

PHILIPPIANS

LESSON TWO OPENING REMARKS (1:1-11)

1:1 Paul and Timotheus

The servants of Jesus Christ

- A. It seems that Timothy and Luke remained in Philippi after Paul and Silas departed (Acts 16 – 17).
- B. The church certainly was familiar with Timothy.
- C. Paul describes himself as a servant – literally, a bond-servant or slave – of Jesus Christ.
- D. This was doubly true.
 1. Spiritually, Paul was bound to Jesus in submission, surrender and service.
 2. Physically, Paul was bound in a Roman prison for preaching the Gospel of Christ.
- E. This salutation (“servants”) sets the stage for all that will follow in this letter – joy is in Christ, not the circumstances of life.
 1. Note that he wore no title.
 2. Note that he did not flaunt his apostleship.

To all the saints in Christ Jesus

- A. The word “saint” means, “holy, consecrated, set apart.”
- B. It was used of all Christians – not a select few who were viewed as being superior to all others.
- C. Anyone who obeys the Gospel of Christ is a saint.
- D. As saints, their location was “in Christ” – they were in fellowship and in a saved relationship with Him.
- E. Consider the use of the word “all.”
 1. Paul loved the church at Philippi – every member.
 2. The use of this word throughout the book indicates the faithfulness of this congregation.
 3. It also illustrates their unity in fellowship and service.

Which are at Philippi

- A. Their spiritual location was in Christ.
- B. Their physical location was in the city of Philippi.
- C. When the spiritual location is right, the physical location is unimportant.
- D. Joy is found in the Lord – no matter what city or country one may inhabit.

With the bishops and deacons

- A. These are the only two “offices” in the Lord’s church.
- B. The bishops are the overseers or superintendents.
 1. Also called elders, overseers, pastors, shepherds

2. Qualifications (1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-11)
- C. Bishops are always mentioned in the plural – they collectively oversee the church. {No “one-man rule”}
- D. The deacons are “official” servants of the church.

1:2 **Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ**

- A. “Grace” was the normal Greek greeting – wishing good will.
- B. “Peace” was the normal Jewish greeting – wishing tranquility, harmony and security.
- C. True grace and peace can come only from God, due to one’s relationship with Him.
- D. Again, Paul is showing that joy does not depend upon one’s nationality or heritage – it depends upon Christ.

1:3 **I thank my God upon every remembrance of you**

- A. Paul gave thanks to God.
 1. Even in the direst of situations, Paul was thankful (cf. Acts 16:25).
 2. He recognized God as the source of all good things (cf. James 1:17).
- B. He gave thanks whenever he remembered the church at Philippi.
 1. This may mean whenever someone mentioned the Philippians.
 2. It also may mean whenever he reflected upon them.
- C. While the source of true joy is Jesus, the foundation upon which joy is built is thanksgiving.
 1. We must count our blessings even when we feel like they are few.
 2. We must focus on the good in our lives – and in the lives of others – or we may be overcome by worry, doubt and fear.
- D. Do you give thanks?
 1. For the church
 2. For loved ones
 3. For your many blessings

1:4 **Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy**

- A. The language of this verse emphasizes that Paul did not forget this faithful congregation.
 1. When he remembered them, he gave thanks.
 2. When he prayed for them, it was with joy.
- B. The word for “prayer” and “request” is the same in the Greek.
- C. Gratitude should be expressed in prayer!
- D. There is a strong connection between “joy” and “grace.”
 1. The Greek word for grace is *charis* (χαρις).
 2. The Greek word for joy is *chara* (χαρα).
 3. They are both built off the word *chairō* (χαίρω) which means, “calmly happy, full of cheer, rejoice exceedingly.”
 4. Thus, grace is the good will or favor of God that enables man to experience true peace and joy.

1:5 **For your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now**

- A. The word *fellowship* means, “partnership, joint participation, association.”
1. The root meaning of this word is the idea of sharing.
 - a. Sharing in relationship with God (1 Cor. 1:9; 1 Jn. 1:3, 6-7)
 - b. Sharing in relationship with one another (Ac. 2:42; 1 Cor. 10:16)
 - c. Sharing in suffering (Philippians 3:10)
 - d. Sharing in labor (2 Cor. 8:23; Philemon 1:17; cf. Luke 5:10)
 - e. Sharing in worship (1 Cor. 10:18-20)
 - f. Sharing in glory (2 Cor. 1:7; 1 Peter 5:1)
 - g. Sharing in giving (Rom. 15:26; 2 Cor. 9:13)
 2. It implies acceptance, approval and unity of purpose (Gal. 2:9).
 3. It can be broken by sinning against God (2 John 9-11) or by sinning against a brother (Matthew 5:23-24).
 4. Fellowship “in Christ” is different from associations with the world (cf. 1 Cor. 5:9-11; 7:13-15; 2 Cor. 6:14-16).

“The spiritual fellowship which binds Christians together is stronger, warmer and deeper than secular bonds. It requires more to maintain it. There is a sense in which “all things are common.” It even demands severe action if the fellowship is threatened. The nature of an ‘in Christ’ fellowship is such that when it is broken, it demands a social exclusion of the offending brother.”

