

Forward (CGI) prt 1

1/7/24

Philippians 3:13–16, 1:1-8

MPS: **Connection with others flows from your connection with God**

INTRO

- To kick the new year off, we are starting a three-week series called FORWARD.
- We will be looking at the church of Philippi – both in the book of Philippians and the book of Acts where Paul and company visits Philippi and plants a church there.
- We will be looking at why and how they connected, grew and invited.
- We will look at connect this week, grow next week, and invite the third week.
- Before we get into Connect, let's look at an important statement that Paul said to the church of Philippi.

***3:13-14** Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, **14** I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.*

- As Christians, we are to leave behind both religion and rebellion and press on toward the upward calling of Jesus – we strain forward
- As a church family, we together should strain forward from our past successes and shortcomings and answer the upward and ongoing call of Jesus – to make disciples and enjoy growing upward and forward.

OPEN:

How connected to God do you feel in this season?

How connected to others do you feel in this season?

Non-existent

Poor

Good

Great

Connection with others flows from your connection with God

We need connection with others

- We were designed for relational connection.
- Created in the image and likeness of God – who is relational
- A basic need for the human soul is attachment – look what happens when young children miss it.
- It's a means of grace to experience the goodness of His design

- Community is our support, “it’s not good for us to be alone”

Philippians 1:1–8

Vs 1-2 *Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are at Philippi, with the overseers and deacons: 2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

- Paul comes out of the gate with identity statements: This is who Timothy and I are – servants of Christ. AND this is who you are – IN Christ Jesus.

Connection with others flows from your connection with God

1. Thankfulness for others flows from your connection with God

Vs 3-4 (ESV) *3 I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, 4 always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy,*

2. Partnership with others flows from our connection with God

Vs 5 *because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now.*

- The GK word for Partnership is *koinōnia* which means: sharing, community, fellowship, communion
- This is actually where we got the term partners from.
- What was it that gave Paul joy? Their partnership “because of your koinia”
- Paul uses this word, or a derivative of it, 7 times in his letter to the Philippians.

3. Affection for others flows from our connection with God.

Vs 7 *It is right for me to feel this way about you all, because I hold you in my heart, for you are all partakers with me of grace, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel.*

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

- Do you find it hard to love others sometime? You know you need to – even commanded to, but it just won’t click?

What keeps us from deeply connecting with others?

- It might be that people are hard to deal with, fear of rejection, selfishness and consumed with your own life.

Vs 1 Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are at Philippi,

3:14 I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

- Every time you see “in Christ, In Jesus, In the Lord” its speaking of our union with Christ.
 - Among theologians it is sometimes referred to as a “mystical union” for that reason.
 - Union with Christ – a Relational connection **John 17:21 (ESV) 21** *that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us,*
1. He is the vine and we are the branches.
 2. He is the head and we are the body

Colossians 1:18 (ESV) 18 *And he is the head of the body, the church.*

3. He is the husband and we are the bride (marriage is a union),
 - In a marriage the couple assumes a new identity, no longer as individuals but as a couple.
 - Their happiness and their sorrows are joined to one another inextricably.
 - Marriage also has legal aspects, and so it is in our relationship with Christ.
 - When we are joined to him, he assumes the debt of our sin, taking it upon himself and bearing it away, and we share his righteousness.

We are IN Him
He is IN us
His presence is WITH us

- i. **We are IN Him**

Philippians 3:9 (ESV) 9 *and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith—*

Phil 2:1 – there is encouragement in Christ

Phil 3:1& 4:4 – there is rejoicing in the Lord

Phil 4:1 – we stand firm in the Lord

Phil 4:19 – God will supply all of our needs in Christ Jesus

Philippians 4:19 (ESV) 19 *And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.*

ii. **He is IN us**

Philippians 1:6 (ESV) 6 *And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.*

Philippians 2:13 (ESV) 13 *for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.*

Galatians 2:20 (ESV) 20 *I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.*

iii. **His presence is WITH us** (marriage – he is the good husband and we are the bride)

Philippians 3:8 (ESV) 8 *Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ*

Philippians 3:10 (ESV) 10 *that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death,*

Charles Spurgeon once said, “There is no joy in this world like union with Christ. The more we can feel it, the happier we are.”

- Because we are in union with Christ, we also are brought into union with the Father and with the Holy Spirit. We are *in the Father* (John 17:21; 1 Thess. 1:1; 2 Thess. 1:1; 1 John 2:24; 4:15–16; 5:20) and *in the Holy Spirit* (Rom. 8:9; 1 Cor. 3:16; 6:19; 2 Tim. 1:14). *The Father is in us* (John 14:23) and *the Holy Spirit is in us* (Rom. 8:9, 11).
- It’s the HOLY SPIRIT that resides in us making the union with Christ a reality.

1Corinthians 12:13 “For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body...”

Ephesians 1:13-14 “Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God’s possession—to the praise of his glory.”

