

Greetings

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[0 : 00] So we're going to begin in the book of Philippians, but I want to talk a little bit about Bible study before we dive into Philippians. I come from a school of thought about Bible study where one of the questions that you don't want to ask is, what does this mean to you?

The reason we don't want to ask that question is because we believe that the Holy Spirit inspired Paul, the Holy Spirit inspired Peter, and we want to know what did they mean? What were they getting after? So when we do Bible study, one of the things that we want to always do is we're going to do observation, interpretation, application.

So observation, interpretation, and application. That's how you study the Bible. If you grasp what those three things mean, then you've got it. Observation, you're just looking. What does it say? What do you see there? What things jump out at you? And every time you come back to a passage, new things are going to jump out because you can't observe everything.

[1 : 17] But you're just going to observe. You're just going to look at it. Then interpretation, what does it mean? And the best way to know what something means, you want to know what Paul meant when he said the word grace, is to look where else Paul said grace.

What we don't want to do is open up the American Heritage Dictionary and see what it says about grace. That's not inspired. But as Paul uses the word grace over and over again, we get the idea of what he means.

So we want to interpret it based upon what the author intended. And then application. Now we want to know kind of what that initial question people ask, what does it mean to me?

Generally, we're after application. What do I do? What do I need to believe? And here's how I think of it. I always think of, is there something I need to believe? Is there an attitude I need to have? Or is there something I need to do? So I always think head, heart, and hands. Right? Something I need to believe. Something I need to feel or an attitude.

[2 : 21] Or something I need to do. Okay? So, with that said, how many of you have ever heard of a lady named Johnny Erickson Tata? Okay?

So some of you don't know who she is. Well, she's a lady that back in the 60s, I believe it was, she was headed off to college. She was an excellent swimmer.

I think she was even going to go into, planning to go into the Olympics to do some Olympic swimming. And she had this summer off, and she went down to the water with her sister to just do a little swimming around and took a dive in a place that she had normally dove.

She ended up hitting her head and becoming a quadriplegic. Now, she has been in that condition for how many years? 50. 50 plus years.

50 plus years. And she loves the Lord, and she paints by putting a paintbrush in her mouth. She's written numerous books.

[3 : 23] And I got to go see her at John MacArthur's church in California. She was there for a conference. And she just talked about the progress of going from feeling sorry for herself and her condition and not being able to do anything and the trouble that that brings, to even now, this time of her life, the pain of all that she has had happen to her has increased in her life.

And she has to have someone who takes care of her 24-7. She can't do anything for herself. And yet, when you looked at her on that stage, she ended her talk by singing, because she sings, and she sang, Have thine own way, Lord.

Have thine own way. And I just thought to myself, How can you go through such awful, difficult things and still have this attitude of joy, of surrender, and of just trust in the Lord?

And one of the things that I think studying the book of Philippians does for us is it helps us to kind of go down that road so that no matter what we've gone through, we can see where we need to be.

And Philippians, Paul tells us sort of how to get there. And it's going to hit all kinds of things. It's going to hit all kinds of ideas. But the whole point of Philippians is this joy.

[5 : 01] And we get to see all the different things that Paul takes joy in. And so, with that, we're just going to jump right into the first verse. And the way I like to do this, I'm going to divide this up into five categories.

This outline is not original with me, but I love this outline. We're going to look at servants, saints, setting, shepherds, and salutation. So, right now we're going to talk about servants for just a second.

So, here's the first verse, right? We've got Paul and Timothy, bondservants of Christ Jesus, to all the saints in Christ Jesus, who were in Philippi, including the overseers and deacons. Now, let's just start by looking at these servants.

Let me ask you, what is this telling us about who wrote this letter? Yeah, okay, look. I'm going to say, I'm going to ask a ton of questions.

Okay? So, just answer. If you don't know the answer, that's fine. But if you know the answer, just jump right in and tell me the answer. Who wrote this letter? Paul. Paul did, right? And who wrote it with him?

[6 : 05] Timothy. Timothy, right? Because we have Paul and Timothy. Now, let's just talk about Paul for a second. What are some things that you know about the Apostle Paul? Just from your own Bible reading.

He started out persecuting Christians. Started out persecuting Christians. Somebody else? Used to be a Pharisee. Used to be a Pharisee. Okay, somebody else? Somebody struck him down. That's right. He got struck down by the Lord off that horse.

Right? Went blind. Okay. What else? He wrote from prison. He wrote from prison. Actually, there's several letters that he wrote from prison. Yeah, absolutely. Anything else?

He ended up being chained to a Roman soldier 24-7. That's right. He was chained to a Roman soldier 24-7. You know his name used to be called Saul. Okay? He used to persecute Christians. So, just so you know, because a lot of people look at him like they do Abram, and sing Abraham, Abram, and Abraham, but that's not the case. Saul was his Hebrew name.

