

Philippians 1:1-11

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[0:00] Okay, so we are going to go through Philippians. So the format we followed last year for a season where Josh would preach every other week just about and bring some kind of topical thing.

And the rest of the time we spent going through a book of the Bible, went through Colossians. And the guys who are eager to teach, who wanted to teach, would sort of alternate.

Not sort of alternate, we would alternate. Okay, so we have a preaching schedule throughout the year. And so you're going to hear from a lot of us. And we're going to go through Philippians. We chunked it out, not quite a chapter a person, about half a chapter a person, depending on the chapter and the subject matter.

So I'll start off by giving a little intro to Philippians. Philippians is an epistle. It's a letter written by Paul the Apostle. And it was from prison. We don't know exactly where he's in prison.

I think traditionally the church has held that he was in Rome. And Philippi is a really long distance from Rome. So I think that that has called into question. Maybe he was somewhere else. But he was somewhere. He was in prison.

[1:03] And he was writing this letter from prison to a church that had come forth on one of his missionary journeys. The first, I believe, the first time Paul and his team were in Europe, the church at Philippi was birthed.

So he's, let's see here. Acts 16 covers this. I'm not going to dig into that. I'm not going to open up Acts 16 and read through it. But in summary, they're going through Asia, which is basically Turkey. And they get a vision from Macedonia. Or they get a vision. Paul gets a vision of this guy from Macedonia saying, Come over to us and preach the gospel to us.

Come help us. And so he concludes that's from the Lord. And they go over there. And they're in this city called Philippi. And it seems like there's a sort of random series of events.

They find, they go down to the water. There's this woman, Lydia. And the Lord opens her heart to hear the word Paul preaches. She's the first convert. So she believes.

[2:09] And her whole household believes and is baptized. So that's the first convert in the church in Philippi. And then they're jailed. Because I think Paul casts a demon out of this servant girl who's using this demon for divination.

She's making her bosses a lot of money by fortune telling. And Paul's so annoyed by this woman. She's following him around saying, you know, these guys are from the Lord. And anyway, he turns around and casts the demon out.

I think this is the story. So if I'm mixing this up, correct me afterwards. But anyway, he gets thrown into jail. And they're in jail. And through a miraculous set of circumstances, praise the Lord.

This earthquake happens. And none of them leave. And the jailer is so gripped that he just falls down on his knees and says, how can I be saved? And he said, believe on the Lord Jesus and you'll be saved.

You and your whole household. He's got this awesome promise. One of the first gospel promises that's not only particular to a person, but their whole family. He's just saying, hey, the whole thing. So he goes, takes him into his home.

[3:14] This jailer does. This whole family's baptized. You know, they believe. You know, and anyway, this is the start of the church. It's basically just these two people. These two households. Lydia's household.

The jailer's household. And they're there for some time ministering. I don't think it's very long. Maybe three months or so. And they're driven out by persecution. He's gone. All right. And that was the start of the church. So sometime from then, Paul's in jail in another place for preaching the gospel.

And he's writing a letter to them. And the letter is one of encouragement. I mean, this is the letter that's, there's not a lot of rebukes. There's warnings and things. But it's like, man, I'm so stoked you guys are doing so good.

That's just kind of the overall theme over and over again. So these are, Philippians is chock full of heavy hitter verses. These are just sticky, theologically rich, promise, like, man, I can hang my hat on type verses.

I wrote out a bunch of them. I'm not going to read all of them. But for example, Philippians 121, for me to live as Christ and to die as gain. Glorious verse.

[4 : 20] It's on my mom's tombstone. Philippians 2.13.14, work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

You see this, this wonderful synergy between God's working and our responsibility, our outworking in light of his work.

And then in Philippians 3, you get this huge, just one of my personal most precious parts of scriptures in Philippians 3, when Paul basically gives his whole history of pursuit of God and everything he did for God in Judaism and how the Lord just radically changes his whole life. Everything that he had leveled up in, he counted his loss for the sake of knowing Christ. Just knowing Jesus was better than all of it. Everything he had achieved was garbage. And he found this wonderful discovery that there's a righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith. And it's not our works. And everything that he'd achieved by his own works, garbage. It's a wonderful truth. And it reorients his whole life around a singular goal of knowing Christ and being crucified.

[5 : 37] Philippians 3.13. But one thing I do, forgetting what lies behind and straining forward that lies ahead. I press on to the goal of the prize, the upper call of God in Christ Jesus. It's another wonderful promise.

A mature Christian forgets what's behind him, presses on to the goal. It's amazing. People don't think like this. This is maturity. I think that's like irresponsibility.

