

Philippians: The Book of Joy (Phil. 1:3-11)

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Preacher: Scott Liddell

[0 : 0 0] Thank you, Brett. Thank you, worship team. And good morning, church. Please know that I feel great, but my voice has not caught up with how I feel.

And so if I have a little bit of a frog in my throat, please bear with me today. Today, if you're new with us, we're looking what Paul the Apostle has to say to the church at Philippi.

And so we find ourselves in the book of Philippians for this winter and springtime. We'll have several months studying this book of the Bible, and so I encourage us the passage that Brett just read from is the passage that we will be preaching from. And today we're going to be answering the question and hearing what kind of church would we, what kind of church would it be that would excite your engagement? Like, I want to participate in that kind of church.

What kind of church would it be that you would want to attend by virtue of its activities? What would a church need to be doing for you to be excited about being engaged in that kind of church?

What kind of activities would solicit your personal and ongoing involvement? And what kind of church would it be that you would want to tell your neighbors, you ought to come with me. I attend this church.

[1 : 3 4] What kind of church would it be that would, you would want your full participation, that would solicit your full participation and involvement? Paul, in writing to the church at Philippi, we can, he addresses them in a way, and we can tell there are some things and attributes about that church and the way he prays for them and he feels about them. There's things that they're doing that ought to be of encouragement for us and ought to be of a time of reflection for us to say, is this a part of who Fourth Memorial Church is? And may we grow in these ways that we will find today.

But here's the big idea. If you're a note taker, the big idea would be this. If I had to take a stab at it, I would say, a church that pleases God by remaining in partnership with Christ. That's the kind of church I want to be a part of. It's a church that pleases God by remaining in partnership with Christ.

So today, in our message today, we're going to look at five ways that this church at Philippi is in partnership with Christ. And so we're going to look at the first one right now. I'm going to look at the prescript to this letter that Pastor Jay talked about last week, verses one and two, Paul and Timothy.

Servants of Christ Jesus to the saints in Christ Jesus who are at Philippi with the overseers and the deacons, grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. This prescript, verses one and two, it's a greeting. And Pastor Jay did a great job of sharing with us who the authors are, Paul and Timothy. And Pastor Jay helped us orient us to who the audience is of this letter, to the church at Philippi. Pastor Jay helped us introduce some of the initial members of this church, of Lydia and the Philippian jailer and the slave girl. Jay helped us understand where is Philippi physically located in the Roman Empire. And all of this is very important. And lastly, Jay emphasized that these individuals saw themselves as bondservants of Christ, and that is the root and the source of their joy. All of this is very important. But I want us to see one other thing about verses one and two that indicate to us that a church that pleases God by reminding in partnership with Christ, what is one of those things that is, how do we remain in partnership with Christ is that we we would make much of Jesus. Look with me in verses one and two. There's a name that is mentioned more than any other name. Paul and Timothy, servants of Jesus Christ, Christ Jesus, to the saints of Christ

Jesus. And then in verse two, grace to you and peace from God, our Father, the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul and Timothy, this is very interesting, that they're only known in their relationship to Christ Jesus. Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ. That's who we're associated to. That's the only thing that you need to know about me, Paul and Timothy. We're servants of Christ. And then he says to the church, to the saints in Christ Jesus. So not only the author is only known in terms of his relationship, their relationship with Christ Jesus, but also the audience, the one who this letter is written to, they're only known as in terms of their relationship to Christ Jesus. Paul is making much of Christ in this letter. And he is only associating people in relationship to the person of Christ. That church pleases God is a church that must make much of Jesus. Situational comedies, sitcoms are sometimes funny. What makes the sitcom funny is they often make much of dude about nothing. You know, a doorknob turns this way, not that way, and they'll make a whole half hour show about that. And it's, they make a much ado about nothing. That's what in part makes a sitcom so funny. However, Paul is not making much ado about nothing. He's making much ado about the person to whom all glory and honor is due.

