

I. Intro

A. Text: **Phil. 1:1-26**

B. Prayer

C. Background: Philippi

1. 2nd Missionary Journey (Map)
 - a. Macedonian Call
 - i. Leaving Galatia
 - ii. Tried to go to Asia (South) and Bythinia (North)
 - iii. Paul's Night Vision: The Call (**Acts 16:6-10**)
 2. Paul and Silas had great ministry success in Philippi.
 - a. Lydia and entire household came to the Lord/baptized.
 - b. Delivered a girl who was oppressed by a demon.
 - i. Affected the economy of that city
 - ii. Arrested for shutting down the devil's demonic games that brought the city \$.
 - c. At Midnight Paul and Silas were in prison, praying and singing, with all the prisoners listening (**Acts 16:25-26**).
 - i. Suddenly there was an earthquake
 - ii. Foundations of the prison were shaken
 - iii. Immediately all the doors were opened and everyone's chains were loosed
 3. Philippi was a joyful time in Paul's life.
 - a. It marked a time of triumph and victory.
 - b. A time of deliverance from bondage.
 - c. A time where God shifted life's circumstances in his favor.

D. Current Status: Years later, Paul had been arrested again. But this time he was in a Roman prison.

1. Wasn't a temporary imprisonment.
 - a. Real Time (some scholars believe that it was 4 years).
2. Probably the least ideal of circumstances.

-
3. He did have a visitor named Epaphroditus (from Philippi).
 - a. Since Epaphroditus had come to visit him, brought him a package and was returning back to Philippi, Paul decided to whip out his pen and drop a line or two.
 4. In the middle of his less than ideal circumstances, Paul thought of his Macedonian brothers and sisters at Philippi and wrote them a letter with one overriding theme: Joy!
 - a. 15 x's in the letter Paul expresses that he had joy (noun) or that he was actively relishing in the joyful action (rejoice).
 - b. Wasn't promoting happiness (based on circumstances) but a steadfast posture based on the goodness of Jesus.

II. Strategic Prayer: Paul was thankful upon every remembrance of the Philippians... with all joy...

³ *I thank my God upon every remembrance of you,* ⁴ *always in every prayer of mine making request for you all with joy...* (Phil. 1:3-4)

A. Recognizing What God's Already Done (Through You)

1. Sharing in the Gospel

⁵ *for your **fellowship** in the gospel from the first day until now, (v. 5)*

- a. Fellowship (koinonia #2844): intimacy, communion, community, mutual sharing of all things.
 - b. Didn't just preach the gospel together.
 - i. Didn't just do church together.
 - ii. Didn't just partner together to do services and outreaches.
 - c. Did life together.
 - i. Mutual sharing of the gospel (preaching it, hearing it, enjoying it).
2. Sharing in the Grace of God

⁷ just as it is right for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart, inasmuch as both in my chains and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, **you all are partakers with me of grace. (v.7)**

- a. The Grace of God presupposes an overflow that leads to an unusual sharing with others.
 - i. Sharing of burdens
 - ii. Sharing of meals
 - iii. Sharing of hospital rooms
 - iv. Sharing of imprisonments
 - v. Sharing in the proclamation of the gospel.

3. Shared Their Very Lives (**2 Cor. 8:1-5**)

*Moreover, brethren, we make known to you the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia: ² that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded in the riches of their liberality. ³ For I bear witness that according to their ability, yes, and beyond their ability, they were freely willing, ⁴ imploring us with much urgency that we would receive the gift and the fellowship of the ministering to the saints. ⁵ And not only as we had hoped, but they first gave themselves to the Lord, and then to us by the will of God. (**2 Cor. 8:1-5**)*

- a. Paul boasted to other churches about the grace of God upon the church in Macedonia (including Philippi).
- b. In the midst of great trials of afflictions and deep poverty, their joy grew.
 - i. It showed in their liberality.
 - ii. They begged us not to leave them out of the giving.
- c. They not only gave themselves to the Lord, but they gave themselves over to their brothers and sisters.
 - i. They gave their very lives.
 - ii. They gave themselves in order to share in the ministering of the gospel.

-
4. Recap: As Paul wrote this letter to the church of Philippi, he was joyful because of what God had already done through the Philippian church.
 - a. Shared in the gospel
 - b. Shared in Paul's chains
 - c. Shared even though they didn't have much to share!

Re-Cap

³ I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, ⁴ always in every prayer of mine making request for you all with joy, ⁵ for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now, (Phil. 1:3-5)

B. Rejoicing in What He Will Do

1. Completion of the Work (v.6)

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; (Phil. 1:6)

- a. The End Result: Filled With Fruits of Righteousness (v.11)
 - i. Exclusively a work of Jesus
 - ii. Only God gets the glory out of this.

*Because God started the work, He completes the work. And because you and I are plugged into the vine, before we know it... all kinds of fruit starts popping out.