No, no, no. This is, Paul says right after that, if you're mature, you ought to think this way. But wonderful promise. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. Philippians 4.13. Another glorious one.

Anyway, there's a lot of heavy hitters. It's a wonderful book. There's a lot packed into this short book. And I'm just really excited to get into it. So I will start Philippians 1, verses 1 through 11. That's my passage today. So I'm going to read through it. Philippians 1, starting in verse 1. It is right.

[7 : 01] It is right for me to feel this way about you all. Because I hold you in my heart. For you are all partakers with me of grace, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel.

For God is my witness how I yearn for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus. And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more with knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ to the glory and praise of God.

Amen. Okay. I'm going to make some comments on these passages, mostly verse by verse, just working through it. Starting with verse 1.

Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are at Philippi, with the overseers and deacons. So this is a letter written to all the Christians in Philippi, but you note that they are with the overseers and deacons.

This isn't sort of a scattered group of, you know, one Christian's over here doing one thing, and other Christian's doing this thing over here, and, you know, there's no unified sense of church.

[8 : 12] No, it's a real church with real overseers and deacons. It's a family. You know, in a family, you know who the mom and dad are. In this church, you knew who the overseers and deacons are. You knew who was responsible for caring for the needs of this flock, you know.

I think that's notable. The saints are in a church with leaders. This implies order. It organically emerged from the preaching of the gospel while Paul was there, and then he was gone, potentially before even any orders in place.

But this shows that God's order in the church with real elders, with real familial order, is part of his will. When God plants the church, it ends up there, you know.

We can't do our own thing. We've got to do things God's way. Verse 2, grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. The thing that really stuck out to me about this is grace and peace go together.

It's a wonderful thing. It starts off so many letters. Grace and peace to you. Anxiety. There's a foundational anxiety that's there for all mankind because of our alienation from God.

[9 : 20] I'm anxious because I'm not right with God. There's stuff that's wrong. I know the things that are wrong, and it causes a perpetual undercurrent of anxiety because I'm not confident about my relationship with God.

God's grace puts us right with God, and there's peace that comes with it. It's amazing. They go together. Julie and I were just talking about this the other night. She was talking, we were talking about someone who has been burdened for and praying for who has anxiety, and she was remembering how long it's been since she had the kind of anxiety of this person.

Because you forget, you know. Yeah, we've got anxieties. We've got things we're tempted to be anxious about. It's different. There is a peace that surpasses understanding for a Christian because you're right with God.

You know you're still consciously aware of all the sins in your life where you fall short, but you're right with God. You're right with God. It's amazing. Peace comes with that. Jesus says, This is the peace of a Christian, and it goes with grace.

And this isn't true for the wicked. You can't have it. Isaiah 57, 24, 21 says, The wicked are like the tossing sea. It cannot be quiet. Its waters toss up mire and dirt.

[10 : 45] There is no peace, says my God, for the wicked. If we're trying to pay for our sin with confessing, with self-improvement plans, you can't get there.

You can't achieve this peace. You need the peace that was accomplished for you on the cross of Jesus. It's available as a free gift. And it says, Therefore, in Romans 5, verse 1 through 2, Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Through him, we have also attained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. The grace of God is what saves us, and it's a free gift. And when we receive it, we have peace with God. And that's the normal. You know, if there's a lie that you've ingested that it's okay for you to just sort of have anxiety be part of your life as just a normal experience, it's not.

It's not God's will. A Christian is at peace. And that's normal. So, anyway. Verse 3, I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you, in every prayer of mine for you all, making my prayer a joy because your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now.

[12 : 04] So, we use the term partnership at Christchurch to refer to church membership. And this is one of the verses that kind of underpins that. It's a foundational partnership verse.

Partnership in the gospel. Togetherness, unity towards one mission. It's the same word for fellowship. Some translations render this fellowship.

Partnership is another word. Partnership in the gospel is the foundation of any unified church membership. You don't have unity apart from the gospel.

You don't. And Paul sees this fruit. He pulls this out as one of the very first thing he commends him for is, I thank God for your partnership in the gospel from the very first day you believed it until now. Now, the nature of that, it's like a thing that grows. The first day you just believe it and receive it and you're right with God. You're just praising the Lord because your sins are washed away and you're right with God. But that partnership grows and matures.

[13 : 06] You know, there's a day later, he's referencing other aspects of this partnership. You're actually sharing the gospel with other people. You were just talking to our MC this last week. Ken was just sharing how gripped he's been with sharing the gospel.

Like, well, this is how it grows. This partnership, we rejoice in Christ Jesus and what he's done for us. And then immediately we're telling people about it. And we're working together with other members of the Bible of Christ to tell people about it.

