain mindset which is Christ. So it's a specific perspective that we would be adopting this perspective the mind of Christ. And then Paul isn't just describing a passing emotion where he puts in my heart feels in a way for you the Philippians. It's not just a passing emotion when he says things like that. No, he has intentionally chosen a perspective about these believers because you'll see in the passages that he talks about partakers of grace with him.

And this sets the stage for this sermon in this way. It looks like this that when we adopt the mindset of Christlike affection and spiritual excellence, we would in turn as a church not just have merely emotions for each other, but it will go deeper than that. It'll go to the level of having the affections of Christ. That's worth noting when we get to it. It's this compassionate unconditional love that sought the spiritual flourishing of these brothers and sisters in Christ.

So as we dive in into Philippians chapter 1 7-11, we will explore what it means to have this kind of love that he mentions that abounds still more and more and more. We have more love to receive and to give. Amen. And he talks about how this love has boundaries and I'll mention that in the sermon that it guides us that this love is not reckless love. It's set with boundaries and he mentions about spiritual knowledge and all discernment as a way to have those boundaries so that we may not settle for what is merely good right but rather to pursue excellence. This is the word that Paul uses of excellence. Not just good but excellence.

So if you will read along with me verse 7 and we'll begin. Verse 7 says this. Even as it is meet for me to think this of you all because I have you in my heart. Because I have you in my heart. Inasmuch as both in my bonds and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, ye are all partakers of my grace.

Paul tells the Philippians that it is right for him to feel. That's the word meet. This way because they are partakers with him, my grace. You see that? And in what? In the gospel. This partnership was practical and tangible. They stood beside him as he defended and confirmed the gospel which has always met with opposition to the unbelieving world. And this is a constant reminder for myself and I hope it's a constant reminder for you. There will be opposition always to the unbelieving world. But we must continue to preach. Amen.

For Paul it looked like being in bonds meaning imprisonment. And so like the Philippians can hold Paul dear to your heart. Let the message of this love speak directly to your heart. And as you do so, it will God will demonstrate this kind of love that Paul had with the Philippians and the teachings that he gave. And this letter was read in this church of Philippi. And as you're hearing this sermon, I hope and pray that in this service that there will be a change in your life. The kind of change that the Philippian church had when Paul's letter was received with gladness and with love. And so when you do that, the same commendation given to the Philippians could apply directly to you.

So Paul also had good thoughts about the Philippians because of their active Christian life. Their great affection for him was not just a feeling. Their love was practical and tangible. They stood with him. I remember I mentioned last week 10 years from the moment that they met Paul to this letter, they stood by him and as he defended the gospel, which is always a reminder for myself again met with the opposition when he preached, he preached so much so consistently that they're like, "We got to take this man to prison. That's the only way to keep his mouth shut." But the Philippian church was always, no matter what, even while imprisonment was beside him. And they jointly living as it were with Paul with them in bonds, resisted these opposing forces.

And they demonstrate to others that the gospel is the sole path to salvation and the source of all other blessings. And their personal change of life which you call repentance served as a confirmation of the gospel's truth. That's what Paul says here confirmation of the gospel. It was confirmed in them. This gospel changed their lives. And this word confirmation by the way means to produce confidence. They had confidence in one thing in the gospel. No other thing had that kind of confidence with the church of Philippi. You see the gospel is the one thing that we can hold true to because when Jesus said it is finished, it is finished. Amen.

So through their financial support during his house arrest in Rome and their own witness in their sphere of influence, they help prove that the gospel is a true and best way to live. And so we may debate as people that are of God. There might be theological points that we may disagree on, but here's the thing. Those are mainly secondary issues when I'm talking about in this point, but when it comes to the gospel, no, we all agree we're united in it. Amen.

And so, the testimony of living witnesses here at Philippi and us as the local church here at Calvary Road, we can attest to the change the gospel brought into our own lives, right? It's undeniable. It is undeniable. And the thing is when people want to oppose you in this salvation that only Christ can offer, they will try to silence us just like they did with Paul and they try to deal with church of Philippi. But even if they would kill, even then, just like them and just like us, we continue to speak the gospel and we continue to live the gospel.

