

# Introduction to Philippians

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- [ 0 : 00 ] Welcome to our services today and we seek that the Lord would bless his word to us as we come together to meditate upon it.
- Let us commence our worship by joining together in prayer. Lord our God we give thanks unto thee that although we live in a day where certain restrictions are laid upon us when we cannot come together to worship us in former days.
- Yet O Lord we give thanks that there are no restrictions in coming to approach thee. That thou hast opened a way for us that remains open to us through thine own Son the Lord Jesus Christ.
- And that thou doth exhort us to come with all boldness and confidence into the very throne room of God. And to lay out petitions before thee.
- And we come this night O Lord to lay out petitions before thee knowing that thou art the one who out of the riches of thy grace is able to meet with each one of us at our point of need.
- [ 1 : 30 ] And as we come before thee O Lord we confess our sins. We acknowledge our sinnership. We acknowledge O Lord our lukewarmness.
- We acknowledge how far away that we have gone from thee. And so we seek O Lord that thou would draw us to thyself.
- Through the power of thy spirit. For without thee we can do nothing. We are dependent upon thy spirit to take us and to draw us to thyself.
- And we pray O Lord that we would come in repentance. That we would come sorrowing over our sins.
- That we would come in our hearts as others came literally before thee. In sackcloth and ashes. Humbling ourselves before thee.
- [ 2 : 37 ] And acknowledging O Lord that we are the ones who have gone astray. That we are the ones who have moved away from thee. O Lord draw us by the cords of thy love.
- And thy compassion and thy grace. Draw us to thyself. We ask O Lord that thou would bless thy word to us at this hour.
- As we come to read it. And as we come to meditate upon it. Apply it to us O Lord by thy Holy Spirit. We remember O Lord.
- Remember O Lord. Those who are under the care of physicians. Those who are in hospitals. Those who are sick at home. We ask O Lord that thine healing hand may be upon them.
- And O Lord we pray that thou would bless those who are lonely. Those who have come to old age. Those who are unable to do the basic things of life.
- [ 3 : 41 ] Those who need care. And we pray O Lord that thou would bless them. And those who care for them. Remember our young people and our children. And pray that they may grow up in the fear of the Lord.

We remember O Lord. Thine own believing people. O grant to us that we may be true and faithful witnesses for thee.

In our communities. In our homes. O Lord that we would be as lights that would shine forth. The grace of our God.

In Jesus Christ. Remember the gospel we pray thee. O that it may go forth in the power and demonstration of thy spirit. In convicting, converting and the building of thy church.

We pray O Lord that thy gospel may be blessed to all nations of the earth. And all thy servants who proclaim thy gospel tonight. We pray O Lord that the junction of thy spirit may be upon them.

[ 4 : 48 ] And we pray O Lord that thou would be mindful of our needs. They are many. More than we know ourselves. But thou knowest.

Thou art the all-knowing God. And we pray O Lord as the reality of death is brought before us every day on our television screens.

O a reminder that here we have no continuing city. Whichever means has been appointed will usher us out of this world into eternity.

O may we be of that number who will have prepared themselves to be ushered into eternity. Who will know that death is only a doorway that leads us to greater joy.

To that greatest joy of all to be forever with the Lord. We ask O Lord that thou would continue with us. Look upon us with thy favour.

[ 5 : 55 ] And O Lord we ask with the forgiveness of our sins. In Jesus name and for his sake. Amen. Amen. Let us now read the word of God.

As we find it in the epistle of Paul the apostle to the Philippians and chapter 1. Philippians and chapter 1.

And we shall read the first 14 verses of this chapter. Paul and Timotheus the servants of Jesus Christ.

To all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi with the bishops 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.

[ 6 : 58 ] 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. Even as it is meek for me to think this of you all.

Because I have you in my heart. And as much as both in my bonds and in the defence and confirmation of the gospel. You all are partakers of my grace.

For God is my record how greatly I long after you all 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 ye may approve things that are excellent. That ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ. Being filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ and to the glory and praise of God.

But I would ye should understand brethren that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather into the fatherance of the gospel. So that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace and in all other places.

