

New Hope Missionary Baptist Church - Southfield, Michigan
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#hope in the field

Bible Study Series: Philippians
Unified Hope: Loving Christ as we Love One Another

Thanksgiving and Prayer - Philippians 1:1-11

Reflection Questions

A. Why are greetings so important in our church and our culture today?

B. What is your usual way of saying hello to your family and friends?

C. In your family, how important are greetings in affirming each other?

Read the Background Scripture: Philippians 1:1-11

Key Terms:

- | | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Believers | <input type="checkbox"/> Partnerships | <input type="checkbox"/> Modeling |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Blessing | <input type="checkbox"/> Peace | <input type="checkbox"/> Mission |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bondservant | <input type="checkbox"/> Praise | <input type="checkbox"/> Leadership |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Christ Jesus | <input type="checkbox"/> Prayer | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Glory | <input type="checkbox"/> Righteousness | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> God | <input type="checkbox"/> Saints | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gospel | <input type="checkbox"/> Serving | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Grace | <input type="checkbox"/> Thanksgiving | |

Introduction

As Paul wrote this letter, he was under house arrest in Rome. When the Philippian church had heard about Paul's imprisonment, they had sent Epaphroditus (who may have been one of their elders) to Rome to visit and encourage him.

Epaphroditus was a leader in Paul's assembly at Philippi who was sent by the assembly. (Phil. 2:25,30) Epaphroditus had arrived with words of affection from the church, as well as a financial contribution that would help make Paul's confinement more comfortable.

Paul wanted to thank the believers for helping him during his time of need. He also wanted to tell them why he could be full of joy despite his imprisonment and upcoming trial. He wanted them to remain strong in the faith, realizing that although he was in chains for the gospel, God was still in control and the truth of the gospel remained unchanged. In this uplifting letter, Paul counseled the Philippians about humility and unity and warned them about potential problems they would face.

Important Emphasis

Paul begins this particular Epistle with an emphasis on the importance of Leadership. It is obvious from the very beginning that Paul desires to identify the hearts of the righteous representatives of Christ.

Models of Christ

Mission of Christ

There is a mentioning of sects of leadership by Paul. These leaders are accountable for the furtherance of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Among those Paul mentions.

Overseers- Superintendent or supervisor ecclesiastical office. NASB overseer for the bishop of the pastor. Phil. 1:1; 1 Tim.3:1-2; Titus 1:7

Deacon- diakonos, which occurs 29 times in the NT and is most commonly translated "servant" The one who serves are waiters of tables according to the first law of mention in Acts 6

This is a familiar greeting according to the style of ancient rhetoric. Paul Speaks Grace and Peace which both of these are pivotal in our salvation found in Jesus Christ.

Training- We must acknowledge that we are participants in the gospel and not spectators of the gospel. How should that participation be executed today? Has the requirements shifted from what it was intended in Paul's times?

The Gospel

- A. Sacred**
- B. Struggle**
- C. Support**
- D. Sustaining Power**

Paul a servant (slave) of Christ Jesus, “flavoring the entire letter, for he will call upon them to be servants of one another just as Christ himself took the form of a servant.

The one who started the work of grace in Philippi will not abandon it in a state of incompleteness. God will complete, finish bring to fulfillment, perfect that work “at the day of Christ Jesus”

Lesson Outline

- I. Paul's Regard for the Philippian Believers (1:1-2)
 - A. Humble regard for himself
 - B. High regard for the saints
 - C. Heavenly regard for God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ
- II. Paul's Recognition of the Philippian Believers (1:3-6)
 - A. Thankful recognition of the believers
 - B. Prayerful recognition of the believers
 - C. Respectful recognition of the believers
- III. Paul's Relationship with the Philippian Believers (1:7-11)
 - A. Adoring relationship with the believers
 - B. Affectionate relationship with the believers
 - C. Authentic relationship with the believers

Exploring the Text

¹*Paul and Timothy, bondservants [slaves] of Christ Jesus, To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, including the overseers and deacons: ² Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. (1:1-2 NASB)*

While Paul usually used the designation “apostle” in the beginning of his letters, here he referred only to his and Timothy’s role as _____ of Christ Jesus. The Philippians had been an encouragement to Paul, readily accepting his position and message. Apparently, Paul did not feel the need to mention his apostleship or to present his credentials as in some of his other letters. By the word slaves, Paul expressed his and Timothy’s absolute devotion and subjection to Christ Jesus.

Furthermore, neither does Paul permit his affection for the Philippians to substitute for central subject matter: the gospel.

Paul writes to the Philippian believers in a tone of affectionate familiarity. “**Saints**” refers to all believers _____ for God's service. (*Holman Concise Bible Commentary*)

Paul used _____ and _____ as a standard greeting in all his letters. Grace is God’s undeserved favor—his lovingkindness shown to sinners whereby he saves them and gives them strength to live for him; peace refers to the peace that Christ made between sinners and God through his death on the cross. Peace also refers to that inner assurance and tranquility that God places in the heart, producing confidence and contentment in Christ. Only God can grant such wonderful gifts.