Hebrews 11:4 going back to or this passage just really accentuates this point. It says, "By faith, Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts." Here it is. And by it, he being dead, yet speaketh. Think about that. The Apostle Paul's word still speaks just like it did with Abel. So, these are timeless truths. There are truths that could still speak to us as vivid as it were if we were under the preaching of Paul.

So anyone who believes they can help halt the advance of the gospel by imprisoning a preacher like Paul is mistaken. The opposing forces merely ended up opening a new path for the gospel. See, the gospel will spread in both good times and especially in bad times because if it's God's will, there is a way. Amen.

So Paul views this grace he received which enabled him by the way like John Newton. He was once blind but now sees. That's what grace does. It helps to endure the chains that he had to see every day. He didn't take his eyes and gaze at the chains. No, he looked beyond the chains. He looked beyond all that was opposed to him and kept his eyes fixed on the Lord Jesus Christ and to his people so he can defend and confirm the gospel even in that dark cell that he was abiding in.

And then he says, I share in you get to share, I'm sorry. He gets to share in the same blessing for them that were partakers of my grace. You see that it's not it's not selfish. It's the true kind of self-interest rather than when we participate in this kind of grace, it's not just for our own selves but for all those that we are connected to. It's a grace is a powerful thing. It's a wonderful thing. And we see this very clearly here in this passage.

And so he sees himself as Paul both his preaching and his imprisonment as grace. And by the way, in order to see it as grace, you have to have your eyes opened. Because if it was up to just the temporal circumstances, we would all give up, right? But because he opened up our eyes, we have faith to see beyond the temporal world to suffer for the sake of Jesus Christ.

So when speaking of this kind of grace, he tells the Philippians, you are also partakers of it as if you were here with me in bonds without the bonds. So he shares in this grace that is his portion. This highlights a deep unity between Paul and the Philippians sharing a common cause that fosters and binds this unity and fellowship in the gospel. And if you identify with the Lord's

workers and their circumstances, you also partake in the grace they receive for that ministry. You see, God sees not just Paul's labor, but all those who share in the ministry. It's all one. It's a wonderful thing. And the focus is not on people, but on God and the Lord Jesus Christ. As awareness of grace grows, so will the dedication to the Lord and the unity among believers.

The more our relationships grow in the Lord Jesus Christ, the more love deepens between us as believers. It flourishes. It flourishes. More grace is provided to us. This principle applies not only among members of a local church but also between local church and a worker serving elsewhere in the world. Think about it. Apostle Paul was not just speaking to the church of Philippi. He was speaking to church in Thessalonica and Ephesus, right? in Colossian in Colosse, the Corinthians today would be missionaries that we support. And so we get to be partakers of that grace.

Verse eight, for God is my record. How greatly I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ. This is deep intimate bond of fellowship compelling Paul to express his desire for the Philippians in a more tangible way. It just gets more and more real here to be with them. He was so eager to see them that he called God as his witness. You see that? Not because he feared they wouldn't believe him. No, no, no. But to see the strongest possible affirmation of his profound longing for them. This is the way it's expressed. See that takes a changed heart. Amen. That this is the most important thing, the most greatest relationship that one can have is between believers. Amen.

And so his desire was not merely human sympathy. Nor was it based on their kindness to him, which yes, they did offer. It stemmed from a deep heartfelt yearning. Think about it. If you were on the receiving end of hearing Paul like that just blows my mind if I was there in Philippi, I would just imagine myself and just the Apostle Paul that I saw 10 years ago, he still has this in him, right? Because for us, think just think about it. This is what I thought about, right? if you if you don't see someone, it's very hard to engage in that kind of deep fellowship with somebody, right? But you see, Paul just takes that to the next level. And he goes, it's like it's like I haven't left you. That's the kind of expression he gives here. It's very intimate, very deep, very meaningful.