And we're setting aside other things around this mission of knowing Christ and him crucified and sharing that truth with other people. And Paul rejoices about this truth. And this is the foundation of any real church membership.

If you don't have this, all you have is just a club. That's, we're introspective. We're self-serving. It's sort of a self-improvement, humanistic, feel-good, social club.

This is not about us. You know? This is why I really believe, you know, getting partnership in the gospel right is essential for any true committed church membership.

[14:09] You have to have it. If you're not unified on the gospel, honestly, you're not unified on anything. You know? You can have apparent commonalities in many other areas of your life, but the foundation's different.

You know? So we've got to fight for that. Okay. Okay. Verse 6. And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.

I love how the NASB words this. For I am confident of this very thing, that he who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Jesus Christ.

So this brings an element of this completion. There's a, when Jesus comes, there's another verse that says, when we see him, we'll be like him. We see him, we'll be transformed in a twinkling of the eye.

This is the hope of a Christian looking forward to when Jesus comes back. I'm going to be made new. All right? And it's going to be complete on that day. Which is kind of how the ESV, you know, it kind of leans towards that way of interpreting it.

[15:22] But there's other ways of interpreting it that speaks of the perfecting work. You know? That Jesus started something in you, and he's going to continue that in you until the day he returns.

He's going to perfect that which is concerning us. And I think this is, first of all, this is something we could take to the bank. I have a rest and a confidence knowing that I did not choose him, he chose me.

Okay? And he promised me he's going to finish it. He picked me, and he's going to finish it. He's going to keep me until the end. This brings tremendous rest into our hearts. But lest I take that and start using that as a license for sin, there's an element of the fact that he's saying, I'm perfecting this work.

I started a work in you of conforming you to the image of Jesus. This is what it says in Romans 8.

Those who he foreknew, he predestined to be conformed to the image of his son, Jesus.

That's the orientation of this work. It's not a ticket to heaven. This is becoming conformed to the image of Christ. And I'm going to keep doing that in your life until Jesus comes back. It's an awesome thing.

[16:33] It gives me the hope. And it sets my expectations correctly. He's working on me. And if it feels uncomfortable, it's because he loves me and he's keeping me.

They go together. All right? All right. You might say, what about all the warning passages? You know, there's many times in the Bible where there's warnings to believers about falling away. Well, there's a lot there. And there's way too much to go in there in this message. This doesn't talk about the warnings.

It talks about the promise. And we shouldn't let warnings negate the gloriousness and the confidence we have in these promises. And I will say this, though. There is no... There's not a notion in the scripture of perseverance without the perfecting work of the Spirit.

It's just not there. And Jesus' warnings are given to lead us to repentance. So for a Christian, I can read a warning and have it participate in the sanctifying work of the Spirit in my life.

[17:38] It's awesome. I don't need to have you like, oh, wait. He's warning me that if I don't hold fast to Jesus, I'm going to fall away. But he's going to preserve me. And, well, this is part of... Jesus says, those whom I love, I rebuke.

Be zealous, therefore, and repent. And so for me, my basic conviction I've arrived to at... Currently, I'm still working through a lot of this stuff. These go together. Okay? They go together.

You don't have to downplay one to the exclusion of the other. We can hold them. And we can have great confidence that he started it and he's going to finish it. All right.

How can we know this promise applies to us? All right. That's the real... That's the rub. He promises specific people that he's going to complete the work he started.

How do I know that I am one of those specific people? What have I got wrong? I'm going to talk about three things. One, how can we know the promise applies to us? By faith in Jesus and his finished work on the cross.

[18:40] The New Testament is full of this message. This is the basic message of the New Testament. One verse, though. Hebrews 7.25. Consequently, and it's speaking of Jesus' unchanging priesthood. It's one of many of the things about the gospel that...

It's a great, wonderful foundation stone. If your foundation understanding of the gospel is missing this foundation stone, the perpetual priesthood of Jesus, go read Hebrews and get that in your foundation.

It's wonderful. Consequently, he, Jesus, is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for him.

I come to Jesus and know that he will save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him. Just the fact that I can come to Jesus and believe in faith is a gift of God.

Ephesians 2 says, the grace you're saved through faith. And this is not your doing. It's the gift of God. God gave me faith. And the fact that I can even look to Jesus and trust him, God did that.

[19:43] Okay? So I got to keep coming to Jesus. Trust the gospel. Number one is trusting the gospel. Trusting the finished work of Jesus and looking to Jesus. Number two, witness of the Holy Spirit. Ephesians 1, verse 13 through 14 said, In him you also, when you heard the word of the truth, which is the gospel, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, that's Jesus, you were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.

