

Partners In The Gospel

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[0 : 00] The following sermon is made available by Lakeside Bible Church in Cornelius, North Carolina.

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I want to invite you to take your Bibles and turn to Philippians chapter 1 with me. Philippians chapter 1. The opening verses of the book of Philippians provide for us a preview of what will be the major thematic elements of the entire letter.

The book is often characterized as the epistle of joy, and that certainly could be true. There's 18 different times throughout Paul's letter to the Philippian church, he uses the word joy or rejoice, 18 different times.

[1 : 14] There's no doubt that he meant for joy to be a common theme throughout the book. In fact, he probably meant it not just to be a comfort to them, but as you study through the book of Philippians, you'll see that the context of joy with which Paul speaks from is almost in a way of exhortation.

That it's not just that they can experience joy, but he exhorts them to do the things that are necessary in order to have the true joy of the Lord. It certainly is a dominant theme throughout the book.

But I think if we were to reduce the book of Philippians to a simple discussion of Christian joy, I think that that would be a mistake for us, actually.

I think what we'll discover as we study these first 11 verses of the book, and as it sets the tone and lays the foundation for the rest of the letter for us, I think we'll discover that while joy is prominent, there are actually a few other perhaps greater, even deeper themes that run throughout the book. Namely, the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the fact that God continues an ongoing process of work through the scriptures, through his spirit in the lives of those that believe, and then this gospel partnership that we're going to deal with today, that God provides for us in the church, and in fellowship, and in friendship, and in partnership with other believers.

[2 : 43] I think what you'll find as you study the book, and certainly as we discover this together on Sundays, that more common than joy are these themes of gospel, and what God does through the gospel, and what he gives us in partnership in the gospel with other believers.

And then running alongside of that as we study the book is this dominant element of joy. Well, these first 11 verses contain Paul's opening greeting to what some people consider to be his favorite congregation in the New Testament.

As we read it in just a moment, you'll discover, maybe even look for intentionally, a particular warmth and affection that Paul feels for the people to which he's writing.

He communicates an endearing love for them, a thankfulness for their partnership in the gospel, as he refers to it in verse number five. And it becomes clear that this is a heartfelt expression of a pastor to his people.

And so in my own study this week, as we prepared to look at it together today, I can't help but understand Paul's heart in that. That as he writes this prayer of thanksgiving, and as he expresses this love and this joy that he has found actually in the Philippian church, and as he makes this prayer for them, this ongoing prayer that he prays on their behalf, we see his pastoral heart, and it actually shows as a conviction to me as your pastor, as someone that wants to be thankful for you in the way that Paul was thankful for his people, that wants to love you in the way that Paul loved

them, that wants to pray for you in the same way that Paul prayed for the Philippian church.

[4 : 25] Let's read it together, starting at verse number one. Paul and Timothy, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus, which are at Philippi, with the elders and deacons, grace be unto you and peace from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all, making requests with joy for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now.

And I am confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ. Even as it is meet or right is what that means.

It is right for me to think this of you all because I have you in my heart. Inasmuch as both in my bonds and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, you are partakers of my grace.

For God is my witness, my record. How greatly I long after you in the bowels of Jesus Christ. And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment, that you may approve things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ, being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.

[5 : 54] The first thing that we notice, if you're keeping notes as we go along through our lesson today or our message today, the first thing that you'd wanna write down is Paul's joyful thanksgiving.

Paul's joyful thanksgiving. We see this in verses three through six. Let's read them together again. I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all, making my request, making my prayer with joy.

And this is the root and the ground of this prayer and this thanksgiving that he's making. It's as a result of your fellowship or partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.

Reminiscing from his jail cell in Rome, Paul writes this greeting to the Philippian believers and he opens here with a specific prayer of thanksgiving for them.

Verse number four gives us actually the first of 18 mentions of joy that we'll find in the letter. And the joy that Paul has experienced in this particular prayer in verse number four is a direct result of his remembrance of his people.

