

*Paul's **HEART** for the Philippian People*

Philippians 1:1-5

Wednesday, September 13, 2017

Prayer:

Lord Jesus, have your way in this home tonight; whatever it is you wish to convey to us through your written word, please give us ears to hear and hearts to understand it. Lord, we need your understanding and wisdom to know and to do what your word teaches. May we be faithful to you in faith and love. Thank you for loving us and giving us your grace. In your name, Lord Jesus, Amen!

Introduction:

Ten years after Paul had founded the church in Philippi, he was imprisoned but allowed to live *in his own rented quarters* – Acts 28:30. The year was A.D. 61 (or 62 & some scholars say 60).

The reason he was in prison is clearly stated in the book:

Philippians 1:13 (NKJV) ***so that it has become evident to the whole palace guard, and to all the rest, that my chains are in Christ...***

Paul was in prison for the Gospel of Jesus Christ. This was the message he had preached to Lydia and the correctional officer in Philippi; Paul preached that Jesus Christ was God, that He died on the cross for our sins according to the Scripture, that He rose again from the dead according to the Scriptures, and that He was seen after His resurrection by the disciples, by over 500 people, and last of all by him (c.f. 1 Corinthians 15 - The Resurrection Chapter).

Paul's life was centered around the Gospel:

Phil. 1:21 (KJV) ***"for to me to live is Christ and to die is gain."***

By the grace of God, may the Gospel of Jesus Christ be the focal point of our daily living, breathing, and believing.

1. Paul's **HUMILITY** – 1-2

Philippians 1:1-2 (NKJV) ***Paul and Timothy, bondservants of Jesus Christ, To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, with the bishops and deacons: ² Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.***

Paul and Timothy are introduced as bond slaves of Jesus Christ. How do you introduce yourself to people? Paul's and Timothy's humility is revealed by the time the fourth word is read – *bondservant*.

What is a bondservant? A bondservant is a person who is bound to the will of his or her master:

2 Timothy 2:24-26 (NKJV) ***²⁴ And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, ²⁵ in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth, ²⁶ and that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will.***

Galatians 5:13 (KJV 1900) ***¹³ For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty (freedom); only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.***

1 Peter 4:10 (ESV) ***As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace:***

Would we characterize ourselves as servants? Would our parents or spouse affirm our hearts to serve others with a loving heart? This is the change Christ brings into our lives. He makes us servants – people who serve out of love for others. Serving can be as simple as helping another do a task.

This letter was addressed to all the believers in Philippi – a Roman colony filled with retired military personnel. Whether you were a baby Christian or a leader in the fellowship, this letter was address to you. The Holy Spirit has addressed it to us as well. This letter is filled

with love, joy, and important Christian lessons that need to be learned by us all.

Grace is a primary theme of the Gospel of Jesus Christ – the Gospel is called the Gospel of grace:

Acts 20:24 (KJV 1900) ***24 But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.***

Grace means “unmerited favor”. It is the *unmerited favor* of God. Salvation cannot be earned. The gift of salvation is a gift of God made possible by grace alone – the unmerited favor of God alone:

Ephesians 2:8–9 (KJV 1900) ***For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast.***

Salvation from hell, from eternal damnation, and from slavery to sin are all a gift of God’s unmerited favor – we do not earn these blessings, for they are strictly obtained by faith in Christ because of the grace of God. Paul told Timothy:

2 Timothy 2:1 (KJV) ***Thou, therefore my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.***

God’s grace allows us to receive the will and the obedience needed to follow Christ and His ways:

Philippians 2:2 (KJV) ***For it is God which works in you both to will and to do His good pleasure.***

Grace is the means by which I receive *every spiritual blessing* given in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Peace is the result of no longer being an enemy of God:

Romans 5:1 (KJV) ***Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:***

Peace is also the result of trusting God:

Isaiah 26:3 (KJV) ***Thou will keep him in perfect peace whose mind has stayed on thee because he trusts in thee.***

Grace and peace are only found in the triune God – the Holy Trinity: God the Son, God the Father, and God the Holy Spirit. In this case, Paul states that these blessings are from *God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ*. One cannot have grace and peace without knowing the One true God.