God puts his spirit in us when we trust in Jesus in a saving way. All right? And what's that produce? Romans 8 speaks of the spirit bearing witness to us that we're adopted as sons.

And we cry out, Abba, Father. He takes away the sense of alienation from God. It's just amazing. And if you haven't felt this, go to God and ask him for it.

You know? If you're understanding the gospels up here, but you haven't discovered this witness of the spirit that says, you're mine. Because Jesus is mine, you're mine.

Go get it. Go get it. Go ask him for it. Every Christian should be totally confident about this. This is part of our inheritance. Three, by conviction of sin that results in repentance.

[21:02] This is the perfecting part. When the Lord sends a spirit into our heart, it fulfills many of the promises of the spirit. One of which was one of the first ones from Jesus says, when the spirit comes, he will convict the world of sin.

His conviction of sin in our life is a sign that he's not leaving us alone. He's not letting us get away with it. All right? He's getting up in our business. He's exposing sin.

He's reproving. And he's working repentance. It's not just conviction. It's conviction that turns into repentance. Don't deceive yourself.

This is key. There are many who are convicted of sin and are like, oh, that's enough. I can be convicted. I can go confess my sins to the priest. No.

The spirit both convicts and enables turning. All right? They go together. And we can look at that. We can look at our life. You got to put this in the right place, okay?

[22:02] You can't start with this one. You got to start with the gospel. All right? And the witness of the Holy Spirit. And then we need to judge the fruit of that by looking and saying, has this actually turned into real responding to the Lord when he convicts me and repenting?

Yeah. I love this. In Revelation 3.19, Jesus says, Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline. So be zealous and repent.

And the NLT, I love how the NLT puts it. I correct and discipline everyone I love. So be diligent and turn from your indifference. I love how he puts that.

Indifference. Think of the sins in your life that you've developed indifference to. Yeah, yeah, yeah. He's convicted me. He's convicted me. He's convicted me. Okay, I'll get around to it.

No. No. I love you. And every single child that I receive and love, I convict. Be zealous.

[23:05] Be diligent. Turn away from this indifferent attitude. It's not a game. It's not a game. It's not a game. All right. So what's the point?

The preserving work of God, this perseverance of the saints is a perfecting work. They're like this. Okay. He's going to continue making more like Jesus all the way until Jesus returns.

You can't separate perseverance from sanctification. They're just, they're unified. Jesus is the same. His salvation is the same. There's a unity in this. Okay. So objections to this.

Does this turn into a works-based orientation? You know, it can if it's not through faith, for sure. And there can be thought, okay, this is a narrative I've, this is me.

Okay. This is a narrative I've played. I love perseverance. I believe in Jesus, faith in Jesus, faith in the gospel. I love the Holy Spirit witness. But repentance, my sin is bad.

[24 : 10] Yes. But God needs to change my heart before I can repent. So I'm just going to sit here. I'm going to ask that God changes something inside of me until, and until then, I just don't have an expectation that I can actually turn from the sin.

I need God to do something for me. You know, I just don't, I don't want to. I want to sin. Doesn't God need to like change something in my heart till I, so I don't want to sin anymore.

I mean, I know he's convicted me about it, but like, there's got to be something more. Right? I think that's a lie. I think it's a trap from Satan.

If you weren't a Christian, that'd be true. Okay. But if you're in Christ, Titus 2, verses 11 through 13 says, For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ.

You have all grace. What's this other verse? John 1, 16 says, And of his fullness, Jesus, have we all received in grace for grace. The law came through Moses, grace and truth came through Jesus. [25 : 22] Because you have Jesus, you have everything you need for life and godliness, including the grace to turn from that sin right now. If you know about it, you already have grace to turn from it.

And the devil says you need something more. You need a feeling. You don't. That's a lie. That's a lie. That's a lie that's trapping you and keeping you stuck and waiting for basically something that's not going to happen.

Now, God does move powerfully. He does things in our life. He moves in very powerful ways. He parts Red Seas. He delivers people. But the daily boring grind of discipleship and sanctification, there are so many things that the Lord convicts us of that we don't want to do at all.

And there's grace, abundant grace, if we repent and turn to Jesus and say, Lord, I don't want to, but you commanded me to. In Jesus' name, I trust you to set me free from this.

And I'm going to burn the bridges. I'm going to cut it off. Okay? The obedience of faith. Anyway, I feel like I need to hit that one. Verse 7.

[26 : 29] Who wants to increase here? Okay. Verse 7. Speaking of this confidence in their perseverance, it's right for me to feel this way about you all because I hold you in my heart.