[ 8 : 06 ] And many of the brethren in the Lord walking confident by my bonds are much more bold to speak the word without fear. And so on may the Lord bless unto us the reading of that portion of his word.

Let us then return to the epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Philippians chapter 1 and read from the beginning. Paul and Timothy is the servants of Jesus Christ.

To all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi with the bishops and deacons. Grace be unto you and peace from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

And over the next few weeks we hope to study this epistle of Paul to the Philippians. This morning we dealt with the beginning of that relationship that came to exist between Paul and the church at Philippi.

By which we can come to some understanding of why Paul has a particular sense of attachment and affection to the church at Philippi.

[ 9 : 21 ] We saw this morning how through the guidance of the Holy Spirit the gospel was brought to Philippi and into Europe. But we also saw how the mighty power of the Holy Spirit made the gospel effective at Philippi.

When Paul, Silas and Luke arrived at Philippi there were no Christians. It was only as Paul and his companions began to preach that a small group of believers gathered around them.

Luke describes her as three conversions that took place in the city. Namely that of Lydia, the slave girl and the Roman jailer. There were many other conversions but we can ask ourselves why did Luke select to tell us about just those three conversions?

Well those three stood worlds apart. And yet all three were changed and saved by the same gospel and were welcomed into the same church. As we saw this morning at Philippi we see both the universal appeal of the gospel, that it could reach such a wide diversity of people, and its unifying effect on all that accepts it, that it can bind people together into God's family.

The theme of being united as one in Christ is one of the themes that we find throughout this letter.

[ 10 : 59 ] Many more must have been touched by the gospel for before Paul and Silas left Philippi we are told that they went out of the prison and entered into the house of Lydia, and when they had seen the brethren they comforted them and departed.

It is worth noting that specific activity of Paul and his companions, at least in two cases, a clear pattern is described, and perhaps we can assume that the same would be true of the third case of conversion that is brought before us in the city of Philippi.

In the case of Lydia we are told, and when she was baptized and her household she besought us saying, if we have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house and abide there, and she constrained us.

We find that in the book of Acts and chapter 16 that we dealt with this morning. You see, Paul and his companions were not only concerned to preach the gospel at Philippi and see conversions being effective by the Spirit at Philippi, but they were also concerned to support the fruits of the gospel in a God-appointed manner, which was to baptize and to teach them.

As it was true of Lydia, the same is true regarding the jailer. We read there in Acts 16, And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house.

[ 12 : 44 ] And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes, and was baptized, he and all his, straightway. And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house.

The Roman jailer gets up, and he calls the other members of his household, and the word is preached, and he's baptized along with his believing household.

Then he tenderly cares for the servants of Christ, and rejoices in God. See, this is the beginning of that relationship that came to exist between Paul and the church at Philippi.

That leaves them so attached with great affection to the church at Philippi. We know that they had to leave Philippi, but the church at Philippi loved Paul, and never lost interest in his work, as he moved on to other cities.

After he left Philippi, he moved on to Thessalonica, and when the church at Philippi heard that he was in need, they sent him a gift, which he acknowledges in chapter 4 of this epistle.

[ 14 : 06 ] For even in Thessalonica, he sent once and again unto my necessity. Again, in his second letter to the Corinthians, he makes mention of the church at Philippi, that they met with his needs.

For that which was lacking to me, the brethren which came from Macedonia, supplied. And although many years had now passed since Paul had first visited Philippi and had founded the church there, the love of the people of Philippi for Paul was still strong, and the church had not forgotten the service among them.

Eventually, Paul is arrested and sent to Rome, and this letter to the Philippians were written by Paul from a Roman prison. It is a very deep and intimate letter.

It is regarded, actually, as the most intimate letter among all the letters written by Paul. And well, may you ask, how can this man, Paul, once a proud Pharisee, now write from a Roman prison to a Gentile church using such intimate and personal and tender words?

A letter to a group of people at Philippi that is hundreds of miles away, so much so that he felt free to bear his heart to them at this, in this deep and intimate level that can only be the result of the grace of God.

[ 15 : 40 ] Because this man, Paul, a proud Pharisee, would have looked upon this Gentile church as dogs, as castaways.

But now here he is, and he's using the most intimate and deep, affectionate words to a church, to a Gentile church.

