

Introduction to Philippians

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Date: 21 January 2018

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[0 : 00] When I would have you to God's blessing, I want us to turn to the letter of Paul to the Philippians, in chapter 1. Philippians chapter 1, that's on page 1179 in the Pew Bibles.

I'm taking your text from verses 1 and 2. Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are at Philippi, with the overseers and deacons, grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Well, when we come to study an epistle such as this epistle, it's important for us to remember that what we are looking at, what we are considering, what we are studying is a real letter written by a real person to real people in a real place at a specific time in history.

And I say this because as we study the Bible, we are perhaps apt to detach ourselves from the historical reality of the words that we are reading.

But you know, there was a day in a Roman prison when this letter was penned for the first time with ink. And there was a day in a church in Philippi, perhaps in a house, when this letter was read aloud for the first time to its intended audience.

[1 : 41] And if we are going to benefit from these letters, we are going to benefit from the Bible even as we ought to, then we must translate ourselves into the context. We must translate ourselves as it were into Paul's prison.

Or we must translate ourselves into that church in Philippi. In the time that we have this evening, I want really just to look at this introduction to the letter of the letter to the Philippians.

And in doing so, I want us to consider the senders of the letter and the recipients of the letter. And finally, and briefly really as a conclusion, the blessing in verse 2, but mostly in verse 1, where we have the senders and the recipients of this letter.

Firstly, then, the senders, we are told Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus. They're the senders. Now, I refer to them as the senders rather than the authors, because it's clear that Paul, the apostle Paul, is the sole author here.

It's clear throughout the letter by the fact that he uses the first person singular. He's always speaking of I and me and my. He's not speaking in the plural, as if speaking for himself and Timothy.

[2 : 57] But not only that, it's clear that Paul is the only writer and that he actually speaks about Timothy in the letter. He makes references to him. He gives instructions to how the Philippians are to treat him.

So we're to understand Paul as the author of this letter. And we are to understand Timothy, who, of course, was well known to the church in Philippi, who was there when the church was founded, who was liked and loved by the church, and who himself liked and loved the church.

We are to understand that he is, as it were, adding his weight to what Paul is saying, putting his amen to it. The letter was written, it's believed, during Paul's first imprisonment in Rome, which is probably between 60 AD and 62 AD.

And when he was in prison this time, he wrote four letters, the epistle to the Ephesians, the epistle to the Colossians, to the Philippians, and also to Philemon or Philemon.

And when he was in prison this time, his terms were more relaxed. He was, as it were, under house arrest in the Imperial Guard. The Praetorian seems to have been a Roman palace of sorts, where prisoners were held, certainly in part of the palace.

[4 : 10] And it's clear that Paul had a measure of liberty, because people were able to come and see him. Epaphroditus, we read of him in this letter, he came to see him. Timothy is with him.

At different times, Luke and Mark seem to have been with him in the prison. But although Paul has a liberty, yet it's very evident that he is in danger, and that he knows he is in danger, that he is in

danger of his life, that the chances are that he won't get out of this prison.

There's a chance that he will. But also he comes to say, well, for me to live is Christ, but to die is gain. So whatever happens to me, I will be content with it.

And so he's in prison, and he's in danger of his life, and he's writing to this church in Philippi. And as he writes, he uses the standard letter-writing etiquette of the day of the first century.

Now, we write letters, don't we? And we put the name of the recipient at the top of the letter, then we write the body of the letter, and then we sign it with our own name.

[5 : 16] But that's not the way that they would write letters in the first century. In the first century, the first thing that you would do in your letter would be to name yourself, and then the second thing that you would do would be to name the person that you were writing to.

So the person that received the letter could look at it, and straight away, before they write any of the information in it, they knew who it had come from, and who it was for. And this was the standard writing of the day.

This would be followed by a greeting, or a blessing, that's what we have in verse 2. And then a thanksgiving, or a prayer of some sort. And then after that, you would have the body of the letter.

And then it would conclude with greetings, perhaps, and a farewell. What Paul does in this letter, and indeed in all of his letters, is this. He takes the structure.

He takes the structure of the day, and he Christianizes it. He fills it with gospel truth. And we'll see this even in the first two verses, as we look at them.

[6 : 17] Now, Paul and Timothy, servants of Jesus Christ, Paul and Timothy were known in Philippi. We read in Acts 16, that's why we read Acts 16.