For you are all partakers with me of grace, both in my imprisonment and the defense and confirmation of the gospel. Paul's confidence in their salvation proceeds from the evidence of fruit of grace in their lives.

And it's the same kind of grace that he's partaking of. All right? He sees it happen. It's like your kids. You know, they start seeing them go through the same things that you go through. You know, he saw them get saved.

And it's wonderful evidence. Later on, he's out in prison. Some years have passed. And he's doing his thing, going and preaching and getting thrown in prison, going and preaching and getting thrown in prison. And he looks back and, whoa, they're doing the same thing.

This is awesome. You guys are partakers of the same grace I have. You know what? But it's right for me to think that God's going to continue this work because you're doing it. He's doing the same thing in your life that he's doing in my life.

[27 : 25] He totally upended it. And now I'm suffering for it. And the gospel is the main thing I'm living for. And he's great. I'm fine discovering the sufficient grace that all my hardships get this grace that's just more than abundant for all my needs.

And I turn around and here you are joyfully doing the same thing. Man, I'm so encouraged. He's going to finish the work in you. Verse 8, for God is my witness how I yearn for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus.

Man, this one just really hit me. He doesn't just say, I yearn for you all. He doesn't just say, I love you. I love you so much. He says, I yearn for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus.

Okay, this comes into the mystery of being a Christian. Like Galatians 2, 20, Amber got me that awesome passage. It's my favorite passage. I'm crucified with Christ. Nevertheless, I live.

Yet not I, but Christ lives in me. There's that thing going on here. There's a real affection that he has. It's overflowing. It's yearning. But it's not his.

[28 : 35] It's the affection of another, Jesus. And this is key. This is really key. This is like expectation reorienting truth here about our own love for believers.

So, yeah. We experience these affections, but they come from God. It's a gift. God put it into me. Something that I didn't naturally have, he put it there. So what's this affection look like? This Christ affection, the affection of Jesus Christ. Number one, it's selfless. Christ's love does not seek its own.

It's not self-interested. It's God and others interested. It's a unique quality of this affection.

Philippians 2, later on in Philippians 1, 20-21, he's speaking of Timothy.

He says, For I have no one like-minded who will sincerely care for your sake. For all seek their own. Not the things which are of Christ Jesus.

[29 : 32] So we see it there. Timothy, his child, got this too. He got it. He, he'd set aside his own and he had a different thing going on with his affections.

He could see people. He could see the things of Jesus and he could see the things of Jesus and other people. And he was just yearning for that. Right? It's selfless. It's very simple.

This is just, you know, Christianity 101. Love is selfless. 1 Corinthians 13, 5. A long litany of what love is. Love does not seek its own.

I love how the NASB. The ESB says does not insist on its own way. And I love how the NASB renders it. Does not seek its own. I don't love you because of what I can get out of you.

I don't love God because of what I can get out of God. Okay? That's how humans love. Okay? It's basic human. That's how, I mean, it's just like that whole worldview. It's just hard to even think of anything different because that's just how we, that's everything we know.

[30 : 37] That's why it's from Christ Jesus. That's how he thinks. It's different. It feels alien because it is alien. It's what Jesus is. And he puts through this Holy Spirit that into us and we can start participating in that love.

Philippians 1, 17, you see this later on, things that are motivated by self-love. Speaking of people who are preaching the gospel, he says, they former proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition rather than pure motives.

They were in it. They were preaching. They're doing ministry. For themselves. Okay? Right alongside all the other believers. And Paul, like, we might not even be able to tell the difference, but Paul can see it.

He just rejoices that Christ is being preached. But he's like, you know what? Some are doing it for love. Some are not. It is love, but it's self-love. Okay?

So, second thing, it's faithful. Christ's love endures to the end. John 13, 1. Speaking, it's before the feast of the Passover. This is right before he goes to the cross.

[31 : 42] It says, It's faithful.

It's consistent. It never gives up. This is why it's a love we can take to the bank. Human love's not like this. Christ's love is. Self-love gives up.

All the disciples said, We'll never leave you. We'll never forsake you. Jesus loves them to the end. And the disciples thought they could love him to the end. They're like, Are you crazy? He would never forsake you. He said, Every one of you will.

Peter's like, If all these guys forsake you, I won't do it. You'll do it. You'll do it extra. Okay? Just to teach you this lesson. It doesn't work.

Self-love cannot motivate you to obey God. It can't. It gives up at the end. Christ's love goes to the cross. That's why we need it. We need his. We don't need our love for each other.

[32 : 38] We need Christ's love for each other. It's a gift. So what's the point? Paul's love comes from God, not himself. So, you might say, Okay, wait a minute.

