

Book of Philippians #1

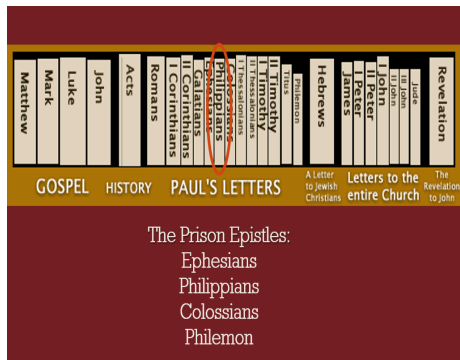
Phil 1:1-11

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9-22-24

Imagine that you own a house and you want to start a big project to build an add-on for a family member who will stay with you. You have very little know-how and resources. Then, you get a letter from a reputable local contractor who tells you the house is covered with both the cost and the workers. They arrive and lay the foundation and begin building! You can go on with your life and keep doing what you were doing.

Take a deep breath and know that this is our state of life in Christ Jesus. Philippians is about Him who will complete the job he began in you.



This is a book in the middle of the New Testament is a letter (epistle) written by Paul from prison.

WHO IS PAUL?

- Saul, opposer of Christians (Acts 8:1-3)
- An apostle of Jesus (Acts 9, 22)
- Proclaimed the testimony of Jesus (Acts 9:20)
- Went on 3 missionary journeys (Acts 13, 15, 18)
- Planted the church in Philippi (Acts 15:36-16:40)
- Arrested in Jerusalem and sent to Rome (Acts 21-28)

Paul, formerly Saul, was a high-ranking Jewish leader who knew about Israel and the Law and violently opposed the early church, throwing people into jail. One day, the resurrected Jesus

appeared to Paul on a road and confronted him, causing Paul to change dramatically into an apostle for Jesus. Notice the references on the slide above if you want to look up more info about his conversion. Later, Paul went on three missionary journeys and on the second journey, he planted the church in Philippi. Later, he was arrested and sent to Rome for a trial in front of Nero. Today would be like going before the U.S. Supreme Court.

WHY PRISON?

- For preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ
- Accused of being a troublemaker and stirring up riots (Acts 24:5)

WHY ROME?

- Proximity to Caesar (Phil 1:13, 4:22)
- Final decision expected soon (Phil 2:23-24)

Paul was preaching the gospel. Whenever the gospel enters a culture, disruption happens because cultures have their own unique cultural systems. Paul was accused of trouble-making and stirring up riot; Rome wanted an illusion of peace that everything was under control.

The letter says Paul is in proximity to Caesar and was guarded by the Caesar's palace guards. Those around him were actually encouraged by Paul's presence. He is expecting a final decision from his trial in order to free him so he could see the Philippians again.

WHAT WAS PRISON LIKE?

- In this case, house arrest
- Unable to earn income
- Required to provide rent, clothing, care
- Only for the duration of the trial
- Anticipating either freedom or execution

Prison in Rome was like being under house arrest. He couldn't leave and was required to provide his own care through friends/family around him. After the trial, a person would either be executed or freed so, basically, imprisonment for Paul was a waiting time to find out if he would live or die.

ACTS 28:30-31

For two whole years Paul stayed there in his own rented house and welcomed all who came to see him. He proclaimed the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ—with all boldness and without hindrance!

Although Paul is imprisoned, he is free to share the gospel.



PHILIPPI

- Location of 42 BC Battle of Philippi
- Anthony & Octavian defeat Brutus & Cassius
- Philippi becomes a Roman colony
- Paul establishes the church in Philippi (Acts 16)

- Military veterans
- Few Jews
- Political autonomy
- Italian customs
- Roman citizenship
- Tax breaks

Philippi was steeped in Roman history. 100 yrs before this was the Battle of Philippi in 42 BC where the Roman republic became the Roman empire. Notice this was a ROMAN community of gentiles with few Jews and no synagogue. Nevertheless, Paul establishes a church there.

GENEROSITY FROM PHILIPPI

- To Paul previously (Phil 4:15-16)
- To the needy in Jerusalem (2 Cor 8:1-4)
- Another gift now to Paul (Phil 4:10)
- And Epaphroditus (Phil 2:25)

The believers are very dear to Paul and very generous to him. They had been believers for about 10 yrs when this letter was written in 61-62 AD. These people also gave to other believers around the region and sent Epaphroditus to help Paul.

PHILIPPIANS: PURPOSE

- Thank you note (Phil 4:10-18)
- Commend Epaphroditus (Phil 2:25-26)
- Send updates (Phil 1:12-26)
- Meditations on Jesus (Phil 2:1-2; 3; 4:1-2)

The purpose of the letter was to send the Philippians updates and meditations on who Jesus is as well as a way for Epaphroditus to come home because he was sick.

If you have received a hand-written letter this year (2024), you probably remember it because today such letters are very rare. This was similar to 62 AD!. I think this letter from Paul was very dear to the Philippians, like this letter



I received from 4-year-old Lucy Sommitz.

Here, Lucy is thanking me for some stickers I gave her. Notice she uses most of the stickers in the letter she writes to me!