Most of what happened there, happened in Philippi. He saw a man in a vision, calling him into Macedonia. And that's where Philippi was. It was, and still is, in the northern part of Greece, near Thessalonica.

But they make their journey there. It's their first trip into Europe. And there he formed the church. And the people there, they knew him to be an apostle. They knew him to be one who spoke with God's authority.

He was a leader that they trusted. He was an apostle. He was a great man in their eyes. He was their minister. He was their founder. He was the one who brought to them the truth of the gospel. And yet it's interesting to see how he refers to himself, isn't it? How Paul refers to himself, and indeed to Timothy. Not as apostles, but as servants.

[7 : 19] Literally, the word means slaves. You see, although the Philippians looked to him as a father, and as a guide in matters of faith, yet Paul and Timothy knew themselves to be slaves and not masters.

To be servants and not kings. They were slaves. They were slaves of Christ Jesus. Now, we think of that word, don't we? We think of the word slave.

And what do you think of when you think of that word? You probably think of involuntary service. You probably think of forced subjection or harsh treatment.

You think of the slave trade. You think of segregation and discrimination. You think of inhumane bigotry. But that's not the connotations necessarily of the word in scripture.

I'm not saying that there weren't slaves who were mistreated in these days. Of course, there probably were. But generally, this word is used as a normal term.

[8 : 23] It's often used positively. Slaves were an accepted part of first century society. They were generally well-treated people. They were paid generally. They were respected.

The chances are, in fact, it's 99% sure that there were slaves in the church in Philippi. However, the fundamental characteristic of a slave and the difference between a slave and just a normal hired servant was this.

That if you were a slave, you weren't your own. You weren't your own. You didn't belong to yourself. You had been bought by your master. You belonged to your master.

You were his. And as such, you owed him your allegiance and you owed him your service because you were his possession. That's perhaps difficult for us to get our heads around in 21st century society.

But that's the way it was. That was the accepted norm. Now, Paul uses this terminology as he so often does. He takes things from the day to day, things that he sees and he applies them to the Christian life.

[9 : 34] And what he does here is he applies this term slave to the Christian's relationship with God. And what he sees is he sees that God is the master and the Christian is the slave.

God is the king and the Christian is the servant. What has caused this relationship? What has caused this bond to be formed between God and the Christian?

Between the master and the slave? Between the king and the servant? Well, there's two main things. And the first of them we find is in 1 Corinthians 6 and verse 19.

Where we read there of the Christian that he is bought with a price. God has bought the Christian. What has God bought the Christian with?

Well, not with corruptible things such as silver and gold but with the precious blood of Christ as of a lamb without spot and without blemish.

[10 : 35] That was the price. If you're a Christian today, that was the price of your ownership. That was the cost to God. It was the shedding of the blood of his own son. And because Christ has bought you by dying for you.

Therefore, you are the slaves of Jesus Christ. You are the possession of God and you serve him as such. You are a slave. You are his willing slave because you are not your own.

You are owned by God. But there's another aspect to Christian slavery, if I could call it that, which we can't ignore. And that's that this is a voluntary slavery.

The Christian is a slave because he wants to be a slave. The service of the Christian slave is voluntary. He is willing. Now, voluntary slavery to us, it might sound like a paradox.

But to the Christian, it's a reality. And it's based upon this. It's based upon the fact that the love of Christ, as a Christian, the love of Christ, it constrains you.

[11 : 41] It constrains you to do what? Well, when you look and when you see that Christ has died for all his people, then you think to yourself, well, I ought not henceforth to live unto myself.

Who then shall I live for? If Christ has died for me, well, I shall live for him who died for me and who was raised again unto life. I will live for Christ.

And so I will be his slave. I will willingly serve him. I will put myself under his yoke. I will do it willingly because I am constrained by his love.

Because his love has taken possession of my mind and my heart. And I can do nothing else but to serve him. And so to summarize, Paul and Timothy's slavery, it's based really upon two things. It's based upon Paul's, God's buying them for himself. And it's based upon their love-constrained desire to serve him.

[12 : 43] It is an obligatory thing. They must do it. They belong to another. They belong to God. But it's also voluntary. They desire to serve their beloved.

You know, you might be here tonight and you're not a Christian. And one of the reasons that you're not a Christian is because you just don't want everything that goes along with it. You don't want the Christian life.