Does this mean that God makes a swap? Like he just, he eliminates our own love? Like we can't love ourselves? No, that's not it. Jesus says, Love your neighbor as yourself.

It's the second greatest commitment. Love them as you do yourself. He doesn't say stop loving yourself. What it does is it takes it off the throne. It's not the boss anymore.

God's love. So, 2 Corinthians 5 verse 14 says, Christ's love compels us. All right? Whether I want to do it, and my love agrees with that love, that's awesome when that works.

Or I don't want to do it. Doesn't matter. Christ's love now controls us. That's the hope of a Christian.

So, our self-love will not go to the cross and die for God and others.

[33 : 45] It will not love them to the end. Christ's love will. That's the love of a Christian. We have it. Through faith in Jesus, we can receive it. So, anyway. Verse 9, moving on.

And it is my prayer that your love, this kind of love, would abound more and more with knowledge and all discernment. I think it's, it's, it's important to note that love, growth and love, comes with real knowledge.

The NASB says real knowledge and all discernment. This is true towards God. This is true towards people. It says love God, love people. We can apply it to both. Right? So, love for God, growth in love for God, results in growth of true knowledge of Him and being able to discern what is from Him and what is not from Him.

John 17, 3 says, this is eternal life that they know you. They know Him. Hebrews 5, 11 through 14, speaking of Christ, says, concerning Him, we have much to say and it's hard to explain since you've become dull of hearing.

For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again that someone teach you the elementary principles of the oracles of God and you have come to need milk and not solid food. For everyone who partakes only of milk is not accustomed to the word of righteousness for he is an infant.

[35 : 02] But solid food is for the mature but because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil. This is what happens. We grow up in the Lord. We stop living on milk but we actually grow.

Our discernment grows. We start to understand more of God and what He said and then in light of that we turn around and we're like, oh, wait a minute. Oh, that's way off. Oh, that's wrong. Why? All the reasons why? Okay, first of all, I just know it's wrong because I know God. Now, I'll get into the Bible and show you. If you're living on milk, you won't know. People say all kinds of things with Bible verses on it like you don't know because your powers of discernment aren't trained. You have to go ask someone else whose powers of discernment are trained or you have to get in the Word and see what the Bible says about it. Sometimes, you know, we're all grown. We got to do that but you should be growing in your knowledge of God such that your knowledge of Him, your relationship with Him is growing and your powers of discernment are being trained.

This is also true towards people. There is a carnal understanding of love that treats it as see no evil, hear no evil.

[36 : 10] When I love somebody, and to love somebody means I stick my head in the ground about anything they got wrong with them. You know, this is immature. This is not true love because true love comes with knowledge and discernment.

As it grows, it's interested in the good of others and so it wants to know what's going on. You know, it's curious. I think of Gina when I think of this passage.

When we first met her, I was set aback by how aggressively curious she was. And I kind of categorized it as kind of like, I don't know, I just didn't like it. But, it's so good.

I had a shield. I had a shell. I didn't like people getting up in my business, asking all these kind of questions. And I thought, okay, it's a little gossipy, you know. No. It's love.

It's mature love. Mature love wants to dig in there to find out what's going on. Chris and Stacey are feeling great about this too. Just get on in there. Ask lots of questions. Make you feel a little, huh, you know.

[37 : 14] It's great. This is true love. True love wants to know what's going on. Wants to understand, you know. Immature love or lack of love, you don't care.

Don't tell me your problems. If you tell me your problems, I got to deal with them. Makes me feel uncomfortable. I almost have to deal with them where I just have to awkwardly turn around and walk away. Like, I don't want to know.

That's selfishness. It's not true love. This false kind of love, this is what turns into like, you start having these like unspoken social contracts with people where you're just not going to ask them certain things.

Even like, best friend type relationships. That's messed up. That should not be the case with us. And it happens. Naturally happens. It happens because they don't want to tell you your sin and you, they don't want to tell you their sin.

And you feel that. And so you agree with them. All right. We haven't even spoken about this arrangement. We've just silently been like, all right, cool. We agree. I get the vibe.

[38 : 18] I ask you how you're doing about certain things and I can tell there's some areas where you're just like, nope, nope, no, no, no, it's fine. And if I agree with you, we now have a social contract that we're not going to, we're not going to go there.

That's jacked up. That's not how Jesus is. So, true love is curious and it's willing to dig. It's willing to get in there and find that information.

Bible commands us to bear one of those burdens to fulfill the law of Christ. If they don't want to give you the burden, guess what? That doesn't stop Jesus. He doesn't care. Gets right up in there. Asks uncomfortable questions.

