

Link Up With Others  
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Allen Power

Philippians 1:1-11

- I want you to USE YOUR MIND's EYE for a moment. Here's the question:
- Have you ever been a part of a team that accomplished something very special? (PAUSE)
- I mean a team and an accomplishment SO SPECIAL that even today it makes you SMILE to remember THOSE PEOPLE and THAT ACCOMPLISHMENT? (PAUSE)
- Got it? Do you have something like that in mind?
- For some it might be a MISSION TRIP or LOVE LOUD project. For others it might be a special WORK RELATED project.
- Who would share about a SPECIAL TEAM and a SPECIAL ACCOMPLISHMENT that comes to mind?

Why do you have WARM, SENTIMENTAL FEELINGS about that?  
Why does the MEMORY of those PEOPLE make you smile?

Statement:

Whenever we're joined with others in a SIGNIFICANT and SPECIAL task, we form a special BOND of LOVE and SERVICE that leaves a MARK in our minds.

Furthermore, there's NO TASK that we could TEAM UP to do more important than SHARING THE GOSPEL! A TEAM of "beggars telling other beggars where we found bread."

That's what these first eleven verses of Philippians are all about. A former PASTOR writing to his former CONGREGATION to ENCOURAGE them to KEEP the work of TELLING PEOPLE ABOUT CHRIST going.

The book of Philippians...Paul's letter to the church at Philippi is a SHORT little book. The good thing is you can read the whole book QUICKLY. But it's a lot like some of the deserts that Elizabeth Thompson or Dawn Mooring make. You might look at a little piece and say "that's not very big" until you TAKE A BITE... "Wow, that's RICH!" I don't want to GOBBLE it...I want to SAVOR it!

Philippians 1

1 Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus,  
To all God's holy people in Christ Jesus at Philippi, together with the overseers and deacons[a]:  
2 Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

- Verse 1 - Question: What does Paul tell us in this first verse?
  - Who wrote it (Paul)
  - Who is with him (Timothy)
  - Reinforces their POSITION (SERVANTS of Christ...BOND SLAVES who DO WHAT THE MASTER COMMANDS).
  - To WHOM it is written (God's Holy people...or Saints...FELLOW BELIEVERS IN CHRIST)
- What does he convey in verse 2?
  - He's wishing for them GRACE (God's FAVOR that we don't deserve) and PEACE (That only comes from God).
- When do we get GRACE and PEACE?
  - From God through SALVATION.
- Why would Paul feel the need to mention GRACE and PEACE?
  - Paraphrased: "My PRAYER for you is God's GRACE and PEACE."
  - Paul is praying that they will DAILY RECALL the GRACE and PEACE they (we) have through SALVATION.

In just these first two verses Paul makes it clear that he, Timothy, and this church are FELLOW SERVANTS of Christ who have the GIFT OF GRACE and PEACE. They are a TEAM of FELLOW WORKERS in spreading THE GOSPEL of GRACE and PEACE.

Philippians 1:3-6

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.

- Verse 3: Paul says "Everytime I think about you (my former church) it makes me THANK GOD!"

Warren Wiersbe said:

It's worth asking, "Am I the kind of Christian who brings joy to my pastor's mind when he thinks of me?" GOOD QUESTION...GOOD GOAL!

- Verse 4: What does verse four say about Paul's relationship with this church? He PRAYS FOR THEM.
- What do words like "all" (my prayers) and "always" pray tell you? He prays for them A LOT and REGULARLY
- How does he pray for them? WITH JOY!
- Joy? Really?
- Anyone know where Paul was when he wrote this letter? In prison in Rome.
- How can you be JOYFUL when you're in PRISON!

John MacArthur writes:

*Trials don't touch a believer's joy if it's the joy of a Spirit-filled life. Instead, trials are occasions for an increase of joy because they increase the believer's dependency on God and remind him not to focus on circumstances. Real joy is found in the depth of a believer's relationship to God.*

- Verses 5 and 6 tell us WHAT MADE HIM JOYFUL when he thought of the church a Philippi. What were those reasons in verses 5 and 6?
  - Because of their partnership in the Gospel
  - And that God would complete what he started in their lives
- Let's look at verse 5: Partnership in the Gospel
- KJV: "your fellowship in the gospel" – The Greek work KOINONIA
- When we Baptists think of "fellowship" what do we usually mean? FOOD and FUN with other Believers! We even build a place for this called a FELLOWSHIP HALL.
- That word KOINONIA or FELLOWSHIP means MUCH MORE

J. Vernon McGee wrote:

*Koinonia...means that which believers can share of the things of Christ. There are three elements that must enter into it: spiritual communication, sympathetic cooperation, and sweet communion. (1) Spiritual communication is sharing the things of Christ. This would be sharing the great truths concerning Christ. (2) Sympathetic cooperation means working together for Christ. That is why, when Paul used the word fellowship, he could be talking about Bible reading or Bible study together or prayer or celebrating the Lord's Supper or taking up an offering. Paul called all of these koinonia—fellowship. The result would be (3) sweet communion. It makes us partners with Christ. This is true koinonia. (McGee, J V: Thru the Bible Commentary: Nashville: Thomas Nelson)*

- FELLOWSHIP meant true PARTNERSHIP in ALL THE THINGS of CHRIST and in the SPREADING OF THE GOSPEL
- Let's park on verse SIX for a moment
- Adrian Rogers taught a great method to use when you read a passage of scripture. Got a pen?
  - Is there a...
    - PROMISE to claim?
    - LESSON to learn?
    - BLESSING to enjoy?
    - COMMAND to obey?
    - SIN to avoid?
- Is there a PROMISE to claim in verse 6? What is it?
- Think about that! God has PROMISED to complete the GOOD WORK he started in you when you were SAVED.

