

WHEELERSBURG BAPTIST CHURCH

Life Application Sunday School Class

Philippians - Session 2

April 22, 2001

I. REVIEW Chapter 1:1-8

Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, To all the saints in Christ Jesus at Philippi, together with the overseers and deacons: ² Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. 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. ⁷ It is right for me to feel this way about all of you, since I have you in my heart; for 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.

After greeting his fellow believers and identifying himself as a bondservant of Jesus, he lets them know that when he is thinking of them and praying for them with great joy and thanksgiving to God. He is joyful when he thinks of them because he loves them very deeply, because they have been working together with him from the very start for the promotion of the gospel. He is sure that God will complete the work of grace that He started in these fellow believers. He misses them greatly, and knows that in their hearts they are with him as he is suffering for and defending the gospel.

Paul calls himself and Timothy servants of Jesus Christ. We looked at the word servant.

doulos (dou`lo" , from *δεομ*, to bind, a slave, originally the lowest term in the scale of servitude, came also to mean one who gives himself up to the will of another, e.g., 1

We are all servants of Jesus Christ if we are truly saved. We looked at two implications from this truth.

1. We belong to Christ - we have been bought by Him. The price that has been paid to purchase back our lives (redeem us) is the very life and blood of Jesus Christ. He is not only the one who purchases us, but was also the payment. And what was the cost? It was His very life. The debt of sin had to be paid to free us from the guilt and penalty of that sin. The implication of this truth is this. Our life is not our own to live to please ourselves. Paul was literally in chains for the gospel, and was rejoicing - not because of the chains, but because he was chained to Christ. He was suffering because of his close association with Jesus and the gospel. This was Paul's passion in life, to please his master. Christ has also purchased us for a reason - not for us to live for ourselves, but to serve Him.

2. Because we are Christ's servant, we are no longer bound to and a servant of sin. Everybody serves someone or something. True Christians serve Christ, which is the same as saying we serve righteousness. To be a saint, is to be set apart, or separated. We have been set free from sin and are now bound to God - and God is righteous and holy - we are bound to righteousness and holiness because we belong to Him. What does this mean in practical terms? It means that I do the right thing, even though there may be difficult outcomes from such choices - I am a slave to righteousness - righteousness dictates my actions. As sin used to dictate and control my actions, now Christ controls me. And how do we

understand what Christ commands us to do? By knowing Him through His word.

This letter is addressed to saints. What is a saint? Literally, it is one who has been set apart, and in the context of the NT, set apart to God, e.g. consecrated for God's use.

Sainthood is a state that is bestowed upon justification. When God calls us to Himself,

He sets us apart, and thus we are saints. We are also progressively set apart for God's use as we mature in the faith.

This letter was also written to overseers and deacons. What are overseers and deacons?

Overseer = episkopos (επισκοπος" , (1985)), lit., an overseer (*epi*, over, *skopeo*μ, to look

or watch), This term speaks of the function of an elder. Other terms that refer to the same person are shepherd, pastor, bishop, and elder. Deacons are those who serve and meet the practical needs of the church - they are assigned duties to assist the elders. So in this passage, deacons and elders refer to the leadership of the church. Paul is writing to all of the saints and leadership at this church.

After his greeting, Paul expressed a great joy that he had when thinking about and

praying for these believers. A key word is partnership in verse 5. We looked at what this partnership that Paul refers to that brought him such great joy.

The word partnership is translated participation in the NASB, and it is the greek word for fellowship - Koinania - It is a sharing, and giving, and partnership, a cooperation for a common goal. The sending of the gospel is divinely designed to be a joint effort. We

saw earlier that God has called all saints out of sin and into His service - and the service

we have been called to is to proclaim gospel known. Some saints, like Paul, are called to take the gospel, but all saints are called to participate and share in this joy and

responsibility. This mutual goal is to be the basis of true fellowship, intimacy, and

affection in the body of Christ. Look at verse 7. Paul refers to the grace that he has

experienced from God - the grace he needs to endure the hardship of defending the

gospel and suffering for it. He says that as the Philippians had helped him in proclaiming the gospel, and that they also were sharing in the grace given to Paul for this work.

APPLICATION: If we sense that we are lacking joy and grace from God in our lives, we should ask the Lord to show us where we can become participants in making the gospel known. We should seek to see how we can become partners in proclaiming the Word of God in Wheelersburg, Scioto County, and around the world. Having this as our goal is what brings grace and peace and joy into our lives, for when this is our focus, we are fulfilling the primary purpose for our redemption.