[6 : 25] And is that true of you and me? Do we make much of Christ in our lives? I think there are some in this room that may make much ado about politics. There may be others in the room that make much ado about physical ailments. Just listen to us. There may be others in this room that make much ado about our children. There may be some in this room that make much ado about their future hopes and dreams. And all we have to do is just listen to ourselves. What is it that we make much ado about? Who?

Is Jesus the preoccupation of our mind? Is Jesus the preoccupation of our words? Is he the preoccupation of our actions? Is he the preoccupation of the posture of our heart? I want to make much ado about Christ.

Christ. And it's, and I love how Paul opens that he just says, listen, I'm only relating, you only know me because I'm a bondservant of Christ and you yourselves, saints at Philippi, you're, you're, I'm only addressing you as in terms of your relationship to Christ because we must be a church that makes much of Christ. I find it interesting that there's another way that Paul makes much of Christ and it's in the inclusive language that he has with regard to the word all in this passage. If you want to quickly look with me in verse three, it says, I thank my God in all of my remembrance of you. Verse four, always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy. It is verse seven. It is not 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. And verse eight, how I learned yearn for you all.

I love that when we were introduced to this letter at Phil to fit the church at Philippi, we were introduced to the whole family of people who are in Christ. What, what, what is it that they have in common that Paul is writing to this church? What is it that they have in common is that they have in common the person of Christ. They are all in Christ.

It is the primary identity, the early adopters of the message of Christ that, that Paul or that Jay shared with us last week back in Acts chapter 16. We have this wealthy Asian businesswoman Lydia.

[8 : 59] We have this impoverished Greek slave girl. We have this Roman citizen who is the, who worked as the jailer. What do they all have in common? There's not much those three individuals have in common, but what they do have in common is that they are all in Christ.

What kind of church pleases God is the one who partners with Christ. Their collective center, if you will, wasn't their common interest. Their collective center was not the principle of homogeneity. I should have chosen a better word, an easier word. Their, their, their collective center was not diversity.

Their, their collective center was that they were united in Christ. That was their collective center. And so Paul writes to them all because they all have something in common and that was Christ.

I want to be a part of a church that pleases God by remaining in partnership with Christ. And one of the ways we do that is we make much of Jesus. Secondly, a church that pleases God by remaining in partnership with Christ is a church that possesses a deep affection for one another. Look with me in verses, in verse seven. There's a phrase I want to call our attention to in verse seven.

Listen to Paul's words. It is right for me to feel this way about you. He, and it's this, this feeling that he's referring to is this strong affection. And we'll get to that here in a minute.

[10 : 31] Because I hold you in my heart. For you are all partners, partakers with me of grace, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel.

But notice he says, I hold you in my heart. There's a textual debate here of this phrase. Is this, is this Paul having affection in his heart for the church at Philippi?

Or is this the church at Philippi having affection in their heart for Paul? And there is a textual debate there. And I don't care to get into it before I am woefully underqualified to even enter the debate.

But what I do want to say is speak to is the solution. Does it matter if it is Paul that has this love for the church or the love that the church may have for Paul?

May I argue it is just both. This church held a deep affection for one another. Imagine being a part of a church where the members held each other in their heart with deep affection for one another.

[11 : 36] Where you did not have to prove yourself. Where it didn't matter how long you have attended that church. Where things that we may observe don't matter.

One's socioeconomic standing or other things that are observable about one's person. Whether you're going to be accepted by that.

It doesn't matter. All that matters among us is that we are all in Christ. And as a result of being in Christ we should have this deep affection for one another.

As Paul had for the church at Philippi. And we'll get into the reason for his deep affection in a minute. But also look with me in verse 8. Look with me in verse 8. For God is my witness how I yearn for you all with the affection of Christ.

Look at the word yearn. It's this amazing word. It's an evocative term by intent. And the relationship that Paul had for the people at Philippi.

[12 : 39] It's more than a cursory affection or perfunctory affection. A symptom of perhaps a cursory affection for one another. I have a behavior in churches that I don't care for.