[7 : 13] Have you ever loved someone so much or cared for someone so much that every time you thought of them, what came to your heart was joy?

We don't actually often experience that in the same way, right? Did you pick up on the words that Paul used here? Always, in every prayer, making my request with joy.

There's a uniqueness to Paul's greeting here. As he offers this thanksgiving, thinking of even the place that he writes this greeting from, as you study the book of Acts and you study the tradition of Christianity and church history, you understand that Paul is at closing in on the tail end of a particular imprisonment in Rome.

He's appealed at this point his case to Caesar himself and we'll discover that as we study the book of Philippians just a little bit further, how that even people within Caesar's household have become believers as a result of Paul's witness from his jail cell, from this imprisonment that he had in Rome. Church history tells us that after this particular imprisonment, he actually is released from imprisonment before he goes back a number of years later and is actually beheaded for his faith. But where he finds himself at this particular moment writing to these Philippian believers is under 24-hour surveillance.

[8 : 34] He's chained to a Roman guard and they would take turns, particular watches where every day there would be different Roman soldiers that would come in and they would be physically chained to Paul.

It was humiliating for him, there's no doubt. But even in the midst of that, what he writes to these Philippian believers is his thoughts of joy towards them. And as you study the remainder of the letter, you'll see that even despite his circumstances, that's where this joy is rooted that no matter what's going on in his life, even in the midst of a prison cell, when he's awaiting what could be his death and would eventually be his death, he writes with such joy and such warmth and such affection.

Well, what is this joy really about? What is this thanksgiving about for him in this passage? Kent Hughes wrote this, Paul rarely thanked God for things. Paul thanked God for people who despite whatever trouble they may have been to him, remained a source of joy and thanksgiving. That really stands in contrast to the way that we look at thanksgiving, right? Perhaps this week, even in the thanksgiving holiday, you had a moment like our family does where we'll at least take a few moments or whether it's around the dinner table, usually it's led by my dad when we're with my parents on Thanksgiving.

And he just begins to talk about the ways that God has been good to him. And we go through a whole list of things like you probably did this week too. Hopefully you did this week. And we talk about all the tangible things.

[10:05] We talk about the successes that the Lord has brought. We talk about the physical blessings that the Lord has brought. But my dad always gets to a point where he begins to thank God more for the people that God has brought into his life than he actually does the things that God has blessed in his life.

And that's really the idea and the picture that we get of Paul. Of course he was thankful for things. Of course he was thankful for the benefits and the blessings that God brought. But most often he was thankful for the people that God had put in his life.

And that's the reflection that he gives us here just now in Philippians chapter one. There's two particular notes of this Thanksgiving that I think would be worth you making. The first thing that we notice is that he was thankful for their partnership in the gospel.

He was thankful for their partnership in the gospel. Look with me again at verse number five. For your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now.

That word fellowship is *koinonia* in the Greek. It's translated various ways throughout the New Testament. We'll look at a couple of them today. But it really means partnership. When he thought and he had this memory of the church in Philippi, what he thought first and foremost was the way that they had partnered with him underneath the banner of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

[11:20] Well, what was it that he thought about as he went through? There could have been a number of things that he thought about, but the Bible does actually give us a glimpse into a number of things that it could have been. Think back to Acts chapter 16.

Acts chapter 16 tells us the story of how Paul and Silas and Timothy and Luke started the church in Philippi. They had made this journey there and on their first Sabbath day as they made their way out to the riverbank, they found a group of women that were praying there.

And as a result of the preaching of the gospel, a successful businesswoman named Lydia was saved. As you study Acts 16, you'll see not only was Lydia saved, but she was on fire for the Lord at this point.

Her house became the place where the missionary team lived and we believe that her house also became the location for the meeting place of the church. Perhaps when Paul's writing, I thank my God on every remembrance of you, maybe he's thinking about Lydia and the times and the effort and the expense that she put into this gospel ministry in Philippi.