Paul wanted his readers to experience God’s grace and peace in their daily living. The phrase _____ focuses on the family relationship among all believers as God’s children. By using the phrase _____, Paul was pointing to Jesus as a full person of the Godhead, and he was recognizing Jesus’ full deity. God the Father and Christ the Lord are coequal in providing the resources of grace and peace.

Understanding the Text Questions

1. How did Paul identify himself and his coworker?

2. To whom did Paul address this letter?

3. How did Paul greet the addressees of the letter?

³ I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, ⁴ always offering prayer with joy in my every prayer for you all, ⁵ in view of your participation in the gospel from the first day until now. ⁶ For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work among you will complete it by the day of Christ Jesus. (1:3-6 NASB)

_____ Paul thought about the Philippians, he gave _____ to God for them. The Philippian church had brought Paul much joy and little pain. Some of the churches had developed severe problems, and Paul's letters had focused on dealing with the problems. Paul's letter to the Philippians, while mentioning some concerns and giving some advice, could be considered a beautiful thank-you note for their unwavering support.

The words, "always offering prayer...for you all", are in the present tense, meaning that Paul was praying for them continually. Paul planted churches and then kept those churches in prayer as he continued in his ministry. When Paul prayed for the Philippians, he thanked God for them, and he prayed with a heart full of joy.

Paul had been _____ from the first, and he was still confident to that very day, of God's continued work to transform the lives of the Philippian believers. The good work refers to God's salvation and continued perfecting of the believers. God who began a good work of _____ will continue his work until it is finally finished when believers meet Christ Jesus face to face when he comes back again.

Paul was describing the process of Christian _____ and _____ that begins when people accept Jesus. Nothing in this life or after death can stop God's good work in us (**Romans 8:28-39**). Despite any persecution the church in Philippi might face, Paul was confident that God would continue his good work in them.

Understanding the Text Questions

4. When Paul thought about the Philippian believers, what did he do?

5. How were the Philippian believers in partnership with Paul?

6. What was Paul confident about concerning the Philippian believers?

⁷ For it is only right for me to feel this way about you all, because I have you in my heart, since both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, you all are partakers of grace with me. ⁸ For God is my witness, how I long for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus. ⁹ And this I pray, that your love may overflow still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment, ¹⁰ so that you may discover the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and

blameless for the day of Christ; ¹¹ having been filled with the fruit of righteousness which comes through Jesus Christ, for the glory and praise of God. (1:7-11 NASB)

Depth of Paul's love for them
Defenders of the Gospel with them
Delight of serving with them

Paul knew that his feeling of confidence in the Philippians was right because of his _____ with them and knowledge of their sincere faith in Christ. These believers held a special place in Paul's heart. All the believers shared the _____ of God [His grace and peace]. As Paul sat imprisoned in Rome, he knew that the Philippians suffered as well because of their deep concern and love for him. Paul knew that the church was constantly praying on his behalf. The Philippians also shared in _____ the _____ and telling others the Good News through their support of Paul's ministry across the world both when he was in prison and when he was out.

Paul, separated by his imprisonment from his dear friends in Philippi and uncertain of whether he would see them again during his life on earth, experienced intense longing for fellowship with them. He called God as his witness to the truth of his statement; Paul's love for the Philippians was so strong that it was deeper than human emotion; it was the tender compassion of Christ Jesus himself.

The Philippians should have both _____ and _____ so that, in their Christian lives and in their dealings with one another, they would understand what really matters. They should have the ability to differentiate between right and wrong, good and bad, healthy and dangerous, vital and trivial; but they should also have the discernment to decide between acceptable and right, good and best, and important and urgent.

Paul also prayed that they would be _____ and _____. The Greek for blameless also means "not causing others to stumble." Believers ought to be blameless with God (keeping their relationship with him up-to-date and personal) and with people (that their behavior would not lead others into sin).

There is a mentioning of acceptable conduct contrasting unacceptable conduct. What is acceptable among the saints is that which is : Sincere, Blameless, filled with the fruits of righteousness, glory belonging to God, and praises that are rendered.

Finally, Paul prayed that the believers would be filled with the fruit of their salvation—that “fruit” being all of the character traits flowing from a right relationship with God. The phrase refers to the good things that are produced in a person’s life by Christ Jesus. There is no other way for believers to gain this fruit than through a _____ with Jesus Christ. Only his life through us can help us live in ways that often go against our human nature.

See **Galatians 5:22-23** for a listing of this fruit. Such filling and the results revealed as “fruit” in people’s lives always bring much glory and praise to God. Believers’ lives ought to glorify and praise God, for it is by his grace alone that sinful human beings can obtain _____.

Understanding the Text Questions

7. How did Paul feel about the Church at Philippi?

8. What “real” things did Paul pray that the Philippian believers would gain “more and more” of?

9. What two results did Paul seek from the Philippian believers as they gained ?

10. With what did Paul declare the Philippian believers be “overflowed;” who did it come through; and for whose glory?

Life Application

- Paul complimented the church at Philippi; what positive things can you say about your congregation?

- How can you encourage someone in his or her Christian journey this week?

[Resources: Life Application New Testament Bible Commentary and LessonMaker Adult Questions]