

Prayer and Partnership

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[0 : 00] Alright, we're in Philippians chapter 1 verses 3 through 8 and why don't we, I don't think, let me just, let me read for us beginning back at verse 1 just to get the full context here.

And, Paul and Timothy, bondservants of Christ Jesus to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, including the overseers or elders, pastors, right, and deacons.

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. That's verse 1 and 2. So we get to verse 3 today and Paul says, I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, always offering prayer with joy in my every prayer for you all, in view of your participation in the gospel from the first day until now.

For I'm confident of this very thing, that he who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus. For it is only right for me to feel this way about you all, because I have you in my heart.

Since both in my imprisonment and the defense and confirmation of the gospel, you all were partakers of grace with me. For God is my witness, how I long for you all with the affection of Jesus Christ.

[1 : 37] And that's what we'll cover this morning. I want you to think about the idea that Christian discipleship, one of the things that happens when we're trying to disciple one another or we want to see a church grow.

You know, somebody becomes a Christian and now we want them to mature. There is a particular area that often gets assumed and doesn't get talked about and that has to do with our relationship with one another.

How do we feel about one another? What is our attitude towards one another? And as a member of a congregation, you even want to see, so the pastors and the deacons, the other leaders in the church, you want to see them having these kinds of good, positive, proper relationship with everybody.

Because you know that that's going to then filter down. And so how do we do this? I think Paul gives us a great example of the kind of attitudes we should have towards one another.

And there's five of them in our text that we're going to look at. And so we'll just walk through this together. You've got pretty much my outline. So let's see if we can walk through this together.

[2 : 50] The first one, first attitude is that of a thankful heart. Verses 3 through 5. He says, So here's my question for you.

What exactly is Paul thankful for in this passage? What is he thankful for in this passage? Okay, let me just pause real quick before you answer.

This is extremely informal. We're going to look at the text. I'm going to ask a lot of questions about the text. You can give me your answer. If you're wrong, I'm not going to sit here and play the game of like, oh, that's a good answer.

I'm going to say, well, no, actually the answer is blah. But also, if you need to interrupt me and say, wait a minute, you said something, something, and that doesn't sound right, you're more than welcome to interrupt me.

Okay? So it's informal. So my question again is, what is he exactly thankful for? I think he's thankful for his salvation. Okay. And where do you see that in the text?

[4 : 01] I thank my God every time I remember him. Okay. That's very plain to me. Okay. Somebody else. Can we raise our hands or what? No, just speak out.

Just speak out. I'm not going to. I think he is thankful that he has fellow believers. Okay. The fellowship. Mm-hmm.

Right. So where are you getting that from? I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now.

Right. So it's really this idea of their partnership in the gospel. This one's a harder one to look at than a lot of his other writings.

When he says he's thankful for things in his other writings, he's pretty upfront about what he's thankful for. But in this one, he doesn't get to it until he gets to verse 5 when he's talking about their participation in the gospel.

[5 : 00] Let's look at the next question. So to whom is he thankful? This is an easy question. Not a trick question. The answer. Yeah.

He's thanking God. Right? I thank God for your participation in the gospel. And then there's something that he's not really mentioning. He may be thankful for it, but he's not mentioning it. And it happens to be anything about the personal relationship that he has with them. And that's very surprising since you look at verse 7 and 8 and he's talking about I have affections for you.

You're in my heart. But he's not saying I'm thankful for you. I'm thankful for our relationship. He's not thanking God for that at all.

He's thanking God for the participation in the gospel that they're having. That's a very important point as we move further. Yes, ma'am. He's thankful, especially it says here, help me in the work of the gospel.

[6 : 03] He's thankful for his work in the gospel. Yes. Right. He is doing work in the gospel. They're participating with him in that. And we see verse 7, how they were participating.

But his primary thing that he's thankful for is that participation in the gospel. And that's the first thing is he has this thankful heart.

Obviously, we need to have thankful hearts. Let's look at the second thing. Joyful spirit. So in verse 4, he says, Always offering prayer with joy in my every prayer for you all.

So Paul's attitude as he prays is joy. So let's talk for a second. What is joy? What is joy? Besides fish soap?

