

Philippians 2026 – Week 1 – Philippians 1:1-11

Philippians 1:1-11: *To all God's holy people in Christ Jesus at Philippi, together with the overseers and deacons:*

² *Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

³ *I thank my God every time I remember you. ⁴ In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy ⁵ because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, ⁶ being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.*

⁷ *It is right for me to feel this way about all of you, since I have you in my heart and, whether I am in chains or defending and confirming the gospel, all of you share in God's grace with me. ⁸ God can testify how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus.*

⁹ *And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, ¹⁰ so that you may be able to discern what is best and may 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.*

INTRO to the Letter to the **Philippians**: The letter of Philippians is the perfect starting place for biblical teaching on following Christ as a disciple. This letter speaks to obedience and faithfulness in the life of the individual believer, and the importance of being healthy and unified in the Church. Philippians presents God's instructions in a warm and encouraging tone, as believers are challenged to conduct ourselves at all times and in all places "in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ."

-Philippians has been called "Paul's loveliest letter" – because it is full of joy, and encouragement, what is becoming a lost quality – humility. Philippians continually challenges the reader to pursue that which is excellent and praiseworthy.

-Some 10 years after Paul and Silas' visit to Philippi (**Acts 16**), this letter was sent to the church that had been established there.

INTRO to **Philippians 1:1-11**: This is one letters the Apostle Paul wrote from prison in Rome, and yet the entire tone of the first chapter is hopeful – focused on thankfulness, joy, and love.

I. The Church is not primarily a building or an organization; the Church is us. (vs. 1-2)

-The letter is addressed to "all God's holy people" – often translated as "all the saints." This word simply means those who are "set apart" by God – it does not describe a perfect person or a highly religious person, but rather someone who has become a new creation in Christ (**2 Corinthians 5:17**).

-“Grace and Peace” is the traditional greeting used by Paul in New Testament letters. This is an inclusive greeting – “grace” was the Greek greeting and “peace” the Jewish greeting. These are also gifts of God in the life of the believer through Jesus Christ.

II. The work Christ is doing in and through us is always headed in the direction of His glory and our good. (vs. 3-6)

-The Bible often ties together ‘remembering’ and ‘thankfulness.’ God challenges His people to remember His commands, to take note of His work in our lives, and to be thankful in the process.

-In **vs. 4**, Paul describes how he prayed for the Philippian Christians – which was regularly and with joy. Incredibly, JOY is a major theme of Philippians, used eleven times, even though Paul was writing this from prison!

-Another key theme of Philippians is the word *koinōnia* – translated in **vs. 5** as “partnership.” The word was commonly used for marriage, family, friendship, business partnership, common ownership of property, citizenship, religious organizations. Our relationships in the Church are to be true, committed partnerships for the sake of the Gospel!

-**Verse 6** is a key statement regarding the whole message of **Philippians**: *being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.*

-The phrase “carry it on to completion” is all captured in one word which has the Greek root *telos*. This consistent biblical word describes the work the Lord is always doing in the life of the believer to move us further towards spiritual maturity and completeness (see **James 1:4**).

-The trajectory of this work in our lives is always towards the goal of God’s glory and our spiritual good.

-This promise of completion and perfection also means Christ’s Church cannot be destroyed—His Church will endure until He returns! (see **Matthew 16:18b** and **2 Corinthians 4** below).

III. Our journey of becoming more like Christ is a lifelong one. (vs. 7-11)

-As the Apostle Paul sat in chains because of the gospel message of Christ, he prayed regularly that the believers in Philippi would continue to grow in grace and obedience to the Lord (**vs. 7-8**).

-This model prayer for God's holy people in the Church is that believers will grow in love, knowledge, wisdom, and righteousness (**vs. 9-11**).

-Through a genuine relationship with Christ, we experience both the salvation of our souls and the shaping of our character.

-Growing in God's love and knowledge means more than just gaining information, it means abiding in Christ so that the fruit of His righteousness might be displayed in our lives for the glory and praise of God, not for ourselves.

***Discipleship means continually becoming more like Christ as we grow in love, knowledge, wisdom, and righteousness—all to the glory and praise of God.

Other Scriptures Referenced:

James 1:4: *Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.*

Matthew 16:18b: *...I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.*

2 Corinthians 4:8-12: *We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; ⁹ persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. ¹⁰ We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body. ¹¹ For we who are alive are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that his life may also be revealed in our mortal body. ¹² So then, death is at work in us, but life is at work in you.*

Other Quotes/Resources:

-“Are you in Christ? That's different from being in a church building. You may be in a worship service but not in Christ.” –Tony Merida

-“A person might memorize Scripture, or teach Sunday School, or even earn a degree in theology...but that is not the same as growing in the knowledge of God. Such growth requires repentance and demands an increase in our love—our love for God and our love for others.” –D.A. Carson