There may be extenuating circumstances for why this exists. So I'm not ascribing a motive to everyone. But I would love a church that arrives 15 minutes early to everything and leaves 15 minutes after.

Why? Because if this is what you came for and you came to this service, let's imagine. Is there any opportunity to demonstrate one's affection for the other if you just come right on time and you leave right after?

That's really hard. I don't know how you do that if you're able to. I know I get poked fun by the staff of my little phrase, linger longer.

Please, linger longer. And they poke fun at me and say, no one talks like that, Scott. And so, but what is in my linger longer phrase that I so enjoy is I want to have opportunity to demonstrate and visit with individuals to demonstrate my affection for them.

[14 : 15] So I want to linger longer even though no one talks like that. But why is it now?

Thirdly, there's another cue that there's this deep affection for people. It's not only found in the word yearn. It's not only that Paul has them in his heart, but it's also in verse 8 we see after yearn.

We say, for God is my witness how I yearn for you with all the affection of Christ. What kind of yearning does he have? And that word yearning is this longing to see someone face to face.

Imagine if we were in the military and someone was deployed on deployment. They were deployed overseas. And there would be a longing for that person overseas to see their family face to face.

And there would be a longing for the family to see the one, their loved one that has now been deployed. And there would be this longing to see each other face to face. And that longing though, that yearning would be with the affection of Christ he's saying here.

[15 : 24] That is the affection, the longing that he has is to love them with the affection that Christ had. And you say, well Scott, how do we see Christ having this affection?

This word affection is used in the New Testament and the Gospels of Christ when he has this affection for people. It says, he looked over the masses and described them as sheep without a shepherd.

And the Lord's heart was broken for this and he had such affection for them. So he had this affection with longing care for them. He had this affection that was with longing compassion for them as sheep without a shepherd.

It's the affection that longs to meet real, tangible, personal, emotional, spiritual, social, physical needs. And Paul writes to the church at Philippi and he has that kind of affection for them.

And a church that pleases God by participating with Christ is witnessed through their expression of a deep affection that is found only in Christ.

[16 : 33] Thirdly, so we have, we want to be a church that pleases God by remaining in relationship with Christ. We see that a church that makes much of Christ.

We see a church with a deep affection for one another that is found in Christ. And then thirdly, a church's commitment in advancing the gospel of Jesus. Look with me in verses 5 and 7.

Paul in verses 3 and 4 is thanking them as a church and remembering them in prayer. And then in verse 5, we have this, we understand why he has affection for them.

And in two verses, we have the word because. And I'm going to look at the word because. In verse 5, we say, because of your partnership in the gospel from this day now, from this day until now.

From the first day until now. And then in verse 7, we read, it is right for me to feel this way about you because. So we're getting into the motive of why he has affection for them.

[17 : 43] I hold you in my heart for you are all partakers with me of grace. That's one reason. Both in my imprisonment and in the defense and the confirmation of the gospel.

That you are, Paul has this deep affection for this church at Philippi because he's certain of their partnership in the gospel. They are caring about one reason, one thing.

Paul's heart's devotion and affection was directed to the church at Philippi because of their dedication and advancing the gospel. Paul's heart's devotion and affection for this church at Philippi because of their gospel.

If you say, Scott, I don't know if I have that kind of affection for my neighbor. What would you say to me? I would say all of our affection and dedication will grow for one another as our dedication to Christ.

That's what I'm saying to you. That's what I'm saying to you. That's what I'm saying to you. That's what I'm saying to you. And I want that for us. Let me give you an example. Let's assume I am just known as a person who just lives for himself, thinks about himself, lives for himself, and all that.

[19 : 08] And I'm in the church. I'm sitting next to you in a pew, and that's who I am. I'm just all about me. Now, I pray this would be a fictitious example. And you had another neighbor sitting next to you where they are excited about what the Lord is doing in their life.