Gratitude and appreciation. Gratitude and appreciation. Okay. Okay. A thankfulness. A thankfulness. Joy is a thankfulness. Okay. Somebody else?

[7 : 11] A positive spiritual feeling. A positive spiritual feeling. Okay. Try to give me what joy is in relationship to other things.

Like use some other things and kind of say, well, it's like this or it's not like this. How would you say that? Joy is like? My grandkids. Ooh. Ooh. What?

My grandkids. There you go. You know, that's interesting you say that because I'm fixing to use that as an illustration in just a second. So awesome. Did you read my notes? Yes, I did. Okay. Yeah.

So tell us how you think that connection. Well, if you have grandchildren, you know that it's a different type of joy that you felt from having your own.

It's just a different, you just love differently. I can't explain it. And so when you see them, it just brings you joy.

[8 : 08] Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. That's good. That's good. I love the fact that you can't explain it. That's the cool thing about it. Okay. Somebody else? Joy is like or is not like?

Peace. Peace? Okay. Which? Is it like it or not like it? Like it. It's like it. Like having peace in your heart. Okay. Yeah. So I've often heard people talk about joy as sort of this inner calm, right?

That joy is more internal and happiness is more external, right? I have a tendency to think that that's a little too simplistic for the way joy is.

And I go back to the grandkids because, you know, I don't see my grandkids right now at all.

They're not in my view. They're not anywhere close to me. They're at least two hours away, right?

So if I wanted to see them, I've got to do a little bit of work. However, I can just sit here and contemplate grandkids. And I can even contemplate the thought of a grandkid and not a specific grandkid.

[9 : 12] And there's a part of me that just has an internal joy about just the concept of being loved and having someone to love. Then when I begin to think about that particular grandchild and I just think about their smile and I think about the last time that they said grandpa or they said whatever or they gave me a big hug.

That's a part of it too. But then there's another part and that is when I do get to see them and I get to, they run up and they throw their arms around me and I pick them up and I hug them.

There's a part of what's going on where I am expressing that joy that's inside and we call that rejoicing. Okay?

So, what I'm saying all that, I look at what Paul is doing here and Paul is talking a lot about what it is that these Philippians have done for him.

He certainly has a joy in them, but that joy is being expressed because he's looking at how they have given to him, how they have participated in the gospel with him.

[10:27] That is his joy now. He gets to see this because they have helped him. They've sent somebody to him that we'll see in chapter 2 and they've helped him. So, So, one of the things I was going to say in relationship to that is that as we, as we go and we think about how we're to have joy in the Lord and joy in one another, that joy should be then surrounded or fixed upon that participation of the gospel.

That's a part of what is going on here. So, that's the second point. Third point is a gospel focus and I want us to talk about that. You see in verse 5, he says that it's in view.

And let me just say in view is one word in the Greek and what it means is because of, because of. So, he is thankful because of your participation in the gospel.

Okay? Participation in the gospel. The word participation, this is a word that we're familiar with and, let's see if I can find it.

It's, it's *koinonia*, which means an affectionate partnership. This is the word we would normally use if we say the word fellowship. Fellowship. When we say the word fellowship, what do we normally mean?

[12:01] A meal. We're going to get together for a fellowship, which means we're going to have food. Well, that word does not mean food. That word means an affectionate partnership.

So, Paul's looking at the Philippians. He's a missionary and he says, you have had an affectionate partnership with me. We have partnered together.

We've had fellowship in the gospel together. It's the gospel then that glues us together. Let me, let me just talk about this for a second because I think that there's, there's no, no church is ever going to succeed at being used by God for the expansion of the kingdom.

Unless we see ourselves as partners in the gospel together. And let me give you an example of what that would look like. Oftentimes in churches, we have these moments where we're going to have prayer and we take prayer requests.

And many times those prayer requests center upon the physical. There's a physical illness. There's a physical trouble. There's a physical thing.

[13:12] And we have a tendency to couch our prayer requests that way. And that's fine. And that's good. The problem is, is that it takes over and becomes the bulk of our prayer requests.

When you and I both know that every single one of you, you've got kids and grandkids, you've got nieces and nephews, you've got brothers and sisters, you've got people in your life that spiritually are not doing well.