Now the circumstances that provoked him to send this letter are clearly indicated in the letter itself. The church at Philippi had selected one of its leaders by the name of Evaporiditus to go all the way from Philippi to Rome in order to bring to the imprisoned apostle things that were necessary for his physical well-being.

And having received these benefits from the church, he sends Evaporiditus back to the church with this letter. At the end of chapter 2, Paul explains that there was a delay in sending him back because Evaporiditus nearly died in fulfilling his ministry.

And Paul exhorts them, Receive him therefore in the Lord with all gladness and hold such in reputation because for the work of Christ he was nigh unto death, not regarding his life to supply your lack of service toward me.

[ 17 : 02 ] Now, we have already looked at three of the best-known conversions that took place at Philippi, but here is a man who was also converted at Philippi. Evaporiditus, he has a Greek name which implies the possibility that he was brought up in a pagan environment.

However, at some point he was converted to Christ. He is described to us in his relationship to Paul. Paul says of him, he is my brother, my companion in labour and my fellow soldier.

And then he is described for us in his relationship to the church at Philippi. He is your messenger and minister with respect to my needs. Now, bound up in that two-fold relationship of Evaporiditus to Paul and the church at Philippi, there is much instruction.

But we leave that hopefully for another time. Except, I just want to mention this. Like the previous conversions that we have considered, Lydia and the slave girl and the Roman jailer, these two men, Paul and Evaporiditus, would have nothing in common with each other.

Their religions were miles apart. And yes, you may well ask, how then did this come to pass that Paul uses such endearing words to describe their relationship?

[ 18 : 28 ] What brought these men into a relationship of brotherly love? It was the grace of God and Jesus Christ. That was the great instrument to take these two men who naturally would have been pulled apart to the point when Paul now says, my brother.

When Christ came into their lives, all the barriers came tumbling down and crashed into the ground. while if Evaporiditus could look back to his paganism and Paul to his Judaism, nevertheless, there was now one thing that brought them together and that was the grace of God in Jesus Christ.

Here again, we see the unifying effect of the grace of God in Jesus Christ. Christ. Now in Paul we have a real man with real temporal needs and a real prison with a real chain.

Although he is given what we might call some house liberty so that he may have visitors. But he has this Roman guard by his side day and night attached to him by a chain.

You see, God has different purposes in permitting suffering to come upon us. God has different purposes in permitting certain restrictions to be upon us.

[ 20 : 04 ] For Paul on this occasion his suffering and restrictions were permitted by God so that the gospel might be spread to others. But I would you should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather into the furtherance of the gospel so that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace and in all other places.

It is rather unfortunate that we have here the word palace because Paul was not making a reference to a building but to a certain class of people.

the ESV sheds better light upon us where we find it written so that it has become known throughout the whole imperial guard and to all the rest that my imprisonment is for Christ.

Here is Paul and he is chained to a Roman soldier of the imperial guard who were special soldiers whose duty was to guard the emperor. But Paul was able to witness to every guard to whom he was chained over days and years and in this way he reached with the gospel to most of the imperial guard.

The example of Paul had its effect upon other Christians because here we are told that many of the brethren in the Lord walking confident by my bonds are much more bold to speak the word without fear.

[ 21 : 48 ] Paul begins his letter in the customary way at that time by starting with his name and the name of the one who is with him and identifies those to whom he's writing and offers a prayer for them.

Paul and Timotheus the servants of Jesus Christ to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi with the bishops and deacons. He mentions Timotheus or Timothy as one who is with him.

It has been suggested that he mentions Timothy because he served as Paul's secretary by writing down Paul's transcript of this letter. Of course the church at Philippi would know Timothy from Paul's first visit among them but there was a unique relationship forged between Paul and Timothy in the gospel.

Paul speaks of Timothy with great affection. He writes but you know the proof of him that as a son with the father he has served with me in the gospel.

Paul attaches the name of Timothy to his salutations in another five of his letters. He mentions them in 2nd Corinthians and 1st and 2nd Thessalonians in his epistle to the Colossians and in his letter to Philemon.