Maybe he thought about that slave girl that we studied in Acts 16. She was demon possessed. She was being abused by her masters. God empowered Paul to cast out this demon and presumably she became a believer in that moment.

[12:34] And he was able to witness not only this life change for her physically, but he was able to witness the radical change of her eternity as she believed in the gospel in that moment. Maybe it was her that he thought about.

Maybe it was the Philippian jailer that we're all familiar with, right? Because of his work in the gospel and the conversion of that slave girl, Paul and Silas, as you study the chapter, were stripped naked in front of the whole city.

They were beaten nearly to death. They were cast into the innermost part of the prison and they were held fast in the stocks, awaiting what probably they thought would be their execution the next day.

And that night, instead of complaining, they sang praises to the Lord. You remember what happened? God sends an earthquake. And then this Philippian jailer comes in and his question is, what do I have to do to be saved?

What do I have to do to experience this joy that you've experienced tonight in this prison? Perhaps as he's writing verse three, that I thank God upon every remembrance of you, maybe it's Lydia,

maybe it's the slave girl, maybe it's the Philippian jailer, maybe it was all of them.

[13:42] Maybe he was thinking back to what he wrote in 2 Corinthians chapter eight. In fact, why don't you flip there for me, just a few pages to the left. 2 Corinthians chapter eight, the first five verses, Paul writing to the church of Corinth references this church of Philippi in Macedonia and something that they had done for him.

Verse number one, moreover brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia. That's the church at Philippi. How that in a great trial of affliction, the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their generosity.

For to their power, I bear record, yea, and beyond their power, they were willing of themselves, praying us with much entreaty that we would receive a gift and take upon us, here's that word again, the fellowship of the ministering to the saints, the partnership of the gospel.

And this they did not as we had hoped, but first gave their own selves to the Lord and unto us by the will of God. They gave generously. Some point in Paul's missionary journeys, this church had developed a burden for what he was doing for the gospel and even out of their deep poverty, sacrificially, they gave of themselves in order that the work of the gospel could be supported all across the world.

We do that in our missions giving. In the way that we give for particular outreach efforts here in our community in Cornelius, as we look to missionaries that maybe from time to time would come in and present their works.

[15:17] When we look to things like Marty and Fay are involved with, with getting Bibles all across the world. When we look to all of these things, that's our partnership together. This church, when Paul thought about them, maybe reflected on how even in their poverty, when they had every reason in the world to say no to an extra offering, gave of themselves in order that they could fellowship with the ministering of the saints, partner with Paul in the gospel.

And as he writes in verse three, I thank God on every remembrance of you. He's thinking back to the conversions that he experienced in Acts chapter 16 and then maybe to the particular sacrifice and partnership in financial giving in 2 Corinthians chapter eight.

And then back in Philippians, if you just flip over to chapter four, we see another glimpse of this in verses 15 and 16. On another occasion, Paul is referencing here, now you Philippians know also that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, that is when he first left after Acts 16, no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but you only.

For even in Thessalonica, you sent once and again unto my necessity. Again, verse 15, the word communicated, same word, koinonia, partnership. When Paul thought about this people, what he thought about was partnership.

These people have been there for me. They have helped me. They have helped the gospel. It's not just me that they care for. It's the work of the gospel that they care for.

[16:53] And as he reflected on them, this became an outpouring of thanksgiving to God on their behalf, that as he remembered these people, he thought to stop and thank the Lord, thank you for these people that have partnered with me in the gospel.

And I read that and I consider the testimony of these Philippian people and I ask myself the question, if I was in the Philippian church or if I was a part of one of these other churches that Paul had started, would he think on me with the same kind of thanksgiving?

Would Paul be thankful for Jared because of his partnership in the gospel? Maybe he'd be thankful for friendship or maybe he would be thankful for a number of things, but would he be thankful that I partnered with him in the gospel?

