

Eagle Ridge Lake Elsinore A Study in Philippians — May 13, 2020

Introduction

- A brief background/overview
 - Writer: The Apostle Paul **[1:1]**
 - Date: c. 60-62 A.D
 - Purpose: While imprisoned in Rome, it serves as a letter of encouragement to the Philippians church.
 - The church was birthed out of Paul's 1st missionary journey to the region **[Acts 16]**.
 - Not a single use of the word "sin"; not a letter of condemnation or correction.
 - **Key words:** thanksgiving, prayer, gospel, humility, light, righteousness, faith, contentment, love.
 - Each chapter begins with phraseology that sets the tone for the chapter and the book as a whole:
 - Chapter 1: "I thank my God in all my remembrance of you..."
 - Chapter 2: "So if there is any encouragement in Christ..."
 - Chapter 3: "Finally, my brothers, rejoice in the Lord."
 - Chapter 4: "Therefore, my brothers, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown..."

Philippians, Chapter 1:1-18

Verses 1-2

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.

- Introduction from prison; writing with Timothy present.
 - "Bondservant": *doulos* = one who is enslaved.
 - In this case, Paul is not speaking of his imprisonment, but rather his connection to Jesus as a slave to Christ.
 - Yes, Jesus sets us free (**John 8:32**) from sin, we opt to stay connected and enslaved to Him, for His service.

Verses 3-5

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.

- "Partnership in the gospel" = spiritual fellowship; ie. The Church.

- Partnership, Fellowship, Participation, Sharing
 - What do all these words have in common?
 - What does this mean for the sake of the gospel?
 - We are ALL involved!

Verse 6

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.

- 3 aspects of our new life in Christ
 - **Justification** = Set free; acquitted; we are made new at salvation [ie. “Born Again”]
 - **Sanctification** = Set apart; made holy
 - **Philippians 2:12**, “...work out your own salvation with fear and trembling,”
 - We don’t work FOR our salvation, but rather, work OUT our salvation.
 - It requires effort, study, & obedience to turn away from sin.
 - Perseverance in faith is NOT automatic
 - **Hebrews 10:36**, “For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God you may receive what is promised.”
 - **Hebrews 12:1**, “Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,”
 - This is a life-long pursuit of the holiness of God.
 - **Glorification** = we will be glorified in our heavenly state.
 - **1 Corinthians 15:52-53**, “in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality.”
- But for now, until that day comes, we press in to Jesus and let Him do the work in us that He wants to do.

Verses 7-8

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

- Our circumstances do not and will never determine the outcome of the gospel.
 - Whether we are in prison, or not, the purpose of our life remains the same.
 - We’ve seen the signs... “We’re all in this together” [Quarantine]
 - How can we do this together, when we are mandated to be separated?
 - By our response to these circumstances and our love for one another.

- **Side note:** dependent upon Paul's imprisonment and trial, the results of which could have grave affects upon the church in Philippi **[Roman city]**
- **Romans 5:3-5**, "Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us."
- **1 Peter 4:8**, "Above all, keep loving one another earnestly **[constantly; with intent]**, since love covers a multitude of sins."

Verses 9-11

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.

- Through prayer, Paul was hopeful that the following would take place:
 - Through prayer... **"That love may abound"**
 - **1 John 3:14**, "We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brothers. Whoever does not love abides in death."
 - Through prayer... **"Approve what is excellent"** [purity/blameless]
 - **Philippians 4:8**, "Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things."
 - **Colossians 3:2**, "Set your minds on things that are above..."
 - **1 Thessalonians 5:23**, "Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."
 - Through prayer... **"Filled with fruit of righteousness"**
 - **Galatians 5:22**, "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law."
- Paul's love for the church, and our love for God and each other, should be 3-fold:
 1. **Mind** = "I thank my God in all my remembrance of you," **[verse 3]**
 2. **Heart** = "It is right for me to feel this way about you all, because I hold you in my heart..." **[verse 7]**
 3. **Prayer** = "And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more," **[verse 9]**

Verses 12-14

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.

- In everything, there is a reason.
 - “The same God who used Moses’ rod, Gideon’s pitchers, and David’s sling, used Paul’s chains.” (Warren Wiersbe)
 - The advancement of the gospel is not, and should never be, solely dependent on the individual behind the pulpit.
 - If the church ceases to be effective, or closes it’s doors, because something has happened to the pastor, then that church was built on false hopes.
- Our relationship with Jesus is what should be known. So that if we are ‘bound’ by any circumstance, people can still know of our love for Jesus.
 - Our Christianity is not solely dependent upon our action/service.
- The testimony and witness of the gospel is for ALL believers!

Discussion Questions

1. What did God tell you?

2. What did God teach you?

3. What is God tasking you to do?

4. How can we tell when we are truly “bound in love” to other Christians?

5. How can praying for other Christians improve our fellowship with them?

6. What is true Christian fellowship?