Are we taking full advantage of God's grace to us by seeking those blessings of grace that are available through Christ? Are we at peace in our hearts, or are we in constant agitation, conflict, worry, and anxiety? All born again believers should experience God's grace and peace in their lives – this is the character paradigm of a true believer.

2. Paul's **HEART** for people – 3-4

Philippians 1:3–4 (NKJV) ***³I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, ⁴always in every prayer of mine making request for you all with joy...***

Paul's gratitude to the Philippians is exemplary. He greatly appreciated these people – he loved them, and he thanked God *upon every remembrance of them*. What do you think when you remember people in your fellowship? Can you see why this is also written to leaders? Do the leaders in your fellowship thank God upon every remembrance of you or do they pray that you will leave? (That was a joke☺)

Paul's Exemplary Leadership: His prayer life

- *Paul prayed* for the saints of Philippi – this is an encouragement for all leaders to pray for those whom they lead.

- *Paul remembered* the saints of Philippi – this is the mark of a caring man.

Paul's prayers were *requests* made with joy. Paul had a joyful prayer life – especially when it came to these believers in Philippi and petitioning Christ to work in their lives. Should not every leader have the Lord's joy in his heart for the people to whom the Lord has called him to serve? Leaders, do we have joy in praying for God's people? Fathers, do we have joy in praying for our wives and children?

I want to live my life in such a way as to seek the Lord's face on behalf of others in my care with joy – I want a joy filled prayer life!

3. The Philippian's **HUNGER** for fellowship - 5

Philippians 1:5 (NKJV) ***for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now...***

Fellowship – how important is fellowship? Deep, quality Christian friendship is what fellowship in the Gospel looks like. It was fellowship in the Gospel that caused Paul to joyfully seek the Lord on the Philippian believers' behalf. Fellowship is a pertinent manifestation of a heart at peace with God through Jesus Christ. Those who seek fellowship in the Gospel are truly transformed by the Gospel.

1 John 1:7 (KJV 1900) ***But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.***

Fellowship for fellowship's sake is not fellowship in the Gospel – fellowship in the Gospel is altogether different. Fellowship in the Gospel is where one is motivated because of the Gospel to be in fellowship with believers. Moreover, fellowship in regard to the Gospel sets the agenda for the fellowship – it's restricted to those behaviors that honor, glorify, and please the God of the Gospel.

Here Paul gives the reason for his joyful praying – their fellowship in the Gospel. *Fellowship* is “communion” or “participation” in the Gospel. The

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Philippians “communed” with Paul – they had a deep friendship built on the Gospel, for they, too, lived the Gospel. Because of this friendship, they participated with Paul in the propagation of the Gospel. Paul’s joyful praying was buttressed by their *fellowship* in the Gospel *from the first day until* the time of Paul’s writing.

The Philippians were faithful people. There was no point in their Christian walk where they ceased to recognize God’s will for believers’ active and engaging responsibility to have fellowship in the Gospel of Christ.

There was no “burn out” on the part of the Philippians; even after ten years of living for Christ, these people were still “on fire” for the Lord and remained in fellowship both with Paul and one another. We learn from this that fellowship requires the participation of oneself and others. There is no such thing as fellowship with oneself – that is not biblical. Fellowship always engages others and is a by product of faith in Christ:

1 John 1:3 (NASB95) *what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.*

Like the Philippians, our fellowship is in the Gospel. God calls us to commune with believers (be active and engage in quality friendships with believers through Christ). The Philippian believers had this God given desire to be in fellowship with one another and with Paul. Do we have this same desire produced in our hearts as a benefit of the grace of God through faith in the Gospel of Christ?

Where fellowship is slack, so is the heart of the people. May our fellowshiping in the Gospel be as pure and robust and thriving as in the first days of our faith.

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Prayer:

Lord Jesus, bless this wonderful time of study in Your holy Word. Make us a people who are active and engaging in fellowship in the Gospel with other believers. Help us, Lord, make fellowship with others a priority not to be neglected or squeezed out of our busy schedules. Help us to make time for fellowship in the Gospel. In your name, Lord Jesus, Amen.