Romans 5:5 “God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.”

- From our connection with God (union with Christ), all other things flow – connect with others, grow as a disciple, and inviting others into our lives ALL flow from our union with HIM.

- To say to you, “connect with God and stay connected” would be unfitting and scripturally wrong. **1 Corinthians 1:30 (ESV) 30** *And because of him you are in Christ Jesus...*
- Once a Christian, we will always have union with HIM – We never disconnect with him – the HS doesn’t ‘move out’ because we sin. So, we don’t stay connected with HIM – HE STAYS connected with us. Death can’t even disrupt this communion with Christ – I would argue it would actually enhance it.

Again, what keeps us from deeply connecting with others?

1. You may still be in Adam

1 Corinthians 15:22 (ESV) 22 *For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.*

- In Adam or in Christ – married to Adam where his debt belongs to your, he is the head which leads our body to live in the flesh without salvation.

2. We often quench the Spirit of God

1 Thessalonians 5:15–22 (ESV) 15 *See that no one repays anyone evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to everyone. 16 Rejoice always, 17 pray without ceasing, 18 give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. 19 Do not quench the Spirit. 20 Do not despise prophecies, 21 but test everything; hold fast what is good. 22 Abstain from every form of evil.*

How do we quench the Spirit?

- a) When we drift from verses 15-18
- b) When we despise God’s word being given (vs 20)
- c) When we do not abstain from evil (vs 22)
- d) When we grieve the Holy Spirit

Ephesians 4:30–32 (ESV) 30 *And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. 31 Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. 32 Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.*

- e) When we neglect the gifts of the Spirit – timothy

1 Timothy 4:14 (ESV) 14 *Do not neglect the gift you have, which was given you by prophecy when the council of elders laid their hands on you.*

2 Timothy 1:6 (ESV) 6 *For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands,*

- So, in Paul's mind, neglecting the gift was virtually the opposite of fanning it into flame or quenching it
- Quenching is the opposite of fanning the flame.
- Illustration heat, anvil, hammer illustration -
- You got to be in the heat so God can shape you when hammer blows come - they are coming one way or the other - if you're not hot you could break
- Sometimes you need to be the steel hammered as community holds you
- Sometimes you need to be the steel hot from the fire of His presence hammered by God's goodness.
- Our posture toward God should be one of surrender – You are already surrendered to whatever you think will make you happy, give you peace, provide you hope – yet nothing can truly give you those things except Christ – the one who connected you with him forever

What do we do?

- A. Get into the fire of His presence.
First step for all three of these is prayer - maybe fast – get in the fire
 - David Mathis in his book, Habits of Grace, explains it like this. I can turn on a light switch, but I don't provide the electricity. I can turn on a faucet, but I don't make the water flow.
 - It's by HIS grace alone that we can have forgiveness, justification and ultimate can be in union with HIM. He gives us pathways to not only stop quenching and grieving him, those same pathways of grace give us unending joy that Paul speaks about in Philippians, peace that passes our understanding, guidance for our lives, hope during the worst of times – but it does take effort on our behalf. "God's not opposed to effort; he's opposed to earning."
 - It takes effort and intentionality to stand in the shower and wait for the flowing waters of God's grace to overcome you. Some of you need that right now. But you have surrendered to other idols and worldly things that continually lie to you that you will have much with them BUT they are actually robbing you of the best things your heart desires.
 - Possibly biblical counselling
- B. Read the "In Christ" passages and ask the Holy Spirit to do work in you.
Search "In Christ", "In Him", "In Jesus" from Logos or Blueletter bible online (ESV or NIV). Read them and ask the Holy Spirit that dwells in you through Union with Christ to show you more and GIVE you more knowledge and experience of Him.

- C. Let our church help you connect to a trellis.

The church is like a trellis helping you connect in environments where you can connect with others.

Union with Christ—you could say it is the sum of our salvation. The saving work of Christ is captured in this one simple phrase—by faith we are now in Christ. That’s our only hope, for to be separate from Christ is to be “without hope and without God in the world” (Eph. 2:12). But to be in Christ is to share in all his riches.

Connection with others flows from your connection with God

DIRECTION AND COMMUNION

We are doing things a bit different today. We are adding another song to the set and in this next song, prepare your heart for communion – spend time on some self-reflection asking God to do a work in you. Communion is an ordinance by which we are playing out this union with Christ – taking in His body broken for us, receiving His shed blood for our forgiveness. So, will you take a moment during this song to consider the magnitude of His work and life for you.

You can pray at the altar or in your seat. After communion we will sing two more songs, lifting our voices to the One who loves us and gave His life for us – together in union with HIM and together with one another.

QUESTIONS FOR GROUPS:

1. What does Union with Christ mean to you?
2. What steps will you take to not quench the Holy Spirit, but fan the flame of Him in you?
3. How does our relationships with one another flow from our union with Him?