You want to go to heaven, but you don't want to be under Christ's yoke. You want to go to glory, but you don't want to have to go to church three times a week. But you see, the thing is, when you become a Christian, not only do you have an obligation under God because you belong to himself, but the Spirit of God plants a willingness in your heart so that you want nothing more than to serve Christ.

You want nothing more than to be in fellowship with a believer. You want nothing more than to be in the house of God where he is worshipped. It's a natural thing for you. It's a natural thing for you to want to live the Christian life.

And of course, you will fail. Who does not fail? Every Christian fails. There is no perfect Christian. And yet, there is this desire to be holy.

[14 : 00] There is this desire to do the will of God. There is this desire to serve God. And so, when you pray for God to convert you, you're not only praying that he might take you to heaven, you are praying that he might change you.

That he might plant this principle of love and of service in your heart. And when he does so, when he does so, you will be willing. And you will know God not only as your Savior, but you will know him as your Lord.

And you will love it. And of course, what is true of Paul and Timothy is true of every Christian. If you're in Christ tonight, then you are all slaves of Jesus Christ.

And as a slave, it is, as we have been saying, it is your greatest desire to serve Christ where you are. It is your desire to be obedient to your Master. Your ultimate goal in life is to be of service to the Creator and to the Redeemer who owns you.

Your great objective in life, is it not, is to do the will of Christ who you love. And you know, that was in Christ's design when he redeemed you.

[15:07] He didn't just redeem you to take you to heaven to be with himself, but he redeemed you that you might serve him here. What do we read of Christ? Well, we read that he gave himself for us. Well, why did he give himself for us?

That he might redeem us from all iniquity. Why? Well, that he might purify to himself a peculiar or a special people, sellers of good works.

Sellers of good works. He redeemed you that you might be pure, that he might purify unto himself a special people. But he also redeemed you that you might have a seal to do good works, a seal for service, a seal to serve God.

Do you know that desire in your heart, in your heart of hearts tonight, when you search yourself, when you search your mind and your soul, do you know that desire to serve Christ where you are, to serve him in your personal life, to serve him in your home, to serve him in your workplace, to serve him in your social life, to serve him here in the church?

Do you know that desire? And if you do, then how does it manifest itself? You see, being a slave of Christ, friends, it's not degrading.

[16:20] To be a slave of the king, it's a privilege. If you know nothing of the slave's heart, if you know nothing of this heart of service, then you're missing a vital mark of the Christian and you should be asking questions of yourself.

If you don't have any desire in your heart for service, if you never have had a desire in your heart to serve Christ, then it's a true sign that you're perhaps not in Christ at all.

And so we have here the senders or the author, Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus. But I want us now to notice, secondly, the recipients of the letter.

we see that at the end of verse 1, to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are at Philippi with the overseers and the deacons. I want, first of all, just briefly to mention the overseers and the deacons, basically because I don't have time this evening to look at that in detail.

And there's a sermon in that itself. And that word overseers is the word episkopos from which we get the word episcopalian. Now the episcopalian structure has bishops.

[17:35] And so in the authorized version you have this word described as bishop. The important thing about this word overseer is that it is synonymous. It is, well not necessarily synonymous, but it's used interchangeably with another word, which is a word called, a word presbyteros, which is the word from which we get presbytery.

And these two words are used interchangeably. One of them is usually translated overseer or bishop and the other is usually translated elder. And the point is just this, that this verse, and you won't find this kind of language in any of the other greetings in Paul's letters, this verse where he mentions the overseers or the elders and the deacons, it shows us that even in the apostolic age, even in the 60s, that there was church government simple church government as we have it today, that there were people in the congregation as there are people in your congregation who had specific responsibilities for the spiritual oversight and for the physical or material oversight of the church.

You don't just have elders in your elders pew because some of the men many years ago decided that they wanted to take charge of the church. You have it because it's a biblical institution.

It's the same with deacons. It is a biblical thing. And as a church, we try to stick to the Bible and everything. And so you have here elders or overseers and deacons.

And as I said, there's a sermon in that itself, but I'm going to pass it by this evening. But an important point is that even the elders and the deacons were actually put to the end of this greeting, that they all come under the one overarching category of all the saints in Christ Jesus.

[19:28] They are not aside from the saints. They are not above the saints. They are not below them. They are included in all the saints in Christ Jesus. Now this word, saints, it literally means the holy ones.