Makes people squirm. That's good. That's mature, healthy. Love. It's love. He does it for us. Discernment.

This is a great one. Discernment lets you pick up, like, knowledge lets you pick up on what they're saying. Discernment lets you pick up on what they're not saying. We got to grow in that too.

[39 : 18] We all have done this. We all put up fronts and stuff like this and God has given through the Holy Spirit discernment to know. You know what? They keep saying lots of good things but I keep noticing a pattern of some bad things and they're not talking to me about it.

they're doing this. You know what? Discernment refuses to take their version of the truth at face value. It says, no, no, no. I know. Sorry, I'm a sinner too.

I know who we are. Not going to stay there. It gives you something to pray about and it guides where you can start digging and we should. We should do this with each other. We should ask God for discernment and dig and don't be ashamed of it.

We're all in this boat together. You know, like, hey, we're sinners. We needed Jesus to come down and die for us. So, and we're putting to each other's lives for the perfecting work of the Holy Spirit. So, I guess, so that brings us to the goal. What's the goal? Verse 10, so that you may approve what is excellent and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ.

[40 : 26] It's part of the sanctifying work of the Spirit. This all goes together. Love is how he sanctifies us. Whoever loves to fulfill the law, he sheds abroad his love in our hearts through the Holy Spirit and it's part of this keeping.

You know, even the church, even each other are part of God's sovereign means of keeping each other in the faith all the way till the end. Filled with the fruit of righteousness. Verse 11, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, the glory and praise of God.

Fruit comes from Jesus. He's the getting place. Okay? He's who produces fruit and it is actually organic. We trust in Jesus in real faith.

He produces the fruit and we ought to be filled with it. That's the key. Filled, not sprinkled. You know, we cut ourselves.

We think it's good. The whole thing's getting great on the curve. At least I have some fruit. Okay, good deal. All right. Where am I? Okay, I'm somewhere between the bottom of the curve, top of the curve. My fruit to bad, my good fruit to bad fruit ratio.

[41 : 30] No, no, no. Filled with good fruit. It comes through Jesus. Matthew Henry, I read his commentary on this. First, he said, let us not leave it doubtful whether any good fruit is found in us or not.

A small measure of Christian love, knowledge, and fruitfulness should not satisfy any. Okay? So, God's vision, his goal is full, full of good fruit and he's able to do it.

Abide in me and I in you, John 15, and you will bear much fruit. It's awesome. Awesome promise. Okay. All right, that's it.

On the exegesis, I have some points pulling out of this and applying to our church. These are things that praying through this, praying for our church, these come to mind. One is, we already talked about this, grace and peace go together.

If you've accepted a baseline of anxiety in your life, this is not, this is not Christianity, this is not what God's purpose is. The grace that brings salvation and the peace of God that surpasses understanding that go together and it's for you.

[42 : 34] Let's not settle for it. Let's not leave today with anxiety. It's just grace and peace to you from God. Second, don't be discouraged by small, small, don't be discouraged by small beginnings.

Philippians. This is God's work. Philippians is a small church. Matthew, Henry notes this. I'm not going to read the whole quote, but he basically said, this started out super small. It was basically only two converts and it's fruitful.

It's flourishing. God made it flourish and he looks back and it's a markedly encouraging letter. He's writing a report card that says, really good job. It's awesome. So we should trust that.

Three, Christ's love is what motivates us. We need to get this right. Self-love cannot motivate true obedience. You know, you have a pattern of looking in and just being like, ah, I just wish I loved people more.

Ah, Lord, help me love people more. That's a good prayer, but we need to know that it's a gift from God. It's Christ's love. So like, don't look for ways to outthink your selfishness.

[43 : 36] Don't look for ways to motivate your selfishness in the right direction. It's not going to work. Okay? Christ's love is what compelled Paul and it does not seek its own. It's a fruit of the spirit.

The fruit of the spirit is love. It's simple. Lord, I lack love. Please forgive me. In Jesus' name, I know I get it from you and you've given me your spirit.

So just shed a broad of your love in my heart fresh. Give me your love for people. I'm going to trust you for it. Okay? True love grows in knowledge and discernment. Talked about that a lot. You know, I guess the challenge is, are we growing in knowledge of Jesus?

Are we? God has a lot to say about his son when he says, I want to say all these things to you, but you're dull of hearing. Are we dull of hearing? Is that just kind of a boring thing? Knowing Christ. It shouldn't be. You need to know him. And then towards people, are you curious? Are you genuinely curious about the details of the lives of others and do you dig for them? You know, that's the mark of curiosity.