They love the Lord, and they don't envision their life about them but about Christ. Their only association is about Christ. And they're sharing with you what the Lord is doing around them in their neighborhood as they proclaim the Christ.

Who do you probably naturally will have affection for? It's not hard to understand. And because we exist as a people of God, because of what Christ has done in our lives, grateful unto the Lord for his life, death, and resurrection by which we have salvation, him choosing us, he is our very life, and we can't help but testify about him.

So if there's someone who isn't, it's hard to comport that. Paul sees the church at Philippi sharing something in common with him, and that is their labor in making Christ's name known.

They are partners. They are sharers. They are contributors in this work of making Christ's name known. This last year, this last year in 2024, Fourth Memorial Church, I'm just going to, among other things, and that phrase is very key because I'm going to spotlight a few things, but please know I'm not encapsulating our whole year just by the things that I mention.

[20 : 56] And so there's people and things that I'm not mentioning, so the phrase, among other things, is really important. Okay. Among other things, we saw and we sent Tyler and Karis and Sabina to a foreign land to proclaim the gospel to a people who have never heard Christ.

Isn't your affection for them strong? Because that's what they, they're setting their whole life out to go do.

Secondly, you, Fourth Memorial Church, we together had the opportunity to give generously and sacrificially to a REACH initiative.

One of the purposes of the REACH initiative was to get some funding, which was a capital campaign, in case you're new with us today, to get some monies together so that we could plant a church, so that we could see the name of Christ proclaimed on the South Hill up in the Moran Prairie.

And don't, doesn't your heart's affection, and by the way, I met with Eric this last week, and someone came to Christ this last month at Lampstand Gospel Church, their first convert.

[22 : 16] Isn't that enough? Whatever sacrifice we gave, someone's eternity has been changed because a church was planted. And you've got to be a part of that by giving.

And so isn't your heart well up with affection for those who went? And the privilege we had to give generously to partner with them in that.

When, and today, sitting with us, Rich and Joyce, I saw you. Rich and Joyce Maddox, would you please raise your hand? Rich and Joyce Maddox are later this month going to return to Papua New Guinea.

This is their last time likely with us before they depart. And they are doing the work of some Bible translations so that the revelation of God himself is accessible to a people who can now know and learn and grow.

And a church can be beyond one generation because this word now will go in that language among those peoples. and isn't your heart's affection for Rich and Joyce Maddox grow because you think, keep going.

[23 : 43] Proclaim his name. Do the work of the gospel. And Paul is writing to the church at Philippi and he's telling them the reason for his affection in verse 5, because of your partnership in the gospel.

That's why I feel so strongly about you. That's why I have such deep affection for you. So I have a few concerns for us at 4th.

First, our love may grow cold. We can become a pretty sterile and lifeless church if we deem the cost ever too high to say in our hearts, let's not be evangelistic as a people.

Let's not, the cost was too high to plant a church. It cost too much money. We sent some of our best people, our best, the cost was too high. Let's not do that again.

The cost is too high to send missionaries. The cost is too high to do this. We should never do that again. If we do that and we are no longer partnering in the gospel, do you see how our love can grow cold?

[25 : 01] It's quite the contrary. Since this is true in God's word, let us continue to revitalize existing churches. Let us send out missionaries. Let us strengthen churches.

Let us plant churches. And the Lord continue to regain strength here at Forth so that we may do it more and more and more in the future. That's what our aim ought to be.

But I'm concerned that we would never get there in our hearts to say the cost is too high. Let's not do that. Paul says again, because of your partnership in the gospel, from the first day until now, you have been about proclaiming Christ's name.

My second concern is this, that we would see missionaries and church planters and pastors as somehow in a category altogether different than ourselves with the responsibility of reaching the lost and proclaiming the gospel.

You are in your context, in your neighborhood, in your workplace, in your school, in your family, an ambassador of Jesus Christ.