- b. Continual and Progressive Reaping of Fruit
 - i. And it don't stop. And it won't stop.
- c. There's a definite focal point with respect to fruit bearing: The Day of Jesus Christ
 - i. In the middle of adversity, focal point should be the return of Christ.
 - ii. In the middle of great fruit bearing, focal point should be the return of Christ.
 - iii. He who begun the work, completes the work... with a focus on His return

Read: Phil. 1:8-9:

⁸ *For God is my witness, how greatly I long for you all with the affection of Jesus Christ.*

⁹ *And this I pray, that **your love may abound** still more and more in knowledge and all discernment (Phil. 1:8-9)*

2. Here's What His Work Will Look Like:

a. **Abounding in Love (v. 9)**

Abound (perisseuo #4053): *to exceed a fixed measure (with left overs), to excel in abundance, to overflow*

b. **Approval of Excellent Things (v. 10a)**

Approve (dokimazo #1381): *to test, to examine and prove to be genuine (like precious metals)*

- i. **1 Pet. 1:6-7**: *In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ.*
- ii. That your life would be an open book before the world... that it would be tested, examined and found to prove that Jesus is the Most Excellent of things.

c. **Abstain From Offense (v.10b)**

- i. Sincerity and tender-heartedness that looks out, not for personal needs, but for the needs of others.

-
- ii. Live in community without causing others to stumble.
 - iii. Live sincerely and offenseless with proper focus: An eye toward the Day of Christ (the Return of Christ).

C. Request: Realize that Circumstances Can't Impede God's Plan (**v.12**)

¹² But I want you to know, brethren, that the things *which happened* to me have actually turned out for the furtherance of the gospel, (**Phil. 1:12**)

- 1. The Temporary Ugly Actually Helps Spread the Gospel
 - a. Paul's imprisonment didn't hinder the spread of the gospel. It only furthered the spread of the gospel.
- 2. Adversity, Pain, Loss only provides unique Opportunities to minister.
 - a. John Piper: *God graciously gives His people suffering [coupled with] faith so that they might enjoy magnifying Christ to their adversaries through the fearlessness of faith and humble love toward each other.*
 - b. Because of Affliction and Ugly Circumstances: Paul gained access to the palace guards (correctional officers)
 - i. Paul shared the gospel to the ones who kept him in bondage
 - ii. Before you knew it, the police was receiving the gospel.
 - iii. What the enemy meant for evil, God meant for God.

¹⁴ *and most of the brethren in the Lord, having become confident by my chains, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.* (**Phil. 1:14**)

- c. When other believers saw Paul refusing to bow to his circumstances (preaching the gospel at every opportunity) they got bold.
 - i. If Paul can preach in chains, then I can preach in my prosperity.

-
- d. People everywhere started preaching the gospel, in whatever state they were in.
 - i. It became a fad.
 - ii. Some had pure motives.
 - iii. Others wanted to simply look the part

¹⁵ Some indeed preach Christ even from envy and strife, and some also from goodwill (Phil. 1:15)

- 3. No matter the adjectives that describe your circumstances..., only one noun and one verb matters: Gospel Preached!

¹⁸ What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is preached; and in this I rejoice, yes, and will rejoice. (Phil. 1:18)

- a. Sing pretty Songs
- b. Drink delicious coffee.
- c. Beautiful Weddings.
- d. At the funeral of a loved.

¹⁸ What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is preached; and in this I rejoice, yes, and will rejoice. (Phil. 1:18)

D. Rejoicing is in Order: However Christ is Preached.

- 1. All current circumstances will become a sort of deliverer.

¹⁹ For I know that this will turn out for my deliverance through your prayer and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, (Phil. 1:19)

- 2. My Certain Expectation/ Eager Anticipation: Christ Will Be Magnified

²⁰ According to my earnest expectation and hope that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ will be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death. (Phil. 1:20)

-
- a. Dead or alive, Christ will be magnified in this earthen vessel.
 - i. Whether You Celebrate Me on Facebook or view my body in a casket, Christ will be Magnified.
 - ii. In this I rejoice.
 - 3. Christ is not just the head of my life.

For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain. (Phil. 1:21)

- a. Jesus is not just the center of my life.
 - i. Believers don't simply live their lives for Christ.
- b. Christ is our life! Jesus is All!
 - i. **Col. 3:4:** *⁴ When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.*
- c. Life Is Christ. Dying is a Benefit (**v.21**)
 - i. **1 Cor. 13:12:** *For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then...*
 - ii. Threat of Death: Don't threaten me with a good time.
 - iii. Today is a good day...

²³ For I am hard-pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better. ²⁴ Nevertheless to remain in the flesh is more needful for you. (Phil. 1:23-24)

- 4. The Dilemma: Departing (Far Better for Me) vs. Staying (Far Better for You)
 - a. For Your sakes I think I'll stay just a little while longer.
 - b. But when it's time for me to go for my sake, don't hate.
- III. Conclusion: I am still here for you for your progress and your joy.
 - A. Still in a physical prison that I may never get out of.
 - 1. Still lonely at times and long to see those I love.
 - 2. But there's a joy that grows much larger than my circumstance.
 - 3. In this I rejoice. Yes. And again I say rejoice.