



Sermon Text: Philippians 1:1-11

Sermon Date: February 19, 2017

In the book of Philippians, Paul reveals that the gospel of Jesus Christ should shape every facet of our lives. As we begin our study through this book, Paul first shows us how the gospel has shaped his prayers. In our text, we see three components of gospel-shaped prayer.

1. GOSPEL-SHAPED THANKSGIVING (3-6)

In verses 3-4, Paul informs the Philippians that he regularly prays for them. Every time he remembers them, he gives thanks to God with great joy. Yet we know that there were problems with the Philippian church. Persecution confronted them, false doctrine threatened them, and prideful divisions were present among them. So what was the source and supply of Paul's steadfast thanksgiving?

1. **Their partnership in the gospel (5).** Paul thanked God that the Philippians were partners in the gospel. From the moment of their conversion, they joined Paul in making the gospel known—living it out in their communities and supporting him in his missionary efforts. Their gospel partnership awakened joyful thanksgiving, even though problems persisted.
2. **God's faithfulness to them in the gospel (6).** Paul could always thank God for the Philippian church because he was assured of God's faithfulness. God would complete the good work of sanctification that He began in them. Even though the church was not perfect, God promised that on the day of Christ Jesus it would be; therefore, Paul could always be thankful. He refused to focus on the failures, but instead fixed his eyes on God's faithfulness.

2. GOSPEL-SHAPED AFFECTIONS (7-8)

Next we encounter Paul's gospel-shaped affections. Paul loved the Philippians first and foremost because of **their partnership in the gospel**. Through thick and thin, whether he was in prison or free, they were partakers with him of grace. Putting the gospel first in his affections, Paul was enflamed to love all who loved the gospel with him. In our world of racial, political, and innumerable differences, the only foundation strong enough to secure our love for one another is the gospel. When we put the gospel first in our lives, we will hold one another in our hearts even when our other differences are painfully pressed.

3. GOSPEL-SHAPED INTERCESSION (9-11)

In the final section, we see Paul's prayer for the Philippians. His series of petitions flow into one another culminating in a life that honors God. His first priority in prayer is not their physical needs, but their spiritual growth.

1. **Abounding love (9a).** Paul prays that their love for God and one another would be like an overflowing fountain—boundless, ceaseless, spilling over into every part of their lives.
2. **Growing knowledge (9b).** Love without knowledge can lead us to do some pretty foolish things, so Paul wants their love to be accompanied with spiritual knowledge. He prays that they know God and the gospel with increasing depth of insight.
3. **Practical wisdom (10a).** Paul prays their knowledge-infused love will produce practical spiritual wisdom so that they can approve what is best.
4. **Personal holiness (10b-11a).** Paul prays for practical wisdom so that they will live holy, blameless lives.
5. **God-honoring lives (11b).** Ultimately, Paul's prayer is that the church at Philippi will honor God with their lives, bringing him glory and praise.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What stood out to you from the sermon and the biblical text from this Sunday?
2. What do you normally pray for and how does that compare to Paul's prayer list?
3. Why is it important to remember God's faithfulness as members of a church?
4. What are some ways we partner together in the gospel? How can you regularly remember these things in joyful thanksgiving?