And something will happen and we want to pray for them. And you bring up the physical and that's fine. But part of us fellowshiping together or partnering together in the gospel is for you to take the next step and say, and he needs to hear the gospel.

And she needs to trust Christ more. And she's got a spiritual depression going over her. You see what I'm saying? We need to turn that physical to the spiritual.

And oftentimes, that is the way we end up partnering in the gospel. Because that lets me know, you've got someone in your life that you love, you care for, you're trying to share the gospel with them.

[14:24] You don't know exactly how, but you're burdened for that. And I can share that burden with you. And that's the way we participate in the gospel together. That's a hard transition for a lot of people to make.

Because we're so focused on making sure that we pray for the physical. But we need to be just as sure that we're praying for the spiritual as well. Does that make sense?

Like you've got a teenager that's not listening. Exactly. Exactly. You could say, you know, they're driving to their job today. And it's like, I pray for safety. But inside, you're actually thinking, pray that they repent.

Pray that they see what they're doing. They need to repent. They need to turn back to Christ. They need to stop being rebellious. Sometimes we're scared to say these things. But we need to. Yes.

To participate. Anybody else? Well, like if there's a drug or an alcohol addiction, pray for the addiction. But also, they come to Christ.

[15:22] And once they come to, once with the Holy Spirit inside of them, things become just simpler for them. Right. Right. Because, you know, we could pray all day long that the addiction would end, and that that would no longer be a part of their life.

But if they don't fill that with Christ, Right. What's the use? I just came to the realization that when I'm praying by myself, I'm actually praying spiritually for people.

Right. And something more in a group or whatever it is. Because that's what you say. It's more of the elements and things. I think we're a little nervous about sharing those more spiritual things because they are more intimate to us.

They're, they, sometimes they involve our own fears. And sometimes they involve maybe even a perception that we've done something we shouldn't have done, or we didn't do things in a way we should have done.

So we're scared to share those. But we just can't be scared. Well, I mean, this is, if we can't share those with each other, then we're done. Right. We're just done.

[16:25] We cannot participate. How is it a fellowship if we're not reaching that point? That's exactly right. That's exactly right. Um, all right. So, so then that's the, the focus upon the gospel.

The fourth attitude is a confident hope. And this comes in verse six. And this is going to be surprising, I think maybe to you, depending on what you know about this. But the verse says, for I'm confident of this very thing.

Now let me pause real quick. I'm using the new American standard version. And in my version, uh, this, this phrase right here, is italicized.

Okay. Now this is just to help you as you're reading your Bible. Every English translation will do this, where they will have a portion that's italicized. Do you know what that means?

What that means is that the translators are trying to make this make sense to English readers. But these words have no equivalent in the original language behind the text.

[17:31] Whether it's the Hebrew or the Greek. So in other words, there is no Greek word here that says, for I am. Because that would be gar, I, me. But that's not in the text.

What's in the text is this word confident. And some of, to make sense of how this word is being used, they have to add this other. So if you see italics in your English translation, just know that's not text.

That's translator is helping you. It's not a problem. You just need to know it. And just don't build a doctrine on italicized words. Okay. So he says, for I'm confident of this very thing, that he who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.

Now this is a trick question. It's a hard question. What? Well, before the hard question, what is Paul confident it's going to happen for the Philippians?

They're going to continue it. They're going to continue the good work they've started. Exactly.

Matter of fact, it's going to be perfect. Right? It's going to come to a completion.

[18:38] Okay. Now here's the trick question. Yeah, but Yes? Human nature is intervening and the world is interceding. So how can that, you know, even today, we want everything to be good and great, but we can't get it perfect because the world or the cosmos is out there fighting us all the time.

Great question. Let's read the text again then. Right? He who began a good work in you will perfect it. The it is the good work.

Right? He's, he, it's, it's God who's going to do this and he's going to be perfecting it. All right? So that's the way you need to understand that is perfecting with I-N-G.

So it's a process and he's going to be working on it until the day of Christ Jesus. So the concept is that it is imperfect as Sherry's talking about, but it's, it's gradually getting more perfect and on the day of Christ Jesus when that's over it becomes perfected.

Okay? So, um, great question. Now here's the trick question. The trick question is this. What is the good work? Spreading the gospel.

