



ADVANCING
THE
GOSPEL

Philippians 1:1-11

Introduction

- In Philippians, when discussing people who were preaching the Gospel with wrong motives, Paul said, the only thing that really matters is that the Gospel is preached. If done with wrong motives, at least Christ is proclaimed (1:18).
- In Colossians, Paul says that all of his toil and all of his struggle is for one thing: to proclaim the Gospel, warning everyone and teaching them, that he may present everyone mature in Christ (1:28–29).
- At the end of Acts, Paul decided to go back to Jerusalem in order to testify to the Gospel (Acts 20:24).

Introduction

- In this study, we are going to walk through four letters of Paul: Philippians, Colossians, Philemon and Titus.
- The first three—Philippians, Colossians and Philemon—are part of the group of Paul’s letters that scholars call his “Prison Epistles,” along with Ephesians.
- It is believed that these four letters were written during Paul’s first imprisonment in Rome (AD 60–62).

Mamertine Prison



Introduction

- Philippians, Colossians and Ephesians were all written to churches Paul established on his second missionary journey.
- Philemon was written to his “friend and fellow laborer in the Gospel” Philemon as a plea to receive back his slave, Onesimus, as a brother in Christ.
- The last one, Titus, is one of the three letters called the “Pastoral Epistles,” along with 1 and 2 Timothy, because Paul wrote them to Timothy and Titus—two of his “sons in the faith” who were pastoring churches Paul had planted.

Paul and His Mission

Paul

- We first see Paul at the stoning of Stephen in Acts 7.
- Acts 8–9 describe Saul as a young man who was zealous in his persecution of followers of The Way. He “ravaged the church,” went house by house and dragged them off to prison, both men and women (Acts 8:2–3).
- It says he was “breathing threats and murder” against the disciples (Acts 9:1).
- This was Old Testament imagery for anger—snorting through distended nostrils (Psalm 18:8–15).

Paul

- Paul gave up his life for the Gospel. He made the Gospel his life.
- He traveled all over the known world to preach, teach, and plant churches.
- He then went back to visit those churches to encourage them, correct them, teach them, train them.
- When he couldn't visit, he wrote letters to them.
- He was relentless. Nothing could stop him, no matter how bad things got.

Paul - Advancing the Gospel

- Matthew 28:19-20 - “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.”
- Acts 1:8 - “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

Background of Philippians

Philippians - Author

- Paul includes himself and Timothy and calls themselves servants of Christ Jesus. “Servant” is an intentional choice to emphasize their humility.
- Paul will spend the next several verses calling the Philippians his partners in the Gospel.
- He starts here with the point that he and Timothy, though they are leaders in the church, are only servants of Christ.
- The body of Christ is one body with many members.

Philippians - Recipients

- As he did with the other two letters to churches in the Prison Letters (Ephesians and Colossians), Paul addresses them as “saints in Christ Jesus” who are at Philippi.
- This shows us how Paul viewed the people of God – people justified and holy before God through faith in Jesus.
- It can also be a word of encouragement to the believers. We are saints, so let’s act like them.

Philippians - Background

- Paul's relationship with the Philippians began when he, with Timothy and Silas, first preached the Gospel there during his second missionary journey, likely between 49 and 52 A.D.
- Through their ministry, the first church on the European continent was planted (Acts 16:6-40).
- It has been about eight to 10 years since their church was planted.

Philippians - Background

- In terms of the Greco-Roman world, the city of Philippi was quite prominent, was named by Caesar Augustus himself.
- Although located on the Greek Peninsula, it had the benefits of being considered an official Roman city, rather than just a colony.
- It was also quite wealthy due to its location on the primary trade route between the East and West, called the Via Egnatia.
- This is where they had met the business woman, Lydia (Acts 16:14).

Ancient City of Philippi



Via Egnatia - River Outside Gate



Archaeology of Philippi



Philippians 1:1-11

Philippians

- Paul's greeting combines the typical Greek greeting (charis – “grace”) and the common Jewish greeting (shalom – “peace”).
- Paul's mission was to be God's spokesman to the Gentiles. He was Jewish and the Gospel was rooted in the Jewish faith, but he was typically writing to Greeks.
- In his writings and in Acts, he shows us how he was passionate about the truth that the body of Christ was both Jew and Gentile, together, equally (Galatians 3:28).

Philippians

- Paul is thankful and appreciative of them – I thank my God in all my remembrance ... always in every prayer ... (verses 3-4)
- Why is he so thankful for them? They are partners in the Gospel (verse 5)
- Notice he isn't above them in rank. He isn't in an ivory tower sending down proclamations and judgments to them.
- They are his partners in the Gospel. This will be key for understanding the rest of the book and Paul's heart for his churches.

Philippians

- What do these verses say about the way Paul prays?
- Paul didn't see his prayer life as a list of requests to God.
- He sees prayer as a vibrant relationship with God.
- His prayers are filled with thankfulness and joy, particularly for those who have been such partners for him in the faith.

Philippians

- Remember that Paul wrote this letter during his first imprisonment in Rome.
- Yet, his opening lines in this letter to the Philippians is all about thanksgiving and joy.
- He has joy because of the faithful support from the Philippians, not only for him but for the advancement of the Gospel.
- For him, this is an evidence of the genuineness of their faith.
- They are not just going through the religious motions.

Philippians

- What does Paul mean when he talks about “beginning a good work” and “bringing it to completion”? (verse 6)
- Because of their commitment to the Gospel and the fruit he has seen in their lives, Paul is confident to declare their inclusion with Christ on the last day.
- The phrase “the day of Christ” is a common one in Paul’s letters, though he sometimes calls it “that day” or “the day of the Lord” instead.