5. Christian fellowship is beautiful and powerful (Acts 2:44-46; 4:32).
6. Yet, it will weaken if not preserved (Hebrews 10:32-34, 24-25; 3:13).
7. With this fellowship comes brotherhood (Galatians 3:26-29; 1 Cor. 12:13; Colossians 3:11).

“This fellowship not only erases estrangement between God and man but also between all other men in this realm of fellowship. They become brothers because they are sons of God. ...If God is one’s father, then all of God’s children are his brothers. Christians do not choose who their brothers will be. They only recognize as brothers those who have been born into the family of God.”

- B. Their fellowship with Paul had been continual, from their conversion until the present – some 10 years later.
1. The idea of fellowship in Scripture is more than just having a meal together (cf. 2 Corinthians 8:4).
 2. The Philippians participated in Paul’s work by supporting him as he preached (1:7; 4:14).
 3. This was the attitude of the Philippians from the beginning (Acts 16:15, 34).
 4. It continued even during Paul’s imprisonment (4:10-15; cf. 2 Corinthians 11:7ff).
 5. We must be careful concerning who we support (2 John 9-11).
- C. If we desire to be pleasing to God, we must respect His boundaries of fellowship.
- D. However, in our fellowship with the faithful, we must be constant, steadfast and dependable.

1:6 **Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ**

- A. Paul was convinced, persuaded and assured of the fact he stated in this verse.
 - 1. His confidence came from his knowledge of the nature of God.
 - 2. It also came from his belief in the providence of God.
 - 3. It was also connected to the faithfulness of the Philippians.
- B. Paul gave all credit and honor to God for beginning the work among the Philippians (cf. 2:13).
 - 1. Paul was the man who began the work in Philippi.
 - 2. Yet, he knew and acknowledged that in reality God was responsible for their conversion and faithfulness (cf. 2:12).
 - 3. This does not remove man's need for obedience, but it recognizes his dependence upon God.
- C. Furthermore, Paul knew that God would continue to work faithfully in the Philippians until the end.
 - 1. The word "perform" means to perfect, complete or accomplish.
 - 2. Thus, God would work until He accomplished His will.
 - 3. The ultimate goal and desire of God was for their faithfulness and His work to continue until the return of Jesus.
- D. *Note that only a work begun by God can endure until the end of time.*

1:7 **Even as it is meet for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart**

- A. Paul's praise of and confidence in them was not mere flattery.
- B. It was meet (literally, righteous or right) for Paul to think of them this way.
- C. They had proved themselves to Paul while he was among them and since he had been away from them.
- D. Thus, it was with genuine love for this congregation that Paul kept them in his heart.

Inasmuch as both in my bonds, and in the defense and confirmation of the Gospel, ye all are partakers of my grace

- A. The Philippian brethren had stood by Paul's side through trials and tests of great variety.
 - 1. They did not abandon him when he was imprisoned.
 - 2. They did not deny him when he defended the truth of the Gospel.
 - 3. They did not forsake him when he preached the whole council of God.
- B. Thus, they had proved both their faithfulness to God and their loyalty to Paul.
- C. As a result, they enjoyed the fellowship of his grace – they would share in his reward, even eternally (cf. Matthew 10:41-42).

1:8 **For God is my record, how greatly I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ**

- A. Paul could call God as a witness to testify of his love for the Philippians.
- B. In fact, he desired them with the same tender mercies and emotions that Jesus has for mankind.

1:9 **And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment**

- A. We continue to see the thoughts and desires that comprised the prayers of the Apostle Paul.
- B. As great as their love was, Paul prayed that it would abound even more.
 1. The word “abound” literally means to *superabound* – to be in excess, to exceed a certain measure, to overflow.
 2. All children of God should overflow with true, biblical love.
- C. This overflowing of love would come from knowledge and discernment.
 1. True love must be based upon Truth!
 2. Knowledge of God’s Word is essential.
 3. However, discernment and perception are also needed.

1:10 **That ye may approve things that are excellent**

- A. They needed knowledge and judgment so they might approve (test, examine; then, recognize as genuine) the best things.
 1. This word was used for testing metals to determine if they were genuine.
 2. It is used in a similar way in Romans 2:18.
- B. The idea is that they might learn to love the things that God love by putting them to the test of His Word (cf. 1 Thes. 5:21).

That ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ

- A. Not only were they to test and find the best things, but also they must stand up to being tested.
 1. The word “sincere” means, “judged by sunlight.”
 2. They would be inspected by the pure, bright light of God’s Word.
 3. If they allowed their knowledge and judgment to cause them to overflow with obedient love, they would be found genuine.
 4. They also would be seen as being without offence.
 5. This means that they would not cause others to stumble. *{This word was used of a smooth road.}*
 6. It also indicates that they would not allow themselves to stumble, by remaining true to God’s Word.
- B. This was to be done with a view toward the day of Christ – the day they would stand before Him in judgment.

1:11 **Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God**

- A. Ultimately, these requests all manifest in a life that is filled with righteousness.
 1. Righteousness is doing what is right (1 John 3:7).
 2. The word “fruits” indicates the product of one’s life (cf. Galatians 5:22-23; James 3:18; Proverbs 11:30).
- B. These fruits grow from a fellowship with and a following of Jesus the Christ (cf. John 15:1ff).
- C. The goal of every Christian’s life must be to glorify and praise the Almighty God (cf. Matthew 5:16; John 15:8; etc.).