That's a challenge to us. How's your partnership in the gospel? We commit our lives to all kinds of partnerships all the time. Good partnerships, partnerships with our spouses, partnerships with our coworkers, partnerships that we jump into with particular hobbies and with particular things.

We fill our lives with partnerships, with endeavors, with fellowships and various things. Where does your partnership in the gospel fit on your list of priorities?

[18:11] I know that it's a priority in some sense. You're here today. You're here for church on the fourth week of a baby church in an elementary school gym.

There's a partnership in the gospel that you have here today, even those of you that are guests with us and friendships that we have. There's a partnership here, but where does that partnership in your mind stack on your list of priorities?

Would you give sacrificially to a family member when they had a need? Most likely, yeah. Would you give sacrificially to the work of the gospel when it has a need?

I hope so. Would you drop everything that you're doing in order to help somebody that you love or a friend that you've grown close to? Probably, yeah. Would you drop everything you're doing in order to meet a need and share the gospel with somebody, even though it's going to take away from something else that you're interested in?

When Paul wrote to these people when he thought about them, it was their partnership in the gospel that resounded in his heart and his mind and it became an outbursting of thanksgiving for them.

[19 : 17] But it wasn't just their partnership in the gospel that he was thankful for. Secondly, he was thankful because he acknowledged the true source of their partnership.

He acknowledged the true source of their partnership. Look with me at verse six. being confident of this very thing or I am sure of this very thing, Paul says, that he, being God, that has begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.

That phrase, will perform it, it means will bring to completion, that he'll finish it. That the work that God had started in the hearts and in the lives of these Philippian believers, that he would never stop that work until that work was done.

Paul was confident of that. So look at the verses again. He opens in verse three. I thank my God. Did you notice who he thanked? It's significant here. When he thought about these Philippian believers, the direction of his thanksgiving wasn't to them.

Of course, he was thankful for them. Just like we're thankful for one another, we're thankful for other people in our lives. But it wasn't just directed to them, his thanksgiving. It was directed to God. He understood in that moment, as I give thanks, I'm thanking God because I understand the source of this partnership is not rooted in your love for me and it's not rooted in my love for you.

[20 : 41] The source of this partnership is rooted in the gospel of Jesus Christ. I thank God because he has begun this work in us in salvation. For those of us that have believed, God has begun this work in your heart.

And then what encouragement we get. As we read in verse six and Paul says, and I'm convinced of this, that the God that has begun this work will finish this work in you.

And that again became an outpouring of thanksgiving. I'm thankful for your partnership but even more than the partnership, I'm thankful for the God that has sourced it, for the God that has provided it.

We take great comfort in this verse. Do you ever have moments of doubt in your walk with Christ?

Of course. We all do, right?

Do you ever struggle so much with sinfulness and your own fleshly desires in your life that you wonder, have I ever really got a hold of this? Can God really continue on working in me in this way?

[21 : 43] I keep falling over and over again. I'm not as committed as this person is or I can't seem to get victory in this area or whatever it is. Can I encourage you with verse number six?

that he that has begun a good work in you, he will finish that work. He will bring it to completion.

Jesus said, all that come to me I will in no wise cast out.

There's going to be days that you don't feel particularly saved. Have days like that. Days to be transparent with you that I follow my face and beg God to change my heart, to change the way that I think.

And I come back to verses like this and I take comfort in the fact that my Christian life, the very fact that I'm a Christian has nothing to do with me.

It has everything to do with God's power in my life. Paul recognized that and it caused him to offer thanksgiving to the Lord. We can be thankful for that.

[22 : 48] Thankful for one another that as we see each other's lives that we're thankful that God has promised he will continue this work. Thankful that on our worst days as believers we can stop and have joy not because our circumstances are great or that we've gotten victory over a particular besetting sin but we can stop even in the midst of that and we can have joy because we understand that God will not let me go.

