

Philippians 1

[Philippians 1:1-2 ESV] [1] 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.

- This letter has a different feel from the other epistles
 - Paul doesn't begin by defending his apostleship, like most books
 - There is no correction of doctrine or behavior
- Written to the whole church
 - When studying the Bible, it is important to understand the audience.
 - Addressing believers - "to all the saints" v1

[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, [5] because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now.

- When he thinks of the people in Philippi, he prays for them EVERY time and does it with JOY
 - He loves these people
 - Because of their partnership in the gospel
 - Koinōnia: fellowship - very close interaction
 - Paul is a missionary, and the church at Philippi has been supporting him
 - To start, no other churches were
 - They gave repeatedly and even supported him in prison
 - They are truly partners in the ministry
 - They are in agreement / have same goal

[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.

- Interpreted 2 different ways:
 - Some claim this as a promise that believers will experience something called progressive sanctification
 - Idea that God guarantees that we will continue to grow in our faith
 - God desires, but doesn't promise it
 - What about the person who will be in Heaven, but as one who escapes the flames?
 - **[1 Corinthians 3:11-15 ESV] [11] For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. [12] Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw-- [13] each one's work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. [14] If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. [15] If anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire.**
 - "The Day" in this verse = "day of Jesus Christ" from Philippians
 - I don't believe that God is guaranteeing to grow us to full maturity in Christ in this life.
 - The "good work" is referring to the Philippians' support of Paul and his ministry
 - God moved them to become involved in His good work
 - That good work enabled the Gospel to be spread into Europe
 - In chapter 4, Paul goes into more detail about what they did for him and his ministry:
 - **[Philippians 4:14-17 ESV] [14] Yet it was kind of you to share my trouble. [15] And you Philippians yourselves know that in the beginning of the gospel, when I left Macedonia, no church entered into partnership with me**

in giving and receiving, except you only. [16] Even in Thessalonica you sent me help for my needs once and again. [17] Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that increases to your credit.

- The church at Philippi was the only one that supported his ministry
 - They continued to give
- Paul speaks of the fruit that increases “TO YOUR CREDIT”
 - As the gospel advances, the people of that church who were obedient to participate in whatever way God called them are still accruing a credit.
- **[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.**
 - Eternal impact of obedience is enormous
 - People will be saved because of their obedience up until the day of Christ
 - Rewards will pile up until that day

[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.

- Paul is giving reasons for feeling this way about them and making such a confident declaration
 - Paul calls them “partakers with him in grace, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel”.
 - Partakers = Supercharged version of koinōnia
 - They have been joint partners with Paul everywhere he’s gone
- If you ever begin to grasp the grace that God had shown us, it will change your life
 - It enables you to sit and prison and write letters about joy
 - It compels you to suffer for the gospel]
- Paul continues to express his love and prayer for them

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

- Paul just finished explaining how they are accruing treasures in heaven because of their partnership with him in the gospel
 - Now, He “yearns” or “longs” for them with the affection of Jesus Christ.
 - He obviously wants to see them again
 - It appears that he may also be talking about longing for them to get their full reward for living their lives for Christ.

[9] And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, [10] so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, [11] filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

- This is how they will live so that the good that is being credited to them for their participation in the gospel will not be offset on the day of Christ
 - His prayer is that love will abound with knowledge and discernment
 - Allowing them to approve what is excellent
 - So they can be pure and blameless - filled with the fruit of righteousness
 - Walking by the Spirit, daily
- Because, we will give an account for the good and evil we do on earth as believers
 - **[2 Corinthians 5:10 ESV] [10] For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.**
 - Only believers appear before the judgement seat of Christ

- This is about gaining or losing rewards. Paul just told them how they should live in order to not suffer loss at the Judgement Seat of Christ

- Paul will now pivot out of his greeting and prayer for them

[12] I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel, [13] so that it has become known throughout the whole imperial guard and to all the rest that my imprisonment is for Christ. [14] And most of the brothers, having become confident in the Lord by my imprisonment, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.

- Paul is writing what is known as his “joy letter” from prison.
- Affliction and suffering are advancing the gospel
 - The “whole imperial guard” and “all the rest” know that his imprisonment is for Christ because he has used the opportunity to tell them.
 - Paul is encouraged by the fact that others are emboldened to preach the gospel without fear as a result of his imprisonment
 - This is a sign of spiritual maturity
 - When the hard times come, I’m tempted to keep my eyes on my circumstance and the impact that it has on ME
 - Paul’s concern is that every day of his life be used to make much of Christ and advance the gospel, in accordance with his calling.
- Life will have trials
 - Jesus promised:
 - **[John 16:33 ESV] [33] I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world."**
 - We choose our attitude / response
 - We know the trials will come - question is, will we glorify God in them?