And so his desire was again not mere human sympathy, nor was it based on their kindness, but on this deep rooted compassion that Christ offers him. And then it flows out to others. So this term affection literally means bowels rather means affection and it's it signifies this deep inner feeling and affection. However, Paul's affection was not simply again human emotion but it was the affection of Jesus Christ. Do you see that in the text? Bowels of Jesus Christ. See Paul's affection is Christ own compassion as I said blowing through him. And it's the same kind of compassion Jesus felt when he saw the multitude as sheep without a shepherd.

Matthew 9:36 says this, "But when he saw the multitudes, he moved with compassion on them because they fainted and were scattered abroad as sheep having no shepherd." You see, this compassion goes so deep that you're just thinking about the other person, the interest of that person above yours.

So Paul compares his feelings for the Philippians to Christ love for his church. We see this in Ephesians 5:25-27. And this is one that I pray for myself for my love for my wife. Says, "Husbands, love your wives even as Christ also loved his church and gave himself for it that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word that he might present it to

himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but it should be holy and without blemish."

Those are amazingly pure and true love. Amen. So this kind of affection is not primarily rooted in what others can do for us. No, rather it is a genuine desire to advance their best interest. So Christ looking at us for our best interest and it demands that we love our brothers and sisters unconditionally. Not only those who are enjoyable or agreeable, right? That's easy. But what for the ones that well God put in your life and you know what iron sharpeneth iron? It might irritate might provoke. That's what the word provoke means. Provoke one another in love. It's irritating because it's true, isn't it? If you really think about it and Bible says if you don't take discipline if you take discipline lightly, then you won't really truly understand wisdom.

So understand this is deeper than just superficial love where we, you know, I agree with you, you agree with me, you're a nice person, I'm a nice person. No, that's not the way God builds his church. We're all broken. Amen. We're all broken. We all need help. And we all need to be loved like Christ loved his church.

So, it's essential for us to cultivate these Christlike affections in our relationships within this church.

Let's go to verse 9. Verses 9, 10, 11. It's a prayer. You'll see that the beginning of verse 9. So I will read it together and then I will explain these passages. He says in verse 9, "And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment, that ye may approve things that are excellent, that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ, being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ unto the glory and praise of God."

Paul having already expressed his gratitude and prayers for the believers in Philippi. We see that in verse three. Now he specifies the content of his prayer. His content of his prayer in these three verses. See Paul's gratitude naturally flows into a specific prayer. This is a good lesson for us. Amen. We thank God and then we go into prayer.

He doesn't pray for their basic needs to be met. You don't see that anywhere in this text, but rather for their love to abound still more and more. You see, that's more important. The basic needs will be met, but love, we need more of that. Amen. It indicates that true love is activated and its outpouring intensifies continuously.

And so Paul adds two vital guard rails here. Notice here, knowledge and discernment. This love is not reckless. As I mentioned in the introduction, it doesn't it's not unreliable. No, rather it is focused. It is intentional. It has trustworthiness behind and backing behind it. It has backing behind it. It doesn't go to waste. This love does not go to waste.

So number one, this kind of love is guided by knowledge. Love without spiritual knowledge is reckless and becomes meaningless. We must understand the biblical definition of love which includes the strength to expose and condemn sin. Yes. So that the enjoyment of God's love can be preserved. A changed heart will see truly see the ugliness of sin. God revealed that in true love and in turn he's a beauty in the way God designed relationships his way according to his word.

Secondly is guided by discernment. And here Paul adds all judgment. You see that which is discernment in his prayer for the Philippians. He signifies the importance of spiritual understanding. Not enough to know knowledge. Yes, it's important, but it must be understood. And simply possessing knowledge is insufficient. It must be applied correctly at the appropriate time to specific circumstances.

So this comprehensive level of discernment is unattainable by our own efforts. So it must be sought after by God. This underscores in this prayer the vital importance of this kind of prayer. And therefore we must pray making this a point of prayer for ourselves and others.

Verse 10, speaking of may approve things that are excellent. When guided by knowledge and all spiritual discernment is essential for us to approve the things that are excellent. So it's it goes it just there's order behind this knowledge and this all discernment now it's approving the things that are excellent.