It's actually the same word that you have in the Holy Spirit. It's just the plural of that word, the holy ones. And as I'm sure you know or you've heard perhaps, the word holy means to be set apart, to

be set aside, usually for a special use.

Now in the Old Testament we read of things that were holy, places that were holy. You read of the Holy of Holies, which was the inner sanctuary of the tabernacle.

You read of the Ark of the Covenant, which was holy. You read of the priests and the Levites. You read of even Israel itself, they were holy. What that means is that they were set apart by God for a special work.

God had set them apart. But you'll notice that more than anything in the Bible, that this word, this word holy is used to describe God himself, his holy name, the Holy One of Israel and so on.

[20 : 48] You find this time and again, especially in the Old Testament but also in the New Testament. One of the commentators says this, that this word holy, it is the most intimately divine word that the Bible possesses.

That it touches the essence of the very nature of God, this word holy. The fact is this, or the point is this, that now, now, this word is used to describe Christians.

Christians are the holy ones. They are the saints. They are the set apart ones. In God's sight they are declared holy. They are declared to be set apart.

They partake of his holiness. Indeed, they partake of his divine nature. This, friends, is the honor of all honors. It's the glory of all glories for the Christian.

It is the privilege of all privileges that the Holy One imparts to you if you are a Christian tonight of his own title and character by calling you a saint.

[21 : 58] But these Christians, you'll notice, they're not just saints as if by some merit of their own. As if we were just really good people, really holy people who had shown themselves to be godly, who had shown themselves to be the great spiritual men of the day.

No, they are saints in Christ Jesus. And that means that they are saints by virtue of their union with Christ. We see many good men in the world today or what the world calls good men who are forever doing good deeds, who are doing this for charity and that for charity and what not.

And the world will call them saints. But the fact is this, that good, though they may be in comparison with others, that they are not saints if they are not in Christ.

They are not saints if they are not in Christ. You today, you might be perhaps not a member in the church, perhaps not attending the prayer meeting, perhaps not fully committed to Christ, but you know, you are often in church, are you not?

And you are good to your neighbours and you give to charity and everybody speaks well of you. Some would even say perhaps that you are a saint. But you know, if you are not a believer in Jesus Christ, if you haven't got faith in Him, then you might be a saint in the eyes of the world, but you are not a saint in the eyes of God.

[23 : 22] Because the only people who are saints in the eyes of God are those who are united to Christ by faith. And no other. And no man will see God without holiness, without being a saint.

No man will get into heaven without being a saint. And so if you aren't in Christ Jesus, then you aren't a saint. And if you aren't a saint, then you won't get to heaven. No matter what other people say about you, no matter how saintly your neighbours, your friends, think you are, the only true saints are those who are in Christ Jesus.

Well, what unites the Christian to Christ? Also not the regenerating, that is the making alive, and the sanctifying, that is the making holy, work of the Holy Spirit within the believer.

as he applies to your soul the merits of Christ's death. And as he plants in your heart that principle of faith.

You see, the Christian's sainthood, as it were, whose holiness, it is not independent of union with Christ. In fact, it is dependent upon this union with Christ. The very thing that makes you to be holy in God's sight, the very thing that makes a Christian to be set apart, is that he is in Christ and with Christ by the Spirit.

[24 : 45] Now, it's worth saying that the Philippines weren't a special class of Christian called saints, given this title, because of their great holiness.

The Roman Catholic use of this term, saint, has perhaps made us think this way. They have their practices to canonize what they see as holy people throughout the history of the Church.

And they canonize them, and that means that they make them to be saints, so that when you now refer to this person, you call them saint this, or saint all, or saint whatever it might be.

But the fact is this. Sainthood is true of every Christian. There is no saint who is not, there is no Christian who is not a saint.

The Roman Catholic understanding of it is that some people are Christians, but then you've got these people who are up here because of their godliness, because of their service and their sins. [25 : 45] But you're down here, you're just a Christian. But that's not the biblical understanding of the term. That's not what we find here. We find that sainthood is true of every Christian.

We find that it is universally true among the faithful. In fact, Paul's use of it here to all the saints in Christ Jesus, it points to the universality of the Christian faith and heritage.

So that the rich and the poor, they are on the same level before God. The high and the low in Christ, they are saints. And they all, each and every one of them, from the slave to the noble, they are this inestimable title and privilege.