[44 : 36] You get in there and dig for them, you know? Or are you sticking your head in the sand and ignoring it because you might have to deal with it. Bear one another's burdens. Yes, you're a Christian, you have to deal with it.

Okay? God puts you with him to help him deal with it. They can't deal with it all by themselves. They need your help in dealing with it. Five, union with Christ produces being filled with righteous fruit. We got a lot of good talkers in Christchurch.

Okay? Good at talking, good at saying things that are good about the Lord. For some of us, the fruits lag in the talk. Okay? And that's why one of the words is character.

We need a living connection with Jesus that produces real fruit and we should not deceive ourselves. James talks about this dynamic where you can come to God's word and if any man be a hearer of God's word and not a doer, he's like a guy who comes and sees himself in the mirror and he turns around and immediately forgets what he looks like.

There's like this delusion that you can get to in Christian culture and church culture where you think that acquiring knowledge of God and thinking on things of God and learning on things of God and talking of things of God is real fruit and it's obedience and you're actually just using it as a shield to cover your disobedience.

[45 : 54] There's a character in Pilgrim's Progress who is this, it's talkative. He can talk. The thing is, he can talk about everything. Not just things of God, he can talk about, he's got a gift gift of speaking that's wonderful, it's from God but it can be a trap if you think that it equates to fruit.

It's not, it's not the same. Number six, two more here. Number six, partnering in the gospel. This is a challenge for all of us.

I'm on this, I'm challenging myself. Why are you here at this church? Is it to partner together in the gospel of Jesus Christ? Or is it because you like a smaller church?

You know? Or because your friends are here? Or your family's here? Those aren't bad reasons.

They are not the foundational motivation that Paul is commending the Philippians for.

Partnership in the gospel of Jesus. Set apart for the gospel of God. We need to ask ourselves that. We got bad motives, we need to repent of them.

[47 : 03] We need to get right about it. Other motives are a distraction and a stumbling block. Last one. In light of Christ's keeping you, turn from your indifference.

This goes back to that NLT version where Jesus says, those whom I love, I correct and discipline, be diligent and turn from your indifference. They just go together.

Preserving, the preserving work of Christ and repentance, turning from your indifference. They're just married. They're like the same thing. One is enabling the other.

It's Christ's work. So, we can rejoice in the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints, but practice, but in practice, deny it by resisting his work and trying to lead us to repentance.

repentance. I'm in, baby. I'm saved. You can't tell me that that's going to change. Yeah, he says he's going to complete the work he started.

[48 : 09] And you resist today, as of right now today, you got 19 reasons why that sin the Lord keeps highlighting isn't really a big deal. I need something else to fix me.

I don't know. I just keep praying about it. No. No. That's not the way he works. He says, be zealous and repent. I reprove you because I love you and it's my means of keeping you.

Therefore, be zealous and repent. Repent. I called you and I'm finishing you, bro. My daughter, I love you. Be zealous. And I just want to challenge you.

If God is convicting you of sin, you've been given everything you need right now, today. The Bible says you've been granted everything you need for life and godliness through what?

The knowledge of him. Do you know Jesus today? You got him. You already got him. You have everything you need today to repent. And if you don't believe that, you have an excuse.

[49 : 14] You have a bond. You have a stronghold in your life that the devil has tricked you into protecting. I love it. Has anyone ever read The Great Divorce? I read that.

Okay. There's a character in The Great Divorce and he's got this lizard on him and it's a picture of the sin that he loves. He's protecting.

And the angel tries to pull off him. And he screams. He loses it. He's like, he keeps talking about how he wants to get free of it. And the angel's like, all right, let me kill it for you. And he screams and he won't let it go.

He won't let it go. It's like that. And the devil does this. And I really believe there's people in this room today, the Lord has been doing this. Hey, repent. I've been telling you about this for years. Years. And you keep saying, here's this reason why I can't and this reason why I can't. I just need God to change my heart, you know, so hard. He's given you everything you need.

[50 : 10] You don't want to let it go. That's the truth. The actual truth is you don't believe it. The awesome thing is he finally says yes, the angel takes it, he kills it, and then it turns into this like magnificent horse and that guy gets on and rides it.

It's not ruling him anymore. He's ruling it. That's the intent, you know, that's the intent. A lot of times there's these things the Lord's putting his finger on and you don't want to let it go because you love it.

You love your sin. You love your independence. And you don't realize, like, it's good enough reason just because God said sin and you repent. That's good enough. But there's even more.

Like, that thing that's ruling your life, you trust the Lord with it, you're going to be a master of it, and it's going to bring glory to God. It's just wonderful.

So, I think that's probably the number one thing in my heart.