See this perspective focuses on the positive which is actively seeking the best rather than just passively avoiding evil or struggling sin. You see that's not where God wants you to be. just always just only thinking about the evil, how to avoid it and how to, you know, deal with your sin and struggling with that sin. It goes beyond that. He wants what's best for you. That's good. But Paul's saying, I want these believers to go beyond the struggle and seek even more excellent things for their life.

So he says approve means to examine something closely and carefully to determine its genuineness and worthiness of belief. He doesn't want you to believe blindly. He wants to take that knowledge. He wants to take that discernment and prove it out. See how this God when he speaks it's powerful. It changes your life and the gospel continues to change your life and sanctification.

And so this kind of judgment is based on examination. A person who considers Christ to be everything will not settle for anything less than the best. Right? See the good is insufficient. Only the absolute best is actually good enough. Christ will not allow us to just stay complacent. He will not. That's not who Christ is.

So think about it. If you seek the best in earthly matters, we all do, right? If you're a person that has good knowledge and good understanding and you want excellence, how much more should you then pursue the best in spiritual matters, right? The spiritual best is found in knowing Jesus Christ. Starts there and it continues which then results into living a life that glorifies him. You see that in the text.

And so this pursuit of excellence in our daily Christian walk in our life involves reading the scriptures, praying, serving in our local church. All of it to the honor and glory for God. Likewise, choosing a profession where you can work for his honor and using free time to express gratitude to him are also choices that align with a spiritual walk in the Lord Jesus Christ.

See, God through Christ takes care of all areas of our lives, even in our free time. I'm going to tell you, I shared this one sister this past week. It's just a it was a reminder to myself, you know, on my vacation. You know, if you go on a vacation, what do you do? You spend more time with

your family, right? But I remember I prayed, Lord, how do you want me to use this vacation time? And he put this thought, why don't you spend more time with me also in vacation? And I thank God. I was able to do that last year. That came literally last year time last year and I just remember those times that I got to spend with the Lord and the morning and just hours and hours in my devotional and it just it helped me to be a better father, a better husband. It's a wonderful thing. The more time you spend the Lord, your affection for those you love grows abounds more and more.

So when you consistently choose what is best in spiritual matters, your conduct will align with God's perfect light. In a dark world, yes, we live in a dark world. You will live a life that is blameless and increasingly pure. Remember Ephesians 5:25-27. It's a continual process of growth. This growth culminates either at the day of Christ, right? The judgment seat where Jesus will reward the deeds done in this life or when the Lord calls you to himself before that day. As mentioned in Philippians 1:6, on the day of Christ, you will be completely sincere and blameless. However, here Paul prays that you would be sincere and blameless. Now, that was he was praying for.

So, what does that mean? Where is that connection then? See, God intends for you to work out the sincerity and blamelessness. Now, it's a reminder that someone who has already believed on the Lord Jesus Christ. You know, this is a process. All right? In the day of our moment of our salvation, it's a process that we are found more sincere in our love and more blameless. And this is not speaking to someone who hasn't received salvation yet. Just want to make that clear. It's not a work salvation. You're not working for salvation. It's working out your salvation. Amen. With fear and trembling.

So living a life that is as pure and faultless as possible. Yeah. It might not be perfect, but you know, Paul said he kept trying to obtain the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. You see, when you have this kind of pure love that is transparent without an ulterior motive behind it, here's the thing. You'll be less and less selfish in your dealings with people. So, you become a better witness. You become a better follower of Christ. So this is what Apostle Paul prays.

Verse 11, this is where we're going to end. Finally, Paul describes the end goal here in his prayer. He says, "Being filled with the fruits of righteousness." The original word to this righteousness implies all parts of a body, all parts of a body working together in harmony for a common purpose. Another in other words, the gospel. Amen. The gospel is the one that brings us and gives us harmony. So, so let's just focus more on it. Amen. It's not of us. It's not of us. God brings harmony in this church is because of the gospel. What a wonderful privilege.