[15] Some indeed preach Christ from envy and rivalry, but others from good will. [16] The latter do it out of love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel. [17] The former proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely but thinking to afflict me in my imprisonment. [18] What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed, and in that I rejoice. Yes, and I will rejoice,

- Paul’s attitude is to use everything for the glory of God
 - He’s in prison, and others are emboldened to speak the word without fear
 - Some have selfish motives
 - They are exploiting the situation
 - Paul has his eye on the goal, which is the advancement of the Gospel
 - Rather than being mad about “what they are trying to do to him”
 - REJOICES that Christ is proclaimed - even at his expense

Yes, and I will rejoice, [19] for I know that through your prayers and the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ this will turn out for my deliverance, [20] as it is my eager expectation and hope that I will not be at all ashamed, but that with full courage now as always Christ will be honored in my body, whether by life or by death.

- We’ve talked before about putting our faith in God’s promises rather than what we want God to do for us
- Here, Paul is saying, “I know everything will turn out okay”
 - We hear that all the time when people are going through trials
 - Listen again closely to Paul’s definition of what “okay means”
 - **[19] for I know that through your prayers and the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ this will turn out for my deliverance, [20] as it is my eager expectation and hope**

that I will not be at all ashamed, but that with full courage now as always Christ will be honored in my body, whether by life or by death.

- Paul is indeed looking forward to his deliverance from the current trials
 - Concern is not that the trial just be over.
 - His concern is that he come through it in a certain way:
 - Christ will be honored in his body - dead or alive
- Interesting statement → “*as it is my eager expectation and hope that I will not be at all ashamed, but that with full courage now as always Christ will be honored in my body, whether by life or by death*”
 - What has Paul to be ashamed of?
 - **[2 Timothy 2:11 ESV] [11] The saying is trustworthy, for: If we have died with him, we will also live with him;**
 - He’s referring to enduring suffering in both texts
 - **[2 Timothy 2:12 ESV] [12] if we endure, we will also reign with him; if we deny him, he also will deny us;**
 - This is about enduring suffering for the sake of Christ
 - If we endure (suffering), we will also reign with him
 - Reigning with him is not something that everyone gets to do in heaven.
 - If we deny him, he will also deny us
 - Often, suffering and persecution can be avoided or brought to an end by simply denying Christ.
 - If we do, we will be denied the getting to reign with him for eternity
 - **[Romans 8:16-17 ESV] [16] The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, [17] and if children, then heirs--heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.**
 - Holy Spirit seals us as God’s children - bears witness
 - We are also heirs of God because we are his children
 - “Birth inheritance”
 - “Fellow heirs” is “Joint heirs” in the Greek
 - We share in Christ’s inheritance if we suffer
 - “Reward inheritance”
 - **[2 Timothy 2:13-15 ESV] [13] if we are faithless, he remains faithful-- for he cannot deny himself. [14] Remind them of these things, and charge them before God not to quarrel about words, which does no good, but only ruins the hearers. [15] Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.**
 - Some will mishandle God’s Word
 - Some believers’ work will not be approved by God
 - These people will be ashamed when they stand before the Lord

[Philippians 1:19] for I know that through your prayers and the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ this will turn out for my deliverance, [20] as it is my eager expectation and hope that I will not be at all ashamed, but that with full courage now as always Christ will be honored in my body, whether by life or by death.

- How can he know that he will not be ashamed?

[21] For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

- He knows that this life is all about Christ and he will be better off when he dies and gets to be with him

- What is life to you and me?
 - A life lived for ANYTHING other than Christ is a life that lacks eternal perspective

- Now, Paul will vacillate on whether it would be better to live or die

[22] If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. Yet which I shall choose I cannot tell.

[23] I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better.

- Paul says that death is far better because he can be with Christ
 - For the believer, we know that life doesn't end when we go to the grave
 - This life is our only chance to live by faith
 - **[Hebrews 11:1 ESV] [1] Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.**
 - Faith and hope refer to belief in something that is to come or that can't be seen with the eye... they have something in common:
 - **[1 Corinthians 13:12-13 ESV] [12] For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known. [13] So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love.**
 - Love is the greatest because it is part of God's character and will last forever. Faith and Hope do not
 - The things we hope for and have faith in on earth will be right before our eyes in Heaven.
 - Rewards and treasure in Heaven will be awarded to those who live by faith

[24] But to remain in the flesh is more necessary on your account. [25] Convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with you all, for your progress and joy in the faith, [26] so that in me you may have ample cause to glory in Christ Jesus, because of my coming to you again.

- God has shown Paul that he will survive this imprisonment because God's not through with him yet
- Notice how Paul's focus isn't in being okay, avoiding danger, getting credit, or being satisfied
 - He wants to bring glory to Jesus

[27] Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel,

- He tells them to not be distracted by whether or not he's coming to see them again
- They are to "stand firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel"

[28] and not frightened in anything by your opponents. This is a clear sign to them of their destruction, but of your salvation, and that from God. [29] For it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in him but also suffer for his sake, [30] engaged in the same conflict that you saw I had and now hear that I still have.

- The opponents referred to in vs. 28 are not just people who make our lives difficult
 - These are opponents to the advancement of the gospel
 - These are those who were persecuting them for their faith
 - There is no reason to be frightened because if we suffer there will be incredible rewards