[19:59] Okay. That, I guess it wasn't so tricky then after all. We'll all get that. Yeah, so, so here's the thing about the term good work that you have to always remember.

A good work is never defined by us, our culture, or things we experience. It's defined by God's word. Right?

So, we have to look in the text itself to figure out what this is and by context we have the right answer now. Right? That's what he's talking about is their participation in the gospel. They're making sure the gospel is spread. That's the good work that Christ started in them and that Christ will perfect in them even all the way to the day of Christ Jesus.

So, one of the things that this means is this, is that when we are saved, when we're saved, when we became Christians, it should produce in us a heart that wants to see the gospel spread.

[21 : 04] Our church supports John and Karen Hines as missionaries. We support others through the cooperative program. But one of the things that being saved ought to produce is a heart that wants to communicate with them, encourage, and push them forward in the ministry that they're doing.

Whatever we can do to help them. And so, if you don't get their updates, then let somebody know so we can get you the updates. But also, be mindful and be praying for them all the time.

But also, we should be praying that God would send more missionaries out from our church community that we can be continually, constantly connecting with and praying for as well.

So there's a promise in this passage and that promise has to do with what we just talked about, the until the day of Christ Jesus. And what I want us to do is I want us to look at several verses through the New Testament that Paul writes that help us to sort of nail down what is this day of Christ Jesus. I've given you several verses there. Let me have several of you just kind of look those up for me.

Somebody, who will take 1 Corinthians 1.8? I'm done. Okay, who will take 1 Corinthians 5.5?

[22 : 24] Okay, who will take 2 Corinthians 1.13-14? Neil? Okay.

Linda, raise your hand. Okay, Neil's got it. Alright, I need Philippians 1.10. Okay, Linda. Philippians 2.16.

Kim? 1 Thessalonians 5.1-2. Michelle? And 2 Thessalonians 2.1-2. I'll read that one. Okay?

Alright, so let's start at the beginning. 1 Corinthians 1.8. Ms. Sherry? Okay, I'm reading from the Women's Bible Study Bible. He will also keep you firm to the end so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Hmm. Okay. So the key in this is that there's going to be a blamelessness for Christians on the day of the Lord Jesus Christ. It's called to the end, right?

[23 : 29] He's going to keep you firm to the end, confirm you to the end. And there's a, there's a sense, kind of a sense that there maybe is a judgment involved in this because of the display of Christians as being blameless.

Okay? So that's all we need to pull out of that for now. Okay, so let's go to 1 Corinthians 5.5. I forgot who had that.

The power of our Lord Jesus Christ delivers such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. Okay, the context of this is church discipline that needed to happen in the Corinthian church.

A guy who was having an affair with his stepmom, Paul was saying this guy should be turned over, delivered to Satan so that he's taught not to sin but that his spirit may be saved.

In other words, you do church discipline in order to make sure people are truly Christians and help them see how to walk, right? But he's saying in this verse that his spirit may be saved in the day of Christ Jesus.

[24 : 31] Again, giving us sort of this end, end of time kind of thing in which there's going to be salvation for some. So you've got this idea again, just a sense, not a direct statement, but just a sense of judgment on the day of Christ Jesus currently.

Alright, 2 Corinthians 1, 13-14. Sorry, I've got problem one here. Forget the electronic.

2 Corinthians 1, 13-14.

Okay. Let me get my eyes adjusted here. Gotcha. I've got it now. Okay. For we write nothing else to you than what you read and understand.

And I hope you will understand until the end. Just as you also partially did understand us, that we are your reason to be proud as you also are ours on the day of our Lord Jesus.

[25 : 55] Okay. So again, you just get a sense that there's some sort of display, something that's going to happen where you get this blamelessness that's coming up, salvation, the idea that Christians can be proud of one another on that day.

And so, there's some sense of, excuse me, some sense of judgment coming on that day. So let's go to Philippians 1, 10. Okay. So that you may be able to discern what is death and may be pure

and blameless until the day of Christ.

Again, the idea of blameless, right? He's wanting you to know how to live so you can be blameless all the way until that day. Blameless, by the way, is the idea of being above reproach.