And Paul didn't just address the nobles, the high people in Philippi. He didn't just address here the especially godly, the especially committed. It was a letter to the whole church.

He addressed all together with this glorious title to all of the holy ones, to all those who have been set apart, to all of the saints in Christ Jesus.

[26 : 50] And this, of course, is true of you today, if you are a believer, that you are a saint. You are a saint in Christ Jesus. Saint Donald, Saint Calvin, Saint Christina, whatever it might be.

You are a saint in Christ Jesus if you have believed in him. You are holy. You are set apart by virtue of your union with Christ. You are set apart. You are sanctified.

Your title is of one that God has declared to be definitively holy. You are holy in Christ Jesus. But sainthood, although it is passive in a sense from the believer's perspective in that salvation is the work of God and it is him that sets you apart as the work of the Spirit.

Yet it is not simply passive. Because Paul, in his epistle to the Romans, he tells us that Christians are called to be saints. They are called to holiness.

That is that God calls the Christian not only to definitive holiness, to make him holy in his sight, but he calls them to progressive holiness, to continual separation.

[28 : 02] That is what holiness is, to be set apart, to be separate. To be separate from what? Well, to be separate from the world, to be separate from sin, to be separate from the evil of this present generation.

What does Paul say to the Corinthians? He says to them, come out from among them and be ye separate and touch not the unclean thing. And it is on this point that I want to challenge you.

And indeed, that I want to challenge myself. Because if you are a believer in Christ, then you are a saint by nature. But are you a saint by practice?

Could your life, could your conversation, could it be classed as saintly, as holy, as set apart, as consecrated to God? I will come back to that in a moment.

But notice that not only are the Philippians, not only are they saints in Christ Jesus, but they are saints in Christ Jesus at or in, the word really is the same, in Philippi.

[29 : 06] In Christ Jesus, in Philippi. Philippi, to give you a brief history, it's in, as I said earlier, it's in northern Greece near Thessalonica, which is still a major city in Greece, although I think it might be called Thessaloniki today.

But Philippi was named after Philip, who was the father of Alexander the Great, that great Greek conqueror. And Philip captured and he rebuilt Philippi, and he used it as a base.

But when the Greek empire fell, it passed into Roman hands. Now, after Julius Caesar's death, which I think was in 44 BC, there was a bit of eruption within the Roman Empire, as it were, and Philippi became the site of a famous battle in 42 BC, a battle which was won by Octavian and Antony.

Now, as often happens, although they fought together, after this, there was a great rift and there was a great war between Octavian and Antony. And Octavian got the upper hand and he won the battle.

And Antony, actually, Antony had fallen in love with somebody who many of you will have heard of, Cleopatra, who was the last famous, or the last powerful pharaoh of Egypt.

[30 : 34] And they had fallen in love and they committed suicide together when they saw that their case was hopeless. And so, Octavian became the Roman emperor. he became Caesar.

And he called himself, or he came to be called Caesar Augustus. Now, coming back to Philippi, prior to this, Antony had settled some of his veterans in Philippi and he had given them special

privileges there.

And after Octavian or Augustus, after he defeated Antony, he then settled more veterans and especially those who belonged to Antony's regiment, those who were his partisans, he settled more of them in Philippi and he gave them titles.

The reason that he did this was really to get them out of Italy, because he wanted to support in Italy and he wanted their land back. But this is when it becomes important for the letter.

In honour of the victory which they won together in 44 BC, he made Philippi to be a Roman colony. that is, it became really a mini Rome.

[31 : 44] So that those who lived in Philippi, although it was northern Greece, technically they were citizens of Rome. This becomes very important when you get to chapter 3 in Philippians, where Paul says, our citizenship, referring obviously to the citizenship which they had, the Philippians and Rome, our citizenship, he says, verse 20 in chapter 3, is in heaven, and from it we await a saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.

And that's what he's really referring to. You speak of your citizenship that you have in Philippi, that you are really Romans, but you know there is a greater citizenship which belongs to the Christian. But basically as citizens of Rome, they had a right to the law of Rome, which doesn't sound like much, but really it changed everything. Because these people in Philippi, they had the right to buy and to sell land, which nobody else in the empire had if they weren't in a special area.

They didn't have to pay land taxes. They were under Roman law, which meant that they couldn't be arrested, they couldn't be scourged, and if they were arrested, they had the right of appeal. That's what you see Paul doing here.

