

## **Philippians 1:1-11**

**Subject: Pray with joy for each other**

Intro to Philippians

### **Author:**

Paul, the apostle and church planter wrote the book while under house arrest in Rome, awaiting his trial before Caesar.

### **Date:**

At the end of Acts, Paul is on his way to Rome to have the case against him heard in the court of the emperor himself. This would have been around A.D. 60-62.

### **Setting and Background:**

Paul wrote from Rome to his first church plant in Europe to thank the Philippians for sending him a gift and to assure them that he was being cared for by the church and by His Lord. Paul also desired to warn them against false teachers and urge them to have greater unity.

### **Main Point:**

Paul's main point of Philippians is to present Jesus as the foundation for joyful Christian living. He is:

- The Center of Life – Life is really all about Jesus.
- The Example for Living – Seeking to live and serve as Jesus did is the path to true joy.
- Our Righteousness – Whatever good is in us is wholly the work of Jesus on our behalf.
- Our Sustainer – Jesus is more than enough, and He will supply our every need.

## **Philippians 1:1-2**

**v. 1** Timothy is mentioned here because he helped plant the church in Europe. Paul uses the word servant here, some translations use the word slave – essentially they both mean the same thing – it was a term of humility. Paul always chose his words carefully and the word servant truly characterized his life, especially because he used to be an arrogant self-righteous prosecutor of the church.

Saints – talking to the believers/church at Philippi

Overseers (Bishops)– pretty much the pastors

Deacons – those who serve

**v. 2** – grace – reminded Paul of God's grace in Christ (may God's grace be with you) – God's unmerited favor – Peace – restored non hostile relationship with God) – two of the greatest gifts from the Gospel.

## Philippians 1:3-8

**v. 3** – Start of thankfulness that was warm and personal – he truly cared for these people. Paul frequently remembers the church and always offers up prayers with joy.

**v. 4** – Always pray with joy – he is constantly encouraged by them – It was a joy for Paul to intercede for them in prayer.

**v. 5** – The why behind his joy – The relationship between Paul and the church went deeper than human friendships. They had a tie that came from joining in the work of God in the world. The advancement of the Gospel united them.

Partnership – Koinonia – Fellowship – usually we think of getting together and eating, hitting up some iced coffee at the Dunkin, or just hanging out.

The word koinonia originally had commercial overtones. If two men bought a boat and started a fishing business, they were said to be in koinonia—a formal business partnership. They shared a common vision and invested together to see the vision become a reality. True Christian fellowship means sharing the same vision of getting the gospel to the world—and then investing personally to make it happen. Thus, there are financial overtones in the word koinonia—as well as a call to personal sacrifice. When Paul thanks God for the “participation” of the Philippians, he is thanking God that from the very first day of their conversion, they rolled up their sleeves and got involved in the advance of the gospel.

<https://bible.org/seriespage/1-howdy-partner-philippians-11-11>

**v. 6** – Paul knew that Jesus Christ was an effective Redeemer; he accomplishes what He starts.

Good work – What did Paul mean by this? Was it that the church was helping him out financially – it was but this isn't the good work that he was talking about – it was the reason for their generosity. Most likely Paul was referring to the calling and Christian maturity of the church. Pretty much Paul was talking about the whole salvation process that eventually makes us complete when Jesus comes back and “fixes” everything.  
James 1

“It was Paul's way of making two emphases: sanctification was an ongoing process and the process would continue to the end of the age. At that time the believers would be complete in character. They needed not to fear the judgement which characterized that day.” (New American Commentary, 59)

**v. 7** – Paul was writing this letter from a prison in Rome as he awaited his trial. Regardless of what was going on the church at Philippi had a special place in Paul's heart.

**v. 8** - The word for “affection” is *splagchnon* (SPLONK-non). Please humor me; I absolutely love this word. It refers to the entrails, bowels, or guts. The Greeks viewed the entrails as the seat of strong emotions. *Splagchnon* describes a longing of affection and

compassion so intense it makes your belly ache! Paul so desperately yearns for the Philippians to know his love that he puts himself under an oath—"God can testify to this" This love was not generated from Paul, but from Christ Himself. My heart is that I have this type of love for the body of Christ and vice versa.