[7 : 05] Paul was his Roman name because he was a Roman citizen. So, as he wrote to all these churches outside of Jerusalem, he used his Roman name. So, that's kind of an interesting thing.

Okay. So, we know then about Paul. And you can read Acts chapter 9. Really, you can read a lot of the Acts, the book of Acts, as well as Galatians chapter 1, 11, and following to learn more about Paul.

What do you know about Timothy? Anybody know anything about Timothy? Well, he was raised by his mother and his grandmother.

He was raised by his mother and his grandmother, right? Their faith. If you look in 2 Timothy to see this, their faith got passed on to him. That's right. Paul, he's a convert from Paul's ministry.

And his father, Timothy's father, was a Greek. But he viewed Timothy as so helpful to him that he took him everywhere he went. You know, to do all these missionary journeys that he did.

[8 : 06] And so, this happens to be a time where they're together. They're sort of writing this because Timothy is fixing to go to them with this letter and take it to them. Now, let's take a look at this word here.

It's one word in Greek. In the English, we've got two parts of it. Bondservant. But has anybody heard what this word is before? Does anybody know?

So, this is the Greek word doulos. Now, if you've been around midwives or anything like that, you've heard of a doula. A lady who comes alongside of another lady to help her in the birth of a child.

But it comes from this Greek word doulos. And this is the lowest servant in the house. If you think back to the example of Jesus when he washed the feet of the disciples, that's the lowest servant in the house.

That's their duty. Their duty is... Now, they didn't have tables to sit at when they would eat their meals, right? They would recline at the table. And what that meant is that...

[9 : 06] Okay. That meant that they're laying down, right? And the table is this way, and the feet are out this way.

And so, you eat with your right hand, not your left, and that's just the way it went. And so, everybody's laying like this. So, the doulos would come and wash the feet while you're eating.

That's the lowest servant in the house.

And so, Paul is basically saying, I'm a slave of Christ. I'm a slave of Christ. I belong to Christ. When...

This is a good place for us to kind of think about this. When we come to Christ, when we become Christians, we are leaving slavery to sin, and we're becoming slaves to God.

He is now our master. And I'm using that terminology very, very purposefully, because I know that in our culture, the idea of slavery is such a terrible idea.

[10:07] But I want you to understand it from the perspective that he's our master. He gets to tell us what to do all the time. We don't get to decide anything on our own.

From what his word says, he tells us what we ought to do. I think it's interesting that Paul is saying this about himself.

Because if you look at all his other letters, Galatians, okay? Sunday, we looked at Galatians. What does he call himself in the first part of Galatians? An apostle.

So, there's something different going on here. He's not having to deal with the Philippians is the way he's having to deal with the Galatian churches. So, he comes to them and he says, I'm a slave. I'm a slave of Christ. Galatians, he's coming. I am an apostle. So, it's kind of like, you know, it's like when your kids get in trouble. It's like, I am your father.

[11:08] You know? Like, he's having to get on to them. Yeah, exactly. So, but in Philippians, he's coming with a humble attitude because of the people he's approaching.

It just shows that our walk with the Lord, it just has so many varied things that we've got to live out. So, there's the service. Let's talk about saints.

Who is he writing to? It says, to all the saints. Now, let's talk about that for a second.

What's a saint? A Christian. A Christian. A Christian. You know that there are some who believe that saints are people who perform extra spiritual wonderful things, right?

And they get sainthood. That's not what a saint is. This word here is simply holy one. It's simply sanctified one. If you have trusted Christ, you are a saint.

[12:17] That's a glorious truth. That is the way the Father sees you. He sees you as a saint. It's such a good thing to think about because the saint part of who we are, it doesn't come because of us.

So, he's talking to these Philippians. He says, these saints who are in Philippi, they are saints in Christ Jesus. That little word in means by.

By. By. He has made them saints. He has made them saints. Let's. Let's.

Let me ask you. Let me just ask you this. Have y'all ever heard of what is called the United with Christ? Christ. You heard this term?

United with Christ. So, it's very simply, it's this. That when he died, I died. When he rose, I rose. So, when he says, you're saints by Christ Jesus, saints in Christ Jesus, it's that same thing.

[13:37] Yes. My interpretation says, who are the, in union with Christ Jesus. Yeah. In union with Christ Jesus.

That's exactly right. That is such a, we're not going to talk about it. I'm just going to kind of tell you, tell you this, and we're going to move on. But if you want to read something really astounding, go through the New Testament letters of Paul and find every place that it's in him, in Christ, in Christ Jesus, in Jesus, in the beloved.

Mark every one of them and just look at what it says. You will be astounded at how many times it's in the New Testament. It's huge. It's a huge idea. All right.