And throughout the book of Acts, he is a Roman citizen himself. And because it was a Roman colony, Latin was the common language in Philippi. Even the coins that they've discovered from Philippi 2,000 years ago, they are inscribed in Latin and not in Greek.

[33 : 15] And the common people there, they wore Roman dress. And you combine this with the fact that Philippi was on an important highway, the Via Ignatia, which went out eastward from Rome.

you combine that with the fact that it was a Roman colony and you realize that this was an important town. It was important to Rome itself, it was strategically placed, but it was also important to the people who lived there.

The Romans, the Philippians themselves, they were conscious of their heritage. They didn't think of themselves as Greeks, they thought of themselves as Romans. Indeed, most of them were Romans, they had been moved there.

And those who weren't Romans, they amalgamated. And they got many privileges as well. There were some Jews in the area, but there weren't many Jews in Philippi. We know this because there doesn't seem to have been a synagogue.

Even we see that Lydia and the woman with her, that they were praying not in the synagogue, but by the river. But although the Philippians, although they enjoyed many benefits, although they were forward in many ways, and they had much going for them, yet the Philippians had their vices.

[34 : 28] They were living in idolatry. They took part in the imperial cult, where really Caesar was worshipped. This was popular in Rome. It was also popular in many Rome.

And those who refused to worship Caesar, to bow down to him as a god, and not just a man, they would be marginalized, and they would be persecuted.

We know that around this time, that many Jews were expelled from Rome by Caesar, but by the emperor Claudius, and probably for this reason, because they wouldn't burn the incense, as it were, to Caesar.

But not only was there idolatry in Philippi, but there was gross immorality. Immorality was rife in these type of cities. God's law was not valued here, and where God's law is not valued, friends, there are consequences.

So that things like suicide, and adultery, and drunkenness, and even things like homosexuality, they were normalized, and they were glorified. People there, they became, although they weren't godly, they became spiritual, they sought guidance from mediums, and from fortune tellers, and whatnot.

[35 : 38] Because you see, when God's law is not present, it doesn't leave behind it a moral vacuum. The vacuum is always filled with something, and if it's not filled with God's law, then it will be filled with the laws of the world.

It will be filled with evil. And for all of Rome's progress, as they put it, their carnal humanity, it betrayed them. All you have to do is read up on a bit of Roman history to think of that, to realize that life was cheap, life was generally if you could afford it, for pleasure.

But the most point of all that history is just this, that it was in the midst of this gross idolatry and immorality that church sprang up, probably in around 51 or so AD.

Indeed, it was the first church, as we saw, that was planted by Paul in Europe, in Macedonia, which was far larger then than it is today. And this church would have included Lydia and her family.

It would have included the slave girl who was doing the fortune-telling, who was demon-possessed. It would have included the Philippine jailer and many other people in Philippi itself, from all sorts of cultures and from all sorts of backgrounds.

[37 : 04] And it is to such that Paul writes, to the saints in Christ Jesus in Philippi. You see, just as true as they are in Christ, they are also in Philippi.

They are in this unbelieving, evil city. And the fact that they are saints here, that means that they are called to be separate from this evil.

But the fact that they are in Philippi, the fact that they are saints in Philippi, it shows that they aren't called to segregation.

They are called to separation to ensure that their garments are not stained or spoiled with the sins of the day. But they are not called to segregation. No, they are called to be saints in this present evil generation.

They are called to be in it, but to be distinct from it. You see, for these people in Philippi, holiness is not to be cultivated in the monastery. Rather, it is to be cultivated in the coal face of Philippian life.

[38 : 09] They are to be set apart where? Amongst the people. They are to live with them, but they are not to live as them. And you know, friend, if you are in Christ today, well, you have all the privileges and all the blessings of sainthood.

But you are called to holiness in point. You are called to holiness where you are. In this generation, which is no time for holiness, which is no time for the gospel, the good news, you are called to holiness in it.

And although your faith in many ways, although it is personal, it is not to be private. It is to be lived out here amongst the people. You are to stand amongst them, but you are not to stand as them.

You are to be, as the saying goes, you are to be in the world, but you are not to be of the world. And you are not to use that slogan, as it were, for an excuse for sin, for an excuse to be in places where you ought not to be, in places where you would not take Jesus Christ to be with you.

But what this means in practice is this, that because you are holy, if you are in Christ, because you are holy in an evil day, you will be different from those who are around you.