### **Philippians 1:9-11**

Paul moves from thanksgiving to a prayer that God would continue to work in them and through them.

**v. 9** – Knowledge – a grasp of what is real and true  
Depth of insight (Understanding) – The ability to discern

**v. 10** – discern – Discerning what is best develops character

pure and blameless - Pure – only occurs one other time (2 Peter 3:1) – comes from two words Helios (Sun) and Krino (To Judge) – it means to hold up to sunlight for inspection – Dishonest pottery dealers would fill cracks with wax before glazing them and painting them, making something that was worthless look the same as the expensive ones. The only way to determine if the pot was "pure" was to hold it up to the sun, making wax-filled cracks obvious.

Blameless – to be free from blame – this was referring to relational integrity – Christians were to live lives of true integrity that do not cause others to sin. He was writing this for the whole church to have unity.

Be pure and blameless so that you will be filled with the fruit of righteousness.

**v. 11** – The results of a pure and blameless life - fruit of righteousness – not fruits of the spirit.

Righteous living would protect the church; it would be blameless. However, blamelessness would be as a result of Christ and his righteousness, not one's own.

"This passage teaches that if those who are righteous by God's grace through faith live as they should, the fruit of their lives will be true blamelessness. No one will condemn them, and they will stand the test of judgement day."

The glory of God motivated Paul's actions – that is the end goal. Not what we do but who is glorified through us. He saw the entire scope of salvation as an outworking of God's grace and as a contribution to God's glory.

He was reminding the Philippians of their ultimate calling, to reflect God's character in their lives. That is why we live carefully...to glorify God through everything we do.

### **So What**

So this section of the letter that Paul writes really sets the tone of how he feels about the Philippian church. He is joyful and thankful for them (despite being in jail) because of their partnership in the Gospel (financially and physically) - as a result he really, really, really loves them. So much so that it is giving him joy while in chains and constantly defending the Gospel.

But what I really want to focus on is vs. 9-11, his prayer for the Philippians. These 3 verses give us an amazing prayer that has so much significance.

**I am convinced that how we pray for one another will determine how we treat one another.**

We can learn from Paul how to truly pray for people and how our prayers align us with the mind of Christ.

If we don't pray, or at best only pray when the person we are praying for is having problems, what will be the outcome of how we view that person when we see them? We will think they always have problems, and they become a burden and not a blessing to us. However, if we are frequently praying prayers of thanksgiving and faith, we will have a positive view of other believers.

You see when we pray how Paul did here; we will see people in the BCM and around us in a way that gives us joy. Our community will truly reflect the joy that the Gospel has given each of us! So many times we pray for people as a burden, we need to think about praying for others in a different light. Like Paul, we need to pray with joy, a righteous joy that comes from a strong faith that the gospel renews us each day! When we pray for joy, not only do we see in a change in others but we also will see a change in us!

**Pray with joy for each other**

So here is what we need to pray for:

- **Pray for their partnership in the Gospel** - Pray that God would strengthen these brothers and sisters as they courageously live for Christ and His gospel. This will help everyone within our community to have a common vision that we all invest in together.
- **Pray for their love to overflow** - he means "to flow over," like a soda poured into a small glass by my kids. The Philippians have already demonstrated an abundant love, but now Paul prays that their love will "overflow" (NLT) even more. God desires that love be the badge of our discipleship and that it only increases as time goes on.
- **Pray for their discernment** – discernment is the practical application of knowledge – perception and insight into social situations – This leads to living a pure and blameless life, when all believers do this, the church is protected and the world is changed.

## **Pray with joy for each other**

Imagine if we all started praying for people just in this room this way? We would have a common vision (to advance the Gospel on campus), our love for each other would overflow so much that we would “out submit” each other and desire to serve one another, and we would have discernment for what is best and know how to truly live lives that are pure and blameless so we won't be hurt by each other. Instead we will produce more and more fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ! We will change the campus!

Unrelated to the circumstances of life, the believers' joy flows from an unassailable, unchanging relationship with the sovereign Lord.