It's the idea that no one can make an accusation against you because you live your life in such a way that any accusation of that would be ridiculous. All right, let's go to Philippians 2, 16.

Again, Paul is thinking about the work that he's doing there with the Philippians.

[27 : 01] He's talking about that he's worked and he doesn't want it to be in vain and he's going to find out one day on the day of Christ Jesus. So again, an end of time kind of thing, a discerning and a judgment type of thing being looked at here.

Now let's go to 1 Thessalonians 5, 1 and 2. About the times and the seasons, brothers and sisters, you do not need anything to be written to, for you yourselves know very well that the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night.

Okay, now we get something familiar to us. At the end of time, the day of the Lord comes in as a thief in the night. In other words, when you least expect it.

You're not ready for it. It's just going to happen. Okay? So, at that time, which is at the end, there's a sense in which the Christians will be seen as blameless, their salvation comes to an end, the work that they do and the labor they do gets rewarded.

All that's happening then at this day of Christ Jesus. And our last verse is 2 Thessalonians 2, 1 and 2. Now, we request you, brethren, with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him that you not be quickly shaken from your composure or be disturbed either by a spirit or a message or a letter as if from us to the effect that the day of the Lord has come.

[28 : 33] And what Paul does in 2 Thessalonians is he connects the day of the Lord with the coming of the Lord and our being gathered to Him.

And what that is saying to us is that here we are today as we look forward into the future, we're looking for one thing and we're looking for the Lord to return. And when He returns, judgment will happen, reward, salvation.

It's a very simple way of looking at the future. His promise then is that until that day comes, if you're saved, He is going to be working on you, challenging, perfecting you so that the good work of participating in the Gospel is something that comes to a state of completion.

Make sense? This is one of those places where the Bible is not telling you to do something just yet. It's describing what God does and it is from that platform that we then challenge one another and say, so, participate together in the Gospel and ministry.

Take up and fellowship with one another. See, what we could do is we could say things like this. Do you know how when people are lost and dying and going to hell and if you don't say something to them, then it's on you.

[30 : 03] And then, how much guilt does that bring? You're kind of like, oh my goodness, that's not what Paul does. That's not how Paul approaches it. Paul says, this is the work of God in you.

He's shaping you and forming you. So from this, continue. To live this out. Because we can't do what we're supposed to do from a place of human guilt.

We have to do what we're supposed to do from a place of the Gospel work in us. And that's a very different thing. Any questions on that point?

That was a very lengthy point, but I just wanted us to talk about the day of the Lord. You good?

Okay. Well then, let's look at this last thing and then I'll let you have some discussion.

An affectionate love for one another. He says, for it's only right for me to feel this way about you all because I have you in my heart since both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the Gospel, you're all partakers of grace with me.

[31 : 10] Why is Paul right to feel these things for the Philippians? What does he say? Why? It's right for me to feel this way because why?

Yes. Listen, my questions are simple. They're right out of the text. Okay? Nothing too crazy. Because I have you in my heart.

Now, why does he have them in his heart? Since in both imprisonment and defense and confirmation of the Gospel, it's an extremely long title of that, you are all partakers of grace with me. what unifies a church? The sharing of grace. The sharing of grace.

The sharing of grace. It is not having grown up in the same town. It is not having the same political views.

[32 : 28] values. It is not being a long time member of the church or holding the same moral values.

What unites us is the grace and Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. Be united around anything else and we're just a good organization that does good things.

be united around the grace and Gospel of Christ and we are a church. And that's how we should feel about each other.

This partnership in the Gospel it's all about coming in and saying listen, how can we help the Heinz? How can we help the pastor?

How can we help one another? Who are you praying for? Who are you praying for? Who do you need to share the Gospel with? And then some people coming in going like I need to share the Gospel but I don't know how.

[33 : 30] Somebody please help me. And then we all come together and we pray for one another, we encourage one another, we equip one another. It's the Gospel that binds us.

It's not anything else. All those other things it's great if you've got connections in those ways but let's focus on the Gospel. Any questions about any of that?

Any questions at all? Okay, so at the bottom of your handout I've got three questions for you. So if you want to turn or connect with people right behind you or if you want to come up from behind to up front for y'all can take a few moments to talk about these questions together and then we'll close in a work prayer.

Thank you.