Warren Wiersbe again:

*Salvation includes a THREEFOLD work:*

- *The work God does FOR us – Salvation*
- *The work God does IN us – Sanctification (making us more like Christ)*

- *The work God does THROUGH us – Service*

*This work will continue until we see Christ and then the work will be fulfilled. “We shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is” (1 John 3:2)*

As the story goes...

*One day Billy and Ruth Graham were driving through a long stretch of road construction. They had numerous slowdowns, detours, and stops along the way. Finally they reached the end of all that difficulty, and smooth pavement stretched out before them. This sign caught Ruth's attention: "End of construction. Thanks for your patience." She commented that those words would be a fitting inscription on her tombstone someday. As a matter of fact, those words fit all of us as believers, because in this life we are "under construction." (V.C. Grounds)*

If you leave here with only ONE THOUGHT today, REMEMBER INDELIBLY God has PROMISED to complete the work he started in you! If you and I will just stay CONNECTED and OBEDIENT to Him, HE does all the work!

Philippians 1:7-8

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.

- Verse 7: Paul didn't just THINK about them.
- How does verse 7 tell us his relationship went DEEPER?
  - He FELT this way about them. He HAD THEM IN HIS HEART!
  - Look at the end of verse 7. Why is there a special BOND that forms between BELIEVERS in Christ?
  - "...all of you share in God's grace with me."
  - Verse 8: What is the SOURCE of that SPECIAL BOND? The affection of Christ.
  - He loved them LIKE CHRIST LOVED THEM.

Ronald Reagan had a sign on his desk that read:

"There is no limit to what a man can do or where he can go if he doesn't mind who gets the credit."

I would re-write it for us...

"There is no limit to how far believers can carry the Gospel if they are BONDED TOGETHER by the AFFECTION OF CHRIST!"

Philippians 1:9-11

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.

- We said Paul PRAYED REGULARLY and FREQUENTLY for them.
- Verse 9 tells us WHAT HE PRAYED FOR. What was it?
  - That your LOVE may abound more and more
  - And for “knowledge” and “depth of insight”
- AGAPE love...a love that “seeks others’ best interests” EVEN IF IT COSTS YOU. That’s what he prayed would GROW among them!
- What kind of KNOWLEDGE do you think he prayed they would grow in?
  - Knowledge of scripture and life in Christ.
- DEPTH OF INSIGHT: When we say someone has GREAT INSIGHT what does that mean?
- Paul clarified it in verse 10...what kind of INSIGHT does it describe?
- DISCERNMENT...MORAL PERCEPTION of what is RIGHT and WRONG.
- Also in verses 10 and 11: What is the OUTCOME we’re all working toward through LOVE; KNOWLEDGE; and INSIGHT?
  - ...to be “pure and blameless for the day of Christ.” (When He returns)
  - Pure here may carry the sense of being “examined in the sunlight”.
  - Blameless: Without stumbling or without causing others to stumble.
  - “...filled with the fruit of righteousness that come through Jesus Christ – to the glory and praise of God.”
  - The qualities that RIGHTEOUSNESS PRODUCES
- And what was Paul CAREFUL to do at the end of verse 11?
  - Give God the PRAISE and GLORY for it all!

The more we GROW as BELIEVERS IN CHRIST the BIGGER IMPACT we can have as a TEAM for the Gospel!

We don’t practice Spiritual DISCIPLINES like Prayer and Scripture Reading just for our OWN GOOD. We’re TRAINING FOR the TEAM! We GROW so we can GO, with our other TEAM MATES to SPREAD THE GOOD NEWS!

So, What’s The TAKEAWAY?

- People joined with others in a SIGNIFICANT and SPECIAL task, form a special BOND of LOVE and SERVICE that leaves a MARK.
- There’s NO TASK we could TEAM UP to do that’s more important than SHARING THE GOSPEL!
- To QUALIFY FOR THE TEAM God SAVED us and SET US ASIDE
- We need to CLING to the PROMISE: “He will COMPLETE the WORK he started in our lives.”
- To TRAIN FOR THE TEAM we need to GROW in LOVE for other believers...knowledge of Christ...and discernment of what is right and wrong.
- All of this is not just for OUR GOOD. But to PREPARE us for the TEAM...to SHARE THE GOSPEL with others.
- What can YOU and I do THIS WEEK to PARTNER to SPREAD THE GOOD NEWS of the Gospel?