That because he has done this work of salvation he will bring this work of salvation to completion at the day of Jesus Christ. When Jesus returns or when we die and go to heaven.

Well not only do we see Paul's joyful thanksgiving but secondly we see Paul's supernatural love. We see his supernatural love. This is in verses seven and eight.

They express a very warm affection for the people here. Let's look at them together. It's right for me to think this of you all because I have you in my heart in as much as both in my bonds that is in the suffering that he was experiencing and also as they defended and confirmed the gospel.

They were partakers. Again koinonia same word partners with him in the gospel in his grace. For God is my witness he says.

[24 : 06] How greatly I long for you I yearn for you in all the bowels of Jesus Christ. If you're using a King James that's a weird word. In this particular context it means the seat of the emotions.

It's a reference to affection. Paul's saying here I love you and God is my witness and I yearn after you with the same affection that Jesus Christ yearns after you and loves you.

It's because of his love that I love you and it's in that way that I desire to love you. Jesus said that our love for one another would be an evidence of our genuine salvation.

Do you remember that in John 13? By this shall all men know that you are my disciples if you have love one to another. Paul in another letter to the Corinthian church 1 Corinthians chapter 13 expressed the nature and the superiority of Christian love.

Maybe some of you have this as a picture in your house somewhere. Love is patient and kind. It does not envy or boast. It's not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way.

[25 : 13] It's not irritable or resentful. It doesn't rejoice in wrongdoing but rejoices in the truth. Love bears all things. It believes all things. It hopes all things.

It endures all things. The scriptures teach us that love is the greatest of Christian virtues and here Paul is expressing that love that he had for the Philippian believers. And I think it's a particular example for us.

An example of three ways that we can actually exhibit this same love for one another at Lakeside Bible Church. The first way is this. His love was born out of personal relationships.

His love was born out of personal relationships. Look at verse 7. It's right for me to think this of you all, to have this feeling for you all because I have you in my heart.

It's an interesting, affectionate phrase that he has here. He holds them dearly in his heart. But you cannot hold someone dear to your heart that you have not taken the time to know and understand in time spent together.

[26 : 19] A number of us went to a wedding of a mutual friend last night in Locust. And it reminded me of this kind of love. Caroline and David were married.

Many of you know them. Caroline and David were both teenagers of mine in a youth group at Laurel for years and years and years. I've known Caroline since she was probably 10 years old, 9 or 10 years old.

Last night she got married and that made me feel a little bit old. But I remember watching their relationship. I remember when they first started dating. They started dating at church. Maybe some of you started dating at church.

That's where you met your spouse. And I remember seeing them as they progressed through this relationship and as they developed and this love in their, and for one another, blossomed in their relationship. That only blossomed because they were committed to one another in personal relationship, right?

That's where it started. The love began to blossom in the early days because at some point they spent time together. And it began to grow and continue in love for one another because they spent more time together.

[27 : 19] And then it blossomed into what has been now a covenant of lifelong marriage with one another because they grew in this fellowship together. How can we have this same love for one another that Paul had for the Philippian church?

It starts with personal relationships. Your life in and through Lakeside Bible Church cannot be reduced to a 90 minute service on Sunday morning.

It won't work. You'll be able to come and worship. You'll be able to hear the truth of the Bible but you will never bear this kind of love for the other people here until you determine to commit to building personal relationships.

And there's simple things we can do with that. Come a little early to service on Sunday and just talk to people. Stay a little later after the service. We intentionally on Sundays we intentionally don't start

to tear all of this stuff back down until 20 or 30 minutes after the service concludes because I want us to spend time together.

Come to the prayer fellowships on Wednesday nights at mine and Julie's house. When we have moments of fellowship together ask somebody to lunch today. Ask somebody that maybe you haven't got to know yet at our church if they want to go have lunch today or if they want to have dinner tonight.

