

RESILIENT



RELATIONSHIPS IN CHRIST

Philippians 1:1 – 11
Pastor Brian Rayburn
June 20/21, 2020

MESSAGE NOTES

Philippians 1:1

Paul is writing from Roman imprisonment, chained to a guard. Timothy with him and Paul is dictating this letter to Timothy. This is not the first correspondence between Paul and Philippians. They (the Philippians) have sent multiple gifts to Paul at different times and contributed to an offering he is raising for the church in Jerusalem. The audience to whom he is writing is the congregation of a church he planted. Paul and Timothy had received word from their messenger, Epaphroditus, about a number of issues this church was now facing and debating, and Paul is going to weigh in.

Verse 2 — “Grace and peace to you” — Notice the order.

Verse 3 – 5 — “I thank God FOR YOU” — Paul rarely thanks God for “things” in all his letters, but almost always for people. We are often different. I want this or even at our best thank you for that. Paul recognizes, and we would do well to note, that God’s best gifts are the people He sends to us on our journey. Family, loved ones, relationships. (verse 4 — He does so regularly)

— “I pray with joy”— This is the first of 16 occurrences in this letter to JOY.

Joy is God’s way of being present with His people. — Gordon Fee

— “Because of your partnership in the gospel” — The SOURCE of His joy is their “partnership” in the spread of the gospel.

Verse 6 — The confidence Paul has is not in them but in God! The confidence comes in God’s “good work” clearly their salvation, is initiated and continued as an act of God, who is always faithful, and will end not in death but resurrection.

Verse 7 – 8 — “in chains” this is the first of four times Paul will reference being in chains but he is quick to note its benefits, this time is advancing the gospel!

— defending (verbally to courts and judges and others) confirming the gospel. This word for “confirmation” is only used two in the Bible and means a validation of a claim.

Verses 9 – 11 — Love is the catalyst and criteria for pure and blameless outcomes but it must be a discerning love:

- “I pray your love would abound” — Paul uses this Greek construction several times suggesting that the church is on its way but needs encouragement as much as it needs correction. CONTINUE on this path. Grow in this process.

** But love without knowledge is naive, while knowledge without love is hurtful. SO Paul admonishes that their love would grow in:

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- **Knowledge:** the Greek word epiknosis where we get our English word epistemology. This is not a book or theoretical knowledge BUT SPECIFICALLY an experienced knowledge.
- **In insight:** As Paul often does he borrows this word from Greek philosophy, meaning a moral insight, so not just your lived experience and the accumulated knowledge there BUT an insight into current head scratchers.
- **You would be pure and blameless** — a Greek word specifically chosen to mean NOT GIVE OFFENSE. What is interesting in this is action that takes into account the reputation of the church, the gospel of Jesus, and love. That your decisions would be informed by all of these!

Finally, RESULTING in your righteousness, specifically fruit.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What was something said in the service that stuck out to you and why?
- What about Paul's circumstances, being imprisoned, make the first few verses of this book unique or interesting to you?
- Paul opens with "Grace and peace" to the Philippians. How do you fight for both grace and peace when you are under duress?
- In verse 4, Paul thanks them for their partnership in the gospel. Brian said the use of Gospel here is not a proclamation of a body of teachings or beliefs but God's work with His people such as gifts for the poor. In what ways are you currently partnering in tangible ministry to the people of God?
- Brian asks how our life experience has shaped or changed how we love others. How has your life experienced changed how you trust other people?
- How has your life experience changed how you forgive other people?
- At the end of the message Brian offered four questions to ask when we are making a big decision, especially decisions involving other people. Go back and listen to those four questions if you didn't write them down. Which of the four is the hardest for you to be honest with yourself about and why?