

Text: Phil 1.1-8

We are going to begin a unique period of teaching on Philippians. This is in preparation for church-wide Bible quizzing project. I'm hoping we can quiz over the first two chapters of Philippians, but we will see how we do. There are thirty verses in each chapter. For chapter 1, I've created a set of eight memory cards.

- On one side we have the text you are memorizing
- On the other side, we have the first letters of each word to help you memorize

I won't be quizzing but I'm going to try doing the memory work along with those who are participating.

We will have four teaching sessions on chapter 1 before we start quizzing. Today we will talk about Phil 1.1-8

Phil 1.1-4 ¶ Paul and Timothy, bond-servants 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. ³ ¶ I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, ⁴ always offering prayer with joy in my every prayer for you all, Phil 1.5-8 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 in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus. 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.

Tom Constable says:

"Paul ended up in prison when he first evangelized Philippi. Yet in prison Paul and Silas sang praises to God. When Paul wrote Philippians he was again in prison, but this time in Rome. However the dominant emotion that he projected in this book was rejoicing."¹

¹ Tom Constable, *Tom Constable's Expository Notes on the Bible* (Galaxie Software, 2003), Phil: Message.

He says the theme, however, is “participation in the gospel.”

“By participation in the gospel I mean the fellowship that Paul and the Philippians shared in the work of proclaiming the gospel. This is the work in which all Christians should participate as well. Paul, the Philippians, and modern Christians are all partners in the work of the gospel. The key to working together effectively as partners in the gospel is having the mind of Christ.”²

I. Salutation (1-2)

A. Authors

1. Paul

- a. Paul doesn’t mention his apostleship, unlike Eph, Col, Phile.

“This was a personal letter rather than one giving correction that needed apostolic authority behind it so that the recipients would accept it and act on its instructions.”³

2. Timothy

- a. Timothy was with Paul when he first visited Philippi, and was with Paul in Rome when the letter was written.
- b. Timothy is not a co-author, note 2.19-24, but is listed with Paul as addressing the saints
- c. Paul describes them both as bond-servants

B. Recipients

1. All the saints

2. The overseers and deacons

- a. Overseers = “bishops” κλη (episkopos), synonymous with “elders,” “pastors”
- b. Deacons = laymen assisting the pastors
- c. Only epistle where these two offices are included in the greeting

² Constable, Phil: Message.

³ Constable, Phil 1.1.

C. Blessing (2)

1. Grace and peace Paul's favorite words of greeting
 - a. Grace is a typical Greek greeting
 - b. Peace a typical Jewish greeting
2. Source: God and Jesus
 - a. The "and" reflects the truth of the Trinity – God and Jesus are on the same level

II. The prayer of thanksgiving (3-8)

A. Remembering the Philippians in prayer (3-5)

1. The letter comes about 10 years after Paul's first visit to them
2. He visited Philippi on several other occasions, and always remembered them
3. Whenever the Philippian church is mentioned in this epistle, Paul will use the word "all"
4. Paul didn't just remember them, he always prayed for them
5. The word for prayer means "specific prayers" – Paul knew what was going on in Philippi
6. Paul's prayers for them are accompanied by joy (16 reference to joy in Philippians)
7. The reason for Paul's joyful prayers: their participation

"participation" = "fellowship, partnership, *koinonia*"

"sharing together with mutual activity and mutual benefit in a close bond."⁴

B. Paul's confidence in Philippian growth (6)

1. God began the work of salvation in the Philippians

⁴ Constable, Phil 1.5.

2. Paul was confident that God would complete the work of sanctification in them as well
 - a. Sanctification is a process of spiritual growth
 - b. The primary actor in sanctification is God (but believers participate as they respond to God)
 3. The time of fulfillment was “the day of Christ Jesus” — the second coming (God will not stop working in us)
- C. Paul’s personal confidence in the Philippians (7-8)
1. Paul “has them in his heart” – a deep personal affection
 2. They are partakers of grace with him
 - a. In his imprisonment
 - 1) They were with him in spirit
 - 2) They were with him by representative: Epaphroditus (2.25)
 - b. In the defense and confirmation of the gospel
 - 1) “Defense” can mean a legal defense
 - 2) Paul may be looking forward to his coming trial
 - 3) They shared by supporting him, praying for him, and standing for Christ in Philippi
 3. Paul calls God as his witness to his deep affection for them

Conclusion:

The big theme of the opening prayer of thanksgiving is love and unity. The Philippian church strongly supported Paul’s ministry, both in his activities and in his imprisonment. Paul had a deep affection for them.

We work hard at developing this kind of unity in our church. It is easy for personal desires and disagreements to cloud unity, but we must work hard to put these aside and put the gospel at the center of our lives.