[28 : 35] Get to know people in the church. Develop this love for one another. Spend time together. Not only was this love born out of personal relationships it was born out of that same gospel partnership.

Look at verse 7 once again. Paul says in as much as both in my bonds and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel y'all are partakers of my grace.

Their faithfulness to boldly proclaim and defend the gospel along with their willingness to partner with him in suffering was foundational to the love that he felt.

Kent Hughes again writing about this particular verse said that this is the fellowship of compatriots bound together in a great cause. Paul says I love you because you have fought the fight with me. You have served alongside of me. I don't love you because you're just like me. They were vastly different. It was because they were united under a common cause. Many of us don't experience this kind of love this supernatural godly love for one another because we never engage in the fight.

[29 : 43] I want to encourage you this week engage in the fight. We have a mission as a church as believers. Our mission is to take the gospel that has transformed our lives and to tell it to as many people as we can.

The people you work with the family you know your community your neighbors engage in this fight and then when we come together talk to one another about the fight pray with one another and let's watch the bond that God gives us in love for one another through it.

Thirdly his love was born out of love for Christ. Was born out of love for Christ. Look at verse 8 for God is my witness how greatly I long after you in the infections of Jesus Christ.

It's possible to experience a form of love without Christ just by building personal relationships.

Perhaps before your own salvation there were plenty of people in your life that you loved.

It's possible to have a form of love in particular partnerships that aren't Christian related. we've experienced that as well. It's impossible to experience the fullness of love without knowing the love of Christ.

[31 : 03] The love as Philippians chapter 2 tells us of a mighty God a sovereign God the creator of all that is coming and humbling himself and becoming in the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of men.

Why did he do that? out of love John 3 16 we know well for God so loved the world that he gave his only son.

When you come to grips with the true love that's demonstrated in the gospel and you understand and experience that love it will transform the way you love others.

Sure the partnership will grow your love. Just spending time together will grow your love. But when we come together underneath the banner of Christ there is no kind of love that any person can experience that is like that love the fullness of it.

Thirdly and finally we see Paul's pastoral prayer. We see his joyful thanksgiving we see his supernatural love and then we see his pastoral prayer.

[32 : 14] I'll leave it to you to dig deeper into each and every one of these dynamics as we go in but I will say this Paul's prayer here in verses 9 through 11 stand in contrast to many of our prayers.

Paul didn't pray here for ease in his suffering and he didn't really pray for ease in their suffering.

Surely that was a care and a concern of his. But his prayer was focused in on the spiritual needs of the people.

Let me just mention to him quickly what he prays for. The first thing that he prays for is that their love would continue. Look at verse number 9. This I pray that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment.

So Paul prays it's a very pastoral prayer. I pray God that I'm thankful for them they bring me joy but I pray that you would help their love to continue. Secondly his prayer was that they would examine what is best.

Look at verse 10 that you may approve the things that are excellent. This is the difference between good and best and Paul prayed that on this progression that as they grew in their knowledge of the scriptures and their love for one another that they would learn to choose not just good things but the best things.

[33 : 31] They would have discernment. They would make wise choices in their walk with Christ. When John Wesley went away to Oxford John MacArthur writes his mother Susanna wisely wrote this in one of her letters to him.

She said whatever weakens your reason impairs the tenderness of your conscience obscures your sense of God or takes off the delight for spiritual things whatever increases the authority of your body over your mind that thing is sin.

I think that's what Paul is alluding to here. He prays whatever is in your life even if it's a good thing it's not necessarily a bad thing whatever in your life pulls you away from walking closer with Christ and moving towards Christ that thing for you has now become sin and his prayer for them is that their love would abound but that as their love abounds in knowledge and in discernment that they would learn to choose not just helpful things in life but they would choose the best things in lives the things that would push them further towards God in a walk with him.

The third element of his prayer was that they would experience purity and blamelessness ahead of Christ's return. Look again at verse 10 that you may be sincere that's purity and without offense that's blamelessness till the day of Christ.