So, we've got, we've got the saints talked about. Let's talk about the setting for just a second. This is Philippi. This is where these people live.

This is the church that was started by Paul in Acts chapter 16. Can you tell me anything that you perhaps know about the church at Philippi? Does anybody remember anything that took place there?

[14:44] No? Okay, let's do this then. Let's, let's turn over in your Bibles to Acts chapter 16. In Acts chapter 16, you'll notice that the very beginning of Acts chapter 16, you have got this vision that Paul has.

It's called the Macedonian vision. Paul, verse 1, came also to Derbe and to Lystra. A disciple was there named Timothy, the son of a Jewish woman who was a believer but his father was a Greek.

And he was well spoken of by the brethren. Verse 3, Paul wanted this man to go with him so he took him and circumcised him because of the Jews. Then verse 4, now while they were passing through the cities, they were delivering the decrees which had been decided upon by the apostles and the elders in chapter 15.

Verse, let's go down to verse 6. They passed through the Thigrian and Galatian region having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia.

And after they came to Masia, they were trying to go to Bithynia and the Spirit of Jesus did not permit them. Now drop down to verse 9. A vision appeared to Paul in the night.

[16:17] A man of Macedonia was standing and appealing to him, come over to Macedonia and help us. So that's how Paul decided that he was going to go to Philippi.

Philippi is there in Macedonia. He sees this vision that God's communicating to him with to let him know what he needs to do because he's been prohibiting him from going other places.

Now how did the Holy Spirit prohibit them? We have no idea. To say anything about that would be a guess and speculation and going beyond Scripture. So we just stop. Right?

So he sees this vision. He's going to go over there. When he gets to the town, let's see, verse 13, on the Sabbath day, we went outside the gate to a riverside where we supposed that there would be a place of prayer and we sat down and began speaking to the women who had assembled.

So what was Paul's normal way of doing things is that he would go to the synagogue, he would see all the Jews there and he would reason with them from the Scriptures about the Christ. Philippi had no synagogue.

[17:26] So if they had no synagogue, usually the Jews would gather around the river somewhere in order to gather together to pray and so he went there to try to meet who was going to be there and there were just women there.

There were no men. They were just women. One of those women was Lydia and the Scriptures tell us that she, in verse 14, she was from the city of Thyatira. She was a seller of purple fabrics.

It was meant that she was wealthy and the Lord opened her heart to respond to the things spoken by Paul. Now she's not the only person. If you go down to verse 16, it happened that as we were going to the place of prayer, a slave girl having a spirit of divination met us.

Verse 17, she kept crying out saying, these men are bond servants of the Most High God who are proclaiming to you the way of salvation. Verse 18, she continued doing this for many days and Paul was greatly annoyed.

Now I don't know if that's a spiritual good thing on Paul or not, but he was annoyed and he commanded you there in verse 18, I command you in the name of Jesus to come out of her and it came out at that very moment.

[18:42] So now, this slave girl who was being used by the masters, you got Lydia who's a convert, now you got the slave girl who's a convert, they come and they put Paul in prison, right?

And that night, Paul and Silas, okay, so surely you know the story of Paul and Silas in prison singing songs? What happens when they sing songs?

The prisoners go home. The doors keep open. Yeah, there's an earthquake and the bonds fall off, the doors open up and the Philippian jailer does what? Getting ready to commit suicide.

He's going to commit suicide because he thinks he's going to be killed anyway because the prisoners have escaped on his watch. So, he goes in and he starts to do this and Paul says, don't do anything.

And the Philippian jailer then becomes a convert. So, here's what you have. This Philippian church starts with a wealthy woman, a slave girl, and a Roman jailer.

[19:43] I mean, they could not be more different from one another and yet, here they are together. This is the group. This is where this church starts.

This church that Paul is writing to. These saints. Lydia, you're a saint. Slave girl, we don't know her name, you're a saint. Jailer, you're a saint.

I just think that that is so encouraging because no matter looking back at your past and look at all that you've done, if you are in Christ, you are a saint.

It's just so encouraging to me. Part of the other point that I think is interesting is that as Paul is writing this letter, he is accentuating the local church.

The local church. He is after this local church. So, here's what I believe and I think most Baptists believe the same thing. I believe that there's what you would call the universal church.

[20 : 41] Think of it as an umbrella. This universal church consists of every Christian throughout history as one body of Christ.

It has no organizational structure. I said this one time about the universal church and I had this lady who was called me the next week crying because she felt like that whoever was in charge of the universal church were listening in on her phone conversations and they were tapping her lines and stuff and I was like, it has no structure to it.

Right? It doesn't have a police force. So, a local church like First Baptist Medina is an expression of the universal church and you need to know and believe in both because both are there.

That's why we can have an Easter service with the church across the way or Thanksgiving service because they're a local expression of the universal church.