Epaphroditus is in danger when he brings Paul money and likewise when he delivers this letter back to the Philippian church.

PHILIPPIANS 1:1-2

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

This is a standard greeting but don't miss all the meanings! Timothy is helping Paul with the writing; they are introduced as servants in this letter (as opposed to apostles in other letters): their identity is as servants. The Philippian's identity is as "God's holy people." Grace and peace from the Lord Jesus...important because no longer is Caesar their Lord.

Grace [charis]

A gift one person would give another. If received, it became the foundation of an ongoing relationship.

Peace [eirēnē]

Harmony with God based on salvation He gives, leading to contentment.

When Paul met Jesus, it changed his trajectory and relationship with God. We have this today in the form of engagement rings: you don't have to accept such a ring. But if you receive it, the whole trajectory of life changes. An engagement ring represents grace and change. Likewise, when we receive

Jesus, we receive peace and grace leading to contentment: this peace could be

freedom from war or internal peace that is free from anxiety. However, here it's neither of those but instead is Paul is talking about the foundation (in the Shema) where the concept of "God is One" represents reality. Therefore, we can be content despite our circumstances. The Roman government built their peace on military conquest but Jesus offers a different kind of peace.

PHILIPPIANS 1:3-5

I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your **partnership** in the gospel from the first day until now,

Paul is a partner with the Philippians even though they aren't with them. They aren't ashamed of him, they send him gifts, they welcome him when he comes, they give to others which means a lot to Paul.

PHILIPPIANS 1:6

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**.

The "day" refers to the Day of Judgment: Paul is hopeful they will stand before Jesus and be fully ready when this day comes.

PHILIPPIANS 1:7-8

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. God can testify how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus.

Partnership is like koinonia.

PHILIPPIANS 1:9

And this is my prayer: that your **love** may abound more and more in **knowledge** and depth of **insight**,

This is a prayer with three sections: **love** reminds us of the Shema, loving God with all we are, not with mushy feelings. This is expressed in art and in soul, body, mind, and action. This is a multi-faceted love that he wants them to develop.

Knowledge is in the mind but also in relationships. You can know a person and the facts: knowing who God is so they can:

PHILIPPIANS 1:10

so that you may be able to **discern** what is **best** and may be **pure** and **blameless** for the day of Christ,

They can clearly understand what to believe and how to behave. In Rome, everything was defined by Rome and they were called into questions all the time. They needed discernment daily: we need to know God and be anchored in truth. God wants them

to be pure and blameless.

Pure: I have khaki pants and they all get stained. They are light and they show everything but the stains are hard to see in regular light. However, when you hold things in the sunlight, you can see the spots and treat the stain. This is like us with Jesus: he is calling us into the sunlight so we can see impurities and be clean.

Blameless: this means not being a stumbling block to someone else: a straight road that we don't trip other people up on. This is for the day of Christ, the add-on to their house. This is a building plan for the Philippians' way of life.

PHILIPPIANS 1:11

filled with the **fruit of righteousness** that comes through Jesus Christ – to the glory and praise of God.

You cannot force fruit. God will lay the foundation and he will build it into their lives.

PARTNER WITH JESUS

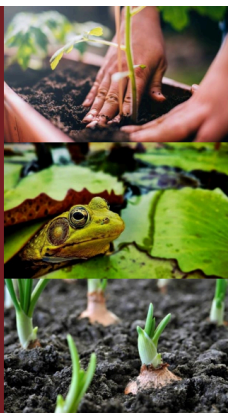
- Love abounding in intimacy & insight
- Discerning right from wrong
- Pure and blameless
- Fruit of righteousness from Jesus

This completes the introduction. The invitation to the Philippians is to continue to partner with Jesus the way they partnered with Paul. If you have workers at your house and you don't keep the trash picked up and open the doors, then they cannot work. This is also true with Jesus.

...HE WHO BEGAN A GOOD WORK IN YOU WILL CARRY IT ON TO COMPLETION UNTIL THE DAY OF CHRIST JESUS.



PHILIPPIANS 1:6



The invitation to us to take heart that he who began a good work will complete it. Some of us think we started our faith journey and must work hard to complete it. We feel responsible for our lives and that of others. We also think we have to lay foundations in the lives of others, too. But we can take

heart and relax. We can lean in and partner with Jesus.

TAKE HEART & LEAN IN

- Rhythms of prayer and Scripture
- Singing songs of praise
- Evaluating & correcting false beliefs
- Confessing sin & walking in obedience
- Shaped by & shaping community

This is what happens when we meet together, both on Sundays and other times.

We can also practice these at home. They might change season-to-season.

We correct false beliefs.

...HE WHO BEGAN A
GOOD WORK IN YOU
WILL CARRY IT ON TO
COMPLETION UNTIL THE
DAY OF CHRIST JESUS.



PHILIPPIANS 1:6



When Jesus shines the light on a sin, we confess it and walk in obedience and are shaped by community where we offer our gifts. These are other ways, as well. But if you think about what we do here on a Sunday, which parts do we take home with us? Conversely, in what ways do we

dismantle what we do on Sunday in our homes or push against what God is doing in our lives?