

Text: Phil 1.9-18

Tonight we continue with our survey of Philippians 1. We are mostly looking to identify facts and details to help prepare you for our upcoming Bible quizzing on Sunday afternoons.

The epistle opened with a greeting from Paul & Timothy and then a prayer of thanksgiving for the Philippians. This is more a summary of Paul's sentiments, expressing those things Paul in the Philippians that Paul thanks God for.

I. The Prayer for Sanctification (9-11)

"We may not be able to fully explain why God has ordained prayer as a vehicle whereby He works in the world, or exactly how prayer works. Nevertheless Scripture is unmistakably clear that prayer does affect objective change."¹

A. Request: abounding love (9)

1. The value of love

- a. Love is the first fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5.22)
- b. Love enables the proper exercise of all spiritual gifts (1 Co 13.1-3)
- c. Love completes the unity of the Spirit within the church (Col 3.14)

2. The key to sanctifying love

- a. Not mere emotion or sentimentality
- b. Rather, intelligent insight ("real knowledge and all discernment")

"Spiritual knowledge, gained from an understanding of divine revelation, enables the believer to love what God commands and in the way he reveals."²

¹ Tom Constable, *Tom Constable's Expository Notes on the Bible* (Galaxie Software, 2003), Phil 1.9.

² Homer A. Kent, Jr., "Philippians," in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Ephesians - Philemon*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin, 19. print., vol. 11 (Grand Rapids, Mich: Regency Reference Libr, 19), 108.

B. Objectives: (10-11)

1. Increased discernment (10a)

a. Clearly sanctification means discerning between good and evil

b. But sanctification also means discerning value:

1) Does this choice edify or not?

2) Will I grow towards God or remain static (or regress!)?

“The things that we choose because we love them reflect how discerning our love really is.”³

2. Complete sanctification (10b-11)

a. Timing: the day of Christ (*i.e.* the judgement seat of Christ, 2 Cor 5.10)

b. Goal: sincerity and blamelessness infused with Christ’s righteousness

c. Purpose: to glorify God

In our prayers for others, we should especially pray for God’s work in their life: some need physical healing (a momentary affliction), but all need spiritual healing and growth.

II. The Progress of Paul’s Imprisonment (12-18)

A. The benefit of imprisonment (12-14)

1. Paradoxical circumstances (12)

a. Imprisonment seems like a defeat of the mission

b. Imprisonment turned out to expand the mission

“The same God who used Moses’ rod, Gideon’s pitchers, and David’s sling, used Paul’s chains.”⁴

³ Constable, *Expository Notes*, Phil 1.10.

⁴ Warren W Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, vol. 2 (Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books, 1996), 67.

2. The spread of the gospel in Nero's Rome (13)

- a. The Praetorian guards were the elite troops guarding the emperor, Rome, and important prisoners
- b. Through their constant guard, the cause of Christ became known to them, and to "everyone else"

"Paul was able to get the gospel out from inside prison walls."⁵

3. The courage of the brethren (14)

- a. They gained courage
- b. They spoke fearlessly

"Positive faith attitude!" Paul abounded in positive faith, which produced positive faith in others.

B. The paradox of conflict (15-17)

1. Admission of conflict (15)

- a. Some preached Christ from envy and strife
- b. Others preached Christ from good will

2. Motivations (16-17)

- a. The positive: out of love, for God and Paul [impressed by Paul's testimony]
- b. The negative: out of selfish ambition, desiring to gain advantage [leadership?] from Paul's imprisonment

The envious were not Judaizers (condemned in 3.2), but selfishly ambitious. With Paul's imprisonment, they had a chance to be the "leading voices" in the Roman church. "Evidently some of them thought that their prominence would distress Paul in the same way that his prominence had distressed them. But Paul was much less selfish than they were."⁶

⁵ Kent, Jr., "Philippians," 110.

⁶ Constable, *Expository Notes*, Phil 1.17.

Note chiasm:

Preaching from envy (15a)

Preaching from good will (15b)

Preaching out of love (16)

Preaching out of selfish ambition (17)

C. The response of joy (18)

1. Paul's indifference to the badly motivated adds to the notion they are not Judaizers (heretics)

“Although [‘pretense’] has the sense of pretext, pretense, or ‘false motives’ (NIV), it does not necessarily imply that the antagonistic preachers did not believe what they were preaching, but that their preaching was a pretext to cover other, less-worthy purposes.”⁷

2. The important thing is the preaching of Christ, which increased in Rome because of Paul's imprisonment
3. Therefore: Paul rejoices

Conclusion:

“Verses 12–18 present Paul as a positive model for all believers. Rather than valuing his own comfort, reputation, and freedom above all else, he put the advancement of God's plan first. He discerned what was best (v. 10). He could maintain a truly joyful attitude, even in unpleasant circumstances, because he derived his joy from seeing God glorified, rather than from seeing himself exalted. His behavior in prison had been pure and blameless (cf. v. 10).”⁸

Title: *Sanctify and Sanctified*

Paul prayed that God would sanctify the Philippians

Paul showed what a sanctified life looked like.

⁷ Kent, Jr., “Philippians,” 112.

⁸ Constable, *Expository Notes*, Phil 1.18.