So, true righteousness is only attainable through a life centered on and sustained by the Lord Jesus Christ. Such a life is fruitful, drawing his sustenance from him and manifesting his fruits of righteousness. Ephesians 5:9 puts it this way again. Apostle Paul, for the fruit of the spirit is all goodness and righteousness and truth. This means acting justly, giving everyone their due and evaluating people whether Christians or non-Christians by your words, by your deeds and in all honesty, right? The ultimate purpose of everything produced in this righteous life that we have in Christ is unto the glory and praise of God both now and for all eternity at Christ's appearance.

So the Lord Jesus Christ perfectly embodied this. Nobody perfectly did. Only him. He was the only one that perfectly embodied this fruit of righteousness. Everything he did was righteous. Everything reflecting the very standard of God's rightness. That's what righteousness is, rightness. And his entire conduct was an example of perfect righteousness.

So as we close, let us remember that the goal of the Christian walk is not simply the avoidance of evil, but the active pursuit of what is excellent. When we consider Christ to be everything, we cannot settle for the mediocre. We can't. We must seek the spiritual best which is found in knowing him and living for his glory. This journey toward excellence is a continual process of growth that prepares us for the day of Christ.

Oh, what an awesome privilege it is as your pastor that I would be able to do this will participate in this. We are all called to stand sincere and blameless before Christ himself. We are called to be wise stewards of our perspectives, choosing the mindset of Christ that values radical obedience as our true self-interest. What I mean by that is it's not about you, it's about his glory to his praise and seeking what is excellent and remaining connected to the Lord Jesus, we will be found sincere and blameless, producing fruit that lasts for eternity.

Paul's prayer for the Philippians is a map, a road map, a spiritual road map for our own spiritual lives. It calls us to move beyond feelings and into a practical, tangible, true love that stands firm even in the face of opposition because yes, it's one of the reality is the more that we preach the gospel, the more opposition will come. This is why we need to be deeply rooted and connected. I gave a message on Friday about that. So important storms will get stronger. There's no question of that.

But as you leave here today, I encourage you to reflect on this. What compels your sincere affection for brothers or sisters in Christ is that you be compelled to be rooted in the same grace that empowered Paul. A grace that flourishes as our relationship with Jesus Christ deepens.

Think of the Christian life not as a person trying to walk on a tight rope trying to not fall but as a branch grafted into a vine. Jesus taught I am the vine. You are the branches. You as a believer the branch does not struggle to produce life. Right? but rather it produces fruit by following what? Remaining constant connected to the source of life. It's not a bunch of following set of rules. No, the fruit grows naturally as a result of that vital connection.

So my question to you is this. I've been mainly speaking to believers. Are you connected to the Lord Jesus Christ this morning? If you're not, I would love to speak with you. If like I mentioned in the sermon earlier, if God has stirred you in this sermon, he wants a transformation happen now. Today is a day of salvation. You don't know what tomorrow is going to be like. So, please speak to me. I will be available. I will make myself available for you. And if you're a believer here and you sensed I'm missing the mark here or there, I would love to speak with you as well. We're all in this together and I want to pray for you at the very least. But all of this the glory and praise of God. Amen.

All right, let us pray. Father, so much pure and good truth we got to see in the life of Paul and these verses that we got to that I got to preach from. Lord, I just find myself constantly just thanking you that you don't leave us alone that you want to be involved in every area of our life

for our good, for our best in our spiritual walk. And so I pray for all of my brothers and sisters here, Lord, or whoever is listening online, Lord, please work in this way, Lord. Because this is the only confidence we have is in the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. We couldn't save ourselves. But while we're yet sinners, Christ died for us.

Lord, I pray that we would always remember what Christ has done for us and that we'll continue to abide in him, the source of life, staying connected and rooted in him. But yet, he even says he'll never leave us nor forsake us. So even us thinking about it, Lord, this connection is so deep and so profound. And we thank you for it, Lord. And I pray for those who are lost amongst us, Lord. You are again the God that is not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. So I pray for that true change from their own self to trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ himself. Bless to this father do a mighty work here for ask all these things in Jesus name. Amen.