[39 : 23] Your hopes will be different, your desires will be different, your aspirations and your motivations will be different, your mindset will be different, your behavior will be different, your speech even will be different.

Is this true of you? Are you in point, but separate from its ungodliness and its unbelief? Remember, you are not called to segregation, but to separation.

And in a day that won't listen, when people won't listen to the gospel, when they won't listen to the good news, let them see the good news in a changed life. And maybe the gospel in your life will speak to them more than the gospel from this pulpit will speak to them.

Maybe it will. But be mindful that as you try to, as it were, infect the world with the gospel, the world will try to infect you with itself.

Be mindful that you wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

[40 : 31] You see, this world as it is without God, this culture as it is without the Bible, it will seek to conform you to its image. It will want you to decide its merchandise and to covet its riches.

It will want you to wear its clothes and to watch its television. It will want you to speak like it and it will want you to think like it. You see, the Philippian mindset, it wants you to worship its gods and to live according to its pattern.

The world, the flesh and the devil, they want you for themselves. And while you still have breath in your Christian soul, they will not give up. But friends, a sense of God, sense of God, see that you stand as saints, separate from such.

And you have good reason too. Because you see, the world looks at you, many of them do anyway, and they see you as poor and deprived. But you know, in Christ, your riches, they far outweigh the riches of the world.

Your merchandise is far superior to the merchandise of the world. Your riches are full, while their riches are really empty. Your riches are eternal, while their riches are temporary.

[41 : 46] What is there for you to covet in the world? When God's wisdom is better than rubies, and when his law is better than gold or silver, and when God's love is better than life, what is there for you to covet in the world?

What reason is there for you to seek to be like the world, and to desire the things that they have? When you have so much more? In conclusion, I want you to notice that Paul concludes his intro with a blessing in verse 2, and just realize that the time has gone, so I'll be very quick.

It's his desire that they might know, that he might know, that they might know the grace and the peace of God multiplied towards them. Now grace, as you know, is the benevolence of God towards undeserving sinners.

in both salvation and throughout the Christian life. It is God's unmerited favor in action. It's his sovereign, free, loving kindness in operation.

And it's this grace that Paul wants the Philippians to stand in, the grace that is the source of all blessings, the grace which he knows will supply all of their need according to God's riches in Christ Jesus.

[43 : 00] He prays that they might know this grace, but also he prays that they might know the blessing of such grace which is peace. You see, grace always comes before peace. There is no real peace for those who haven't tasted that the Lord is gracious.

You might be here tonight looking for peace. Looking for peace and finding none. Looking for it in the things of the world. Looking for it in people. Looking for it in shops.

Looking for it in the internet. Looking for it wherever you might find it. But you know, friends, there is no peace where there is no grace. Grace is the great prerequisite of peace.

It is only those who are justified by faith in Jesus Christ who will know the peace of God. Peace in the first century, it referred in the Greek language, referred to two things.

The absence of war and then secondly, a general sense of well-being. And this can, of course, both these things can be applied to the Christian today.

[44 : 08] Because you see, the Christian has peace with God. The war is over. The enmity is removed. And instead, there is friendship. God no longer has anything against you if you are a believer.

But the believer also has the peace of God. He is complete in Christ. He fears nothing. He wants nothing of this world. He is content with his lot. He has an inner tranquility in his soul, knowing that he is his beloved's and his beloved is his.

Now, this blessing, grace and peace, it's especially relevant, isn't it? It was relevant to the sender and to the recipients. It was relevant to Paul and Timothy who were to be servants of Jesus Christ. It was relevant to the Philippian church who were to be saints of Christ Jesus. And it's relevant to you. You see, much is required of you in the Christian walk as you seek to serve Christ and as you seek to be a saint in an evil world.

But you know, as a saint, you're not left to walk the path of obedience by yourself. There is for you in the Bible. There is for you in Christ. There is for you in God himself a never flowing spring of grace and of peace.

[45 : 24] It is yours through Christ. It is yours to partake of. The temptation is at times to rush to the world and to the people of the world when things go not as you would like them to.

Rush to Christ. Rush to God. Rush to his word. And seek of him his grace and his peace which he continues and has continued from all time to give in great abundance.

And if you do so, there is a promise for you even in this epistle itself that the peace of God which passeth all understanding that it shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus that it will be so with you.

Amen. Let us pray.