He reminds them of the reality that Christ is coming back and that when he returns or when this life is over we will stand before him as judge and we will give account for our lives and so we praise that the spirit would continue to work in them to make them holy and pure and blameless so that they could stand before Christ with joy.

[35 : 14] Fourthly he prays that they would bear the fruit of the righteousness of Christ. Look at verse 11 being filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ.

He tells us in the book of Galatians what those fruits begin with love joy peace long-suffering patience gentleness goodness faith or faithfulness meekness temperance are these things evidenced in your life these fruits of the spirit these things that God provides as we abound in love and knowledge and discernment as we choose what is best and not just what is good as we seek to live a pure life that all results in the bearing of Christian fruit of the fruit of righteousness that God provides to our lives.

Paul prayed that these believers would experience that and it all culminates in this last thing and we're done. It was a prayer for the glory of God. It was a prayer for the glory of God. Look at verse 11 being filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ unto what?

The glory and praise of God. We make God a man-centered God don't we? God certainly loves us. We just talked about that John 3 16 he certainly has a tremendous amount of love for us but greater even than God's love for us is God's concern for his own glory.

He's more concerned that your life glorify him than he is concerned that your life be filled with whatever measure of happiness you would like it to be filled with. It's why God allows good people believers to go through difficult circumstances.

[37 : 11] It's all for the purpose of his glory. Paul's writing to a group of believers in Philippi that are sharing in his suffering. In fact when he gets to the end of chapter 1 we'll discover it in a couple of weeks he commends them to look at their suffering as a grace from God because this grace and suffering is actually for the purpose of God's glory.

God's glory is a difficult thing to define. I think the best description that I've heard of him is that it's God's holiness his perfection everything in his majesty and his greatness demonstrated in us and in the way that we live and in the things that we do.

It's a manifestation of his holiness so that when Paul prays for this people and he prays for the fruit of Christ's righteousness and their knowledge to grow all of these things what he's actually praying for is that God would receive glory in them.

Can I tell you that I pray this prayer for you and I hope you pray it for me and I hope you pray it for one another. Miss Faith we prayed this morning that you'd feel better we know your back's been down.

We prayed for several of us in our prayer fellowship just a couple of Wednesdays ago we all took down requests and we prayed for one another's physical needs but can I tell you I pray for those things I care about those things but more than any of those things what I pray for you is that you will

love the Lord that you will love his word that his word would do its work in your heart in a tremendous way so much so that you would bear the fruit of Christ's righteousness in your life so that you and I together can bring glory to God because more than anything else in our lives God is concerned ultimately for his own glory.

[38 : 55] He's not a man centered God he's a God centered God and why shouldn't he be? He is the one true God he deserves every bit of our attention every bit of our affection and so as we begin this study in the book of Philippians and we see this preview really in Paul's greeting in these first 11 verses we come to understand that the ultimate purpose of Paul's writing and his exhortation is not just that they would experience joy but that the root of that joy would bring glory to God specifically their partnership and I'm thankful to you for your partnership many of you that I've sacrificed so much in order to be a part of this church plant I love you not just because you're my friend I love you because you are partnering with me in this we're partnering together in this it's not about me and my hope is that we'll pray for one another that we'll glorify the

Lord and we'll glorify him in the way that he sees fit to be glorified whether that be through life or through death as Paul will say next week as we study that his ultimate purpose of glory would be fulfilled in us thank you for listening to this sermon made available by Lakeside Bible Church feel free to share it wherever you'd like please do not charge for it or alter it in any way without express written consent from Lakeside Bible Church don't forget to visit us online at lakesidebible.church or find us on Facebook and Instagram by searching for Lakeside Bible NC if you live in the Charlotte or Lake Norman area we'd love for you to attend one of our worship services we meet every Sunday morning at 10 a.m. in the gym at Cornelius Elementary School we'd love to meet you