[26 : 11] There is no special category of Christians that are without the responsibility to proclaim his name.

we share this same responsibility and so we two together are partners, sharers, contributors, and our mutual love for each other increases because we all share this responsibility.

Whatever place you are at in the city of Spokane. So I'm going to mention more names, but I'm going to say among others, among others, I recognize there are others.

Among others, where is Audra Packer on Wednesday evening, discipling ladies on Wednesday night? Where is Jean Tasha on Wednesday morning with some men in a men's huddle, discipling men?

Where are the children's teachers on Sunday mornings at nine o'clock, sharing the gospel, declaring the unimaginable wonders of Christ to children?

[27 : 30] These timeless truths. And where are you each week? Right where the Lord has you, in your neighborhood, in your school, in your workplace, at home, laboring with this mutual commitment to make Christ known.

and as a result, what happens with and for one another is our affection for one another increases. We want to be a church that pleases God by remaining in partnership with Christ.

We are in partnership with Christ by making much of Jesus, possessing a deep affection for one another, being a church committed to the advancement of the gospel, and fourthly, making progress spiritually until the day of Christ Jesus.

Look with me in verse six. This is probably the most common verse of all in our text that is memorized. Paul says, 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.

We want to be a church that makes progress until the day of Christ. Paul is writing, acknowledging to the church at Philippi, I may have planted you as a church with the first converts, the Philippian jailer, with Lydia, with the slave girl.

[29 : 01] I may have been responsible for planting this church, but let me tell you something though that I recognize it is that God began this church. Because in this verse we read, I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you, he's not speaking of himself, he's speaking of Christ.

Christ who began a good work in you, your salvation is owed to Christ. He's the one who drew you unto himself. And so, Paul says, he who began this good work in you, that is the past.

We'll bring it to completion, we'll bring it, that is present, to completion at the day of Christ Jesus, that's the future. And so, Paul, I love, we just want to be a part of a church and encourage this church at Philippi that is just making progress.

Not one of us is perfect. We are in a continuum of maturity. we will often quote verses and this is a good one to memorize in 2 Peter 3.18.

We want to grow in the grace and the knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. We want to grow in the grace and the knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. And all of us are on that trajectory together.

[30 : 23] So, what kind of church would solicit your involvement knowing that we are growing in the grace and the knowledge of Jesus Christ together is part of it. Oh, to be a church of unfinished work knowing what completion looks like.

There's a glory in the journey currently. My wife and I decided to put an egress window in our basement to do that just for fun.

And, and, and, and as a result, there's been a lot of disruption on my property.

There's, there's dirt now to dig the hole for the egress window. There's dirt where it doesn't belong. There's bushes where it doesn't belong. There's concrete where, places where it doesn't belong to cut out the concrete.

And then, on the inside of the house, there is dust where it doesn't belong. Uh, there is, um, things in places that don't belong.

[31 : 24] And there's a massive cleanup work. And then, Wendy and I have decided we're gonna paint the whole basement to just, to put this place back together. And so, I'm not looking forward to painting.

Um, I'd rather have a root canal. And so, uh, that's how much I don't really care for painting. But, what motivates me in the process is envisioning the end product.

That's what motivates me. I can envision what this basement will look like with the window and fresh paint. And it's gonna be great. And so, I will paint. And it's motivating for me.

But we know the end result for us. 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.

There's the completed work. We will one day see him as he is. And the work that he began in us to mature us like Christ and be like him will one day occur.

[32 : 37] And it motivates us to be, to work with the Lord and what he's doing in our lives. So, a healthy church, what does a church look like?

It's making progress, spiritual progress, until the day of Christ Jesus. And lastly, I want to be a church that pleases the Lord by remaining in partnership with him.

The last element to that is what does remaining in partnership look like to Christ is a church where prayers for the church are accompanied only through Christ.

Look with me in verses 9-11. And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more with the 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 the praise of God.

I love Paul when he says, so this is my prayer. He opens this part saying this is my prayer in verses 4. I thank God in all my remembrance for you in verse 3 and verse 4 and always in every prayer of mine for you making prayer my prayer with joy.