In verse 6, Paul states that he is confident that God had started a good work in these

believers, and that God would complete it. Paul was confident that this work was taking place in these

believers, because of their generosity and partnership in the gospel. When we are involved in making Christ known, it is an evidence of our calling being genuine, because we are fulfilling the purpose for which God calls and saves people, which is good works - unto proclamation of His greatness and grace, which is proclamation of the gospel. We are called according to His purpose - and His ultimate purpose is His glory as Christ is manifested in our lives and our words.

READ Cpt 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 until the day of Christ,* ¹¹ *filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ—to the glory and praise of God.*

Let's break this prayer apart into four pieces, and look at each piece, and then reassemble the prayer.

PIECE 1. First, from verse 11, what is the ultimate goal in these believers lives that Paul is praying for?

The ultimate goal is the glory and praise of God. What is glory? The root word means opinion, judgment, view; in the NT always a good opinion concerning one, resulting in praise, honor, and glory;

What is God like? God is excellent; He is great; He is preeminent, His is full of grace, He is majestic - He is glorious. The goal reflected in Paul's prayer is that these believers will reflect and display the glory of God - that when people observe their lives, they see the glory of God displayed.

What is praise?

Verbal commendation of one's greatness. Paul wanted these believer's lives to bring verbal commendation and exultation to God; that God's glory would so show forth in their lives that others would praise God for what they see.

Turn to 1 Peter 2:12 *Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.*

God has saved us for a purpose - to use us to display His glory, grace, and greatness. This should be our desire and goal, and motivation for all we do, to make God look good, and to give others a high opinion of Him.

PIECE 2 - From verse 11, what is it in our lives that will bring glory and praise to God?

It is being filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ. Let's look at each component of this piece. Look at the key phrase "fruit of righteousness"

What is a righteous person? - First, it refers to a person who is in a right relationship with God, and second, the effect of that relationship in that persons life. A person is accepted by God based on his faith in Christ alone. Once a person has faith in Christ and is declared righteous, his life will change to reflect that new relationship. The grace that brings salvation teaches us to deny ungodliness, and live sober, righteous lives. True faith that brings justification results in a changed life (repentance). Such things as integrity, virtue, purity of life, rightness, - conforming completely to the will of God. Because we are born sinners, we are void of righteousness. Our nature is to follow our own ways, and live for ourselves. God's will and glory are of no concern to us. But when God saves us, and imputes the righteousness of Christ to our account, and forgives and carries away our sin, we have a new nature, and change of heart - we are born again. Our desires and motives change - we now live for His glory and praise. So, for us to bring glory and praise to God, we need to be filled with the things that result from our right standing with God - the fruits of righteousness are the same as the fruit of the Spirit - love, joy, peace, kindness, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, humility,

faith.

PIECE 3 - From verse 10, what do we have to have to be filled with the fruit that comes from a right standing with God?

- We need discernment, which is the ability to test and approve what is best, what is excellent,
- Be pure - tested by sunlight, without dilution or mixture;
- Be blameless - not causing any stumbling in others

We need to be able to know what is best in our lives to reflect God's glory, be without impurity, completely pure in our lives, without hidden faults, and without things that would cause others to stumble.

PIECE 4 - From verse 9, what do we have to have to have discernment, purity, and be blameless?

We need a mature love; a fully blossomed love that includes intimate knowledge and mature insight. Full love is deeper than superficial affection. It includes a depth of relationship and knowledge that transcends mere emotion and superficial affection. It includes the intellect and reasoning, and cognition. It is the renewal of the thinking and the mind referenced in Romans 12:1-2, by which we are transformed.

So now, let's reassemble our four pieces. Paul is praying that these believers will bring glory and praise to God by displaying the result of their right relationship with God. Those righteous fruits will be displayed as these believers test and approve what is best, and are pure and don't become stumbling blocks to others. And will be able to live pure lives and approve what is excellent because their love is maturing and includes an intimate knowledge of God and a deep understanding of His will and who He is.

APPLICATION:

How should this passage affect our prayers for other believers?

We need to pray for this mature love and discernment, and knowledge for one another - and our motive should be our desire to see God's glory displayed and for others to bring Him the praise due His name. If our deepest yearning is to see God glorified, we will pray that God do this work in His people. As His people, we will desire this work to be occurring in our lives. We will make it a priority to understand and know God intimately through the Word and prayer, and count it joy when the trials of life come to refine these virtues in our lives. Our desire for ourselves and others should be that God does the work necessary in lives to bring honor and glory and praise to Himself.