So, it just accentuates this idea and here, I'm going to say this too, this is not necessarily in Philippians so this is my opinion. I don't think denominations are a bad thing.

[21 : 57] As you begin to look at what a denomination is, a denomination is a group of people who say we believe the Bible says this and they unify and gather together around that.

What happens is that sometimes that unity becomes a dissension against everybody else and that's not a good thing but the denomination if I'm Baptist and somebody's Methodist that ought to sharpen us because we're not necessarily seeing the Bible the same way and so either one of us is not using the proper rules of interpretation or we're using different rules and so we need to talk in love and in grace in order to sharpen one another because if we're not right about what we think about the Bible we shouldn't just stay where we are we should change.

Does that make sense? And so the denominations are good because it gives us that iron sharpening iron kind of a thing. Where it's bad is when we refuse to engage and discuss and do things with one another because there's so much that we can do together we just need to be we just need to be wise about it.

All right let's then talk about shepherds. This is the fourth thing and Paul he's writing to the church there at Philippi and it says including the overseers and deacons overseers and deacons let's talk first about deacons for just a second what's a what's a deacon?

come on does anybody know what the word deacon means?

[23 : 55] Servant Servant a particular kind of servant the doulas was the lowest servant the deacon was a table waiter table waiter yeah so the other person that was bringing the food to the table in Acts chapter 6 you can look at Acts chapter 6 if you want to the apostles were teaching and preaching and some of the widows in the church were being overlooked for the daily distribution of food the particular widows that were being overlooked happened to be Jews Jews who had become kind of enmeshed in Greek culture and so it began to be a big brouhaha in the church people are complaining because this person is getting something and this person is not so the apostles said okay choose six people six men full of the spirit who will meet this need because we don't need to stop preaching the word and the ministry of prayer in order to meet this need so that was the first instance of deacons being selected and their whole goal was to meet the physical needs of the body to give to them this food distribution to make sure they got what they needed that was important but the apostles could not pull off what they were doing to meet this very important thing so it's a great relationship between deacons and then pastors that we'll get to in a second

Jack you look like you're going to say something oh I'm fascinated oh you're fascinated I'm glad you're fascinated choose seven men among you I said six didn't I don't confuse me I'm sorry hey listen always always thank you for that just so you know you can stop me anytime to ask a question and if I said something like that and I even sometimes I'll say you know Philippians 2.14 and it's really you know Ephesians 2.14 correct me that's fine that way everybody else knows that that's the right answer so no problem so alright so that's the deacons that was their responsibility was to do that now overseers these an overseer is a person who has three words okay three words to describe an overseer the first is the word elder elder and I wanted to show you let's see let's be done with that yeah so in

Acts chapter 20 verse 17 from Miletus Paul this he is Paul he sent to Ephesus one church and called to him the elders of that church okay so that's one word used to describe the pastors is elders that is sort of the title of the position okay is to call them elder right so don't worry about thinking about Mormons or anybody else and what they do just get what the Bible is talking about okay so they're called elders there then in Acts 20 verse 28 this is so he's got these elders together and he's teaching them and notice what he says to them as he's got these elders together he says

be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock among you which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers to shepherd the church so here's our three words elders overseer and shepherd you know what the word shepherd is today pastor pastor so it's the title it's the authority and it's the task the title is an elder the authority is an overseer and the task is to shepherd so that's what pastors are supposed to do pastors and deacons work together and what I find fascinating is that Paul is writing this letter not just to the people but to the leadership of that church they have deacons and they have elders and they work together in order to serve the body and then we have the last thing we have the salutation and here's his salutation grace to you and peace from God our father and the Lord Jesus Christ this is grace some people will define grace unmerited favor I think grace is a part of God's love and compassion on undeserving people giving to them what they don't deserve it's a part of his love and compassion giving to undeserving people what they don't deserve and it's a good thing so his grace is giving good things mercy is keeping bad things from you keeping what you deserve from you peace this is peace with God

I mean this is peace from God not peace with God peace with God is when I'm reconciled to him we're enemies and we're all together I have peace with him peace from God is peace that God gives me in the middle of what's going on right these two things then come from the father and the son the triune God is the source of our grace and our peace so that covers pretty much those two verses does anybody have any questions about anything we've talked about so far before we get to our next part of what we're going to do here pretty clear so on the handout that I gave you there's some questions there at the bottom and I'm still sort of trying to think through and struggle about how we approach this in here but I would like for you to take some time to talk to one another about these questions questions so my thought had been that perhaps the two of you could turn around and talk to the two of you and the two of you could turn around and talk to the two of them kind of right here at the table and just in a little small group just kind of hear these questions and go through the questions together and sort of ask them to each other and we'll experiment today and you can let me know how that goes maybe it's not a good way to do this so just give you some time to talk together