[34 : 01] He's been praying for this church and there's two things that I see in this prayer that he desires. He's praying for their faith that they would approve that which is excellent that we would be a people that would take the Lord at his word.

When temptation comes into our life we say, Lord, what do you say about this? And we take thoughts captive and we simply take the Lord at his word.

And then secondly, Paul prays for their fruit and we see that so to be pure and blameless in the day of Christ. There's a lot of fruit actually mentioned in his prayer.

I'm just articulating one aspect of it. So what happened in the church at Philippi when they gathered to pray? It's the same thing that can happen to us when we gather to pray.

Their love for each other abounds more and more as they are committed to the advancing of the gospel of Jesus Christ. And the affection for the Lord increases and their affection for one another increases.

[35 : 11] And next Wednesday on the 22nd we're going to have a prayer and praise service. We have these about quarterly. In addition to a regular Sunday morning prayer there's other prayer meetings that occur on a weekly basis here at the church but we're going to have a prayer and praise service and in visiting with Jay and some of the other staff we just want to gather and commit this next year to the Lord.

And our prayers will not be all that together different for us. Our prayers will be to pray that our faith remains strong that we would be a people who take God at His word. And we would be a people who would pray for the fruit of our church that we would live holy lives.

It's not going to be very flashy just praying what God's word says to pray for each other and one another. That's all we're going to do and sing songs of praise.

But you say well Scott what's the result of that? It's the same result that Paul has for this church at Philippi as they partner in the gospel of Jesus Christ as they make much of Christ as they have confidence this is what your life is about what happens to all of us our affection for one another grows and our affection for the Lord grows and I desire for that.

I want to be a part of a church like that and so I'm grateful to have this opportunity here shortly on the 22nd to pray with you. I want to conclude with a statement of gratitude.

[36 : 52] Once a month on a Wednesday evening there's about 40 elders throughout the city of Spokane and several churches that partner to do a collective elder training here in our church in the lower level.

We have a building that's centrally kind of located in Spokane so we use our building and I'm grateful that we get to do this and I want you to know of something that's happening in our building once a month and there's five pastors in the room five churches with some elders in each of them and there's about 40 men in the city of Spokane who are preparing themselves to serve one day as an elder and there's a training process involved in that and there's some men from 4th attending that as well and I'm grateful my wife always mentions to me when I come home you seem happy tonight apparently I don't seem happy all that often when you have to note it it's like okay I'm so sorry so you seem happy tonight and I've noticed when I go home on that evening how encouraged I am and I think what is happening on that evening we're partnering for the gospel's sake to train up men that the gospel would be faithfully communicated in this city through other churches and I love partnering in the gospel in this way and every night

I go home I'm like I'm so encouraged I am so encouraged and I already have an affection for these pastors and these men but my affection every time I'm with them grows and increases each night and I want that that's the kind of church I want to be a part of a church that pleases God by remaining in partnership with Christ makes much of Jesus is a church that possesses a deep affection for one another the reason for that deep affection for one another is a commitment to advancing the gospel of Christ fourthly it's a church that makes progress until the day of Christ Jesus spiritual progress maturing and then lastly it's just the church that prays for the work of God to be accomplished but only through Christ to his glory and honor and praise alone not our own

I'm grateful for you church and I love you and let me pray Father help us to grow into this church where we we want to be pleasing to you and we want to be remain in partnership with what you are doing in our lives individually in this city together corporately but also around the world may we may we not neglect our responsibilities Lord I pray that we would pray we pray as a church help us to become more of a praying church to to see that your great the greatness of your name be proclaimed among the nations use us Lord in our neighborhood use us Lord in our families use us at school use us in our workplaces would you do that

Lord may we be as a church found faithful thank you Lord for these being a part of a body where I pray our affection for one another and our affection for you increases as our commitment to you does we love you and thank you amen amen forNING