Philippians

- It referred back to the Old Testament “Day of the Lord” preached so often by the prophets.
- The “Day of the Lord” was the judgment day, which was a day of judgment for the wicked, but is also a day of vindication for the righteous.
- True believers are not to fear the day of judgment, but welcome it.

Philippians

- In the Old Testament, the prophets preached that the problem was that some people who thought they were of “the righteous” were really of “the wicked.” They thought they were safe, but they really should be afraid.
- The prophets called them to repent and turn back to God.
- Here, Paul is telling the Philippians the opposite. He is confident they have nothing to fear.
- They are of “the righteous” because of their authentic faith in Christ.

Application - Love

- Paul's partnership with them results in love, thanksgiving and prayer.
- Look at the way Paul talks about this church:
 - He thanks God for them every time he remembers them, in every prayer, with joy (verse 4).
 - He holds them in his heart (verse 7).
 - He yearns for them with the affection of Christ (verse 8).
 - He prays for their love to abound more and more (verse 9).

Application

- These are the words of a spiritual father who loves his people dearly and only wants God's best for them. Paul's relationship with the church at Philippi was not casual. It was intimate and loving.
- The Greek word for "affection" in verse 8 is always used for very intense emotions. It was based on its common use for the intestines, so figuratively, it meant loving someone from the very deepest part of you.
- Paul specifically uses this word with "in Christ" – this intense love in Christ. His love for them came from their mutual love for Christ.

Application - Thanksgiving

- Paul thanks God for the Philippians in all his remembrance of them (verse 3).
- Every time he remembers them, he thanks God for them. Paul says they not only worked to advance the Gospel, they were “partakers with me of grace ... in my imprisonment” (verse 7).
- This meant they prayed persistently for him and sent him letters and sacrificial gifts while he was in prison.
- Several churches sent him financial support during this time.

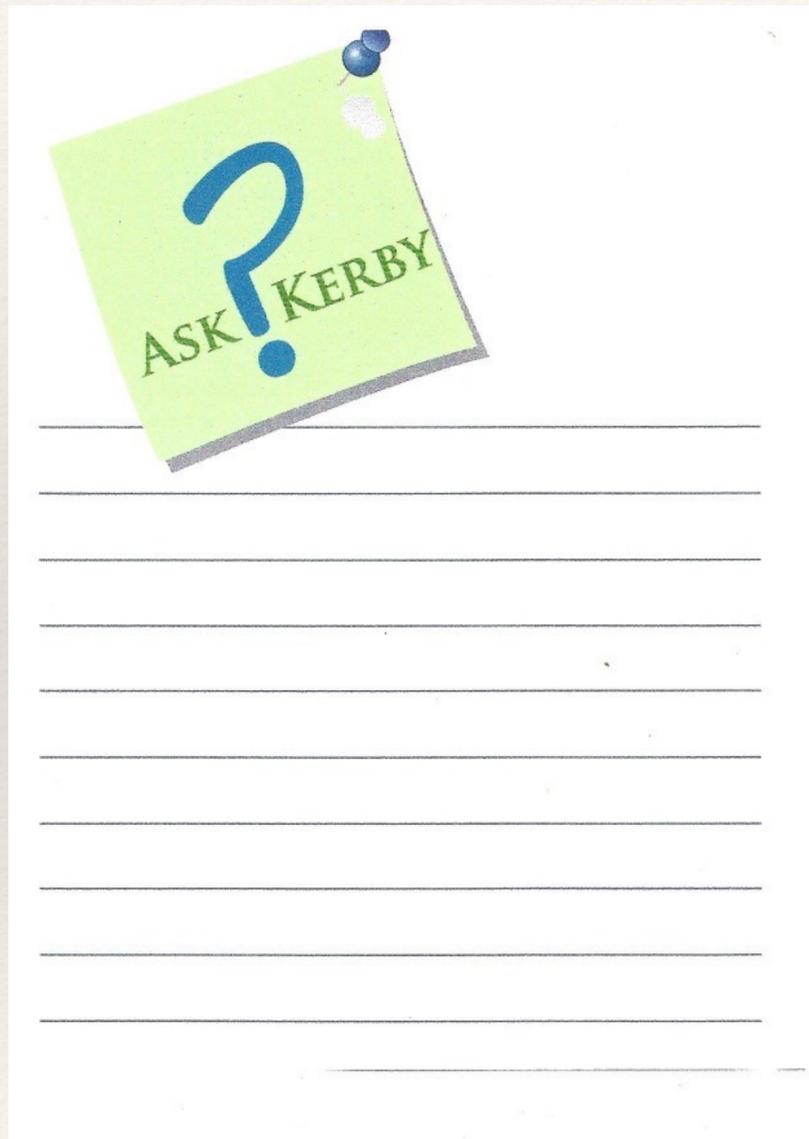
Application - Thanksgiving

- Thanksgiving is a big part of any healthy prayer life.
- When we practice thanking God for the good gifts He has given us, it opens our eyes to see His gifts more and more, in every aspect of our lives.
- Because Paul lived a life focused on Christ's mission and filled with gratitude, he was able to see how his imprisonment was actually a good thing, an act of grace. It gave him the chance to preach to the Roman guards and many in Rome who visited him and it emboldened others to share the Gospel back in their own cities.

Application - Prayer

- Beyond thanking God for them, Paul said he also prayed for the Philippian church. What kinds of things did he pray for them? (verse 9)
 - That their love would abound more and more.
 - That they would grow in knowledge and discernment.
 - That they would be able to approve what is excellent.
 - That they would grow in sanctification.

Ask Kerby (revisited)



Can we lose our salvation?
What is the biblical basis of
eternal security?

Eternal Security

I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand.

John 10:28-29

Eternal Security

For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 8:38-39

Eternal Security

Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy.

Jude 24

Eternal Security

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.

Philippians 1:6