[ 23 : 17 ] Now Paul was an apostle of Jesus Christ and this is a title that he uses along with his name in most of his letters apart from the letter to the Thessalonians where he just mentions his name and his letter to Philemon where he names himself as a prisoner of Jesus Christ.

And when he comes to address the church at Philemon he does something unique. He gives himself and Timothy the same title as servants of Jesus Christ.

He does not mention there at all his apostleship. He just says Paul and Timothy as the servants of Jesus Christ.

I think this balances in with what we have already noted as one of the major themes of his letter. We are all united as one in Christ.

All united as one in Christ. Whether we are the messages of the gospel or whether whatever ministry we are involved in, we are all one in Jesus Christ.

[ 24 : 33 ] Remember how Paul writes to the church at Ephesus and he says, Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners but fellow citizens with the saints and of the household of God.

We are one in Jesus Christ. Then Paul comes to name those to whom he's writing. Paul is writing to the church at Philippi, to the body of believers at Philippi, and he names them as saints in Christ Jesus.

What does Paul mean by calling the believers at Philippi saints? We see from his other letters that this is a common way by which Paul speaks of believers.

He writes to the saints at Corinth, to the saints at Ephesus, to the saints at Rome and so on. Well this word saints in the biblical sense refers to consecration or the setting apart.

So Paul was writing to those who were set apart in Philippi that made up the body of believers in the city. This meaning we find in the Old Testament.

[ 25 : 44 ] For example, when Moses was instructed by God to sanctify the altar and the vessels of the tabernacle and so on, obviously there was no change in the stones of the altar or in the structure of the vessels.

It simply meant that they were set apart for the worship of God. And when we come to the New Testament we find that Jesus prayed for his disciples and for their sakes I sanctify myself that they also might be sanctified through the truth.

Now this does not mean that Jesus made himself more holy for he was holy. But it does mean that he separated himself for a specific task.

The task of providing salvation for us by his death. He set himself apart to the work of the cross. Peter in his first letter reminds us that we are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people, that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.

Every Christian has been set apart by God and to himself. You are not your own for you have been bought by a price. So here Paul writes to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi.

[ 27 : 11 ] They were all saints set apart by God for himself. Every believer is a saint.

Every believer has been set apart. Every believer, every person in Jesus Christ, united to Christ by faith, have been set apart by God for himself.

Now when you think of some of those who made up this body of believers at Philippi, there was a wealthy businesswoman, there was a slave girl who was once demon-possessed, and there was a brutal Roman soldier, and yet they were all saints in Christ Jesus.

Today you may be struggling with sin, how easily you give in to temptation in your life, you may like Peter have denied the Lord, but if we are in Christ Jesus, despite our weaknesses and our failures and our imperfections, we are saints.

We are those set apart by God in Christ Jesus for himself. We are saints not because of what we have done or what we are doing, but because we have been separated into God in Jesus Christ.

[ 28 : 36 ] To all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi with the bishops and deacons. We are all together and we labour together for the fathorance of the gospel.

He is addressing this letter to all the saints in Christ Jesus. He is not simply addressing individual Christians. Paul uses this word all five times in the first eight verses of this letter.

This letter is addressed to all who are set apart in Jesus Christ for they are all the recipients of the grace of God in Jesus Christ.

Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, labouring together to all those who are set apart in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi with the bishops and deacons.

Whatever level of ministry we are involved in, whether we are bishops or deacons or apostles, says Paul, we are all one in Christ Jesus.

[ 29 : 50 ] We are all the servants of Jesus Christ. And then he says, grace be unto you and peace from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

Grace was a normal Greek address that meant greetings and peace was a common form of greetings among the Jewish people. So that grace and peace were the ordinary form of Greek and Hebrew greetings.

It is certainly a suitable form of greetings to a church that was made up of Jews and Gentiles. But I think that Paul's words here has a more deep, a more depth to them than just to be a form of greeting.

I think that the word grace here, as used by Paul, has the full biblical meaning. And that is the unmerited favour of God.

If we are going to have any true understanding of the grace of God towards us, we must begin with the knowledge that God has acted graciously towards us in Christ entirely apart from any human merit or any human effort.

[ 31 : 08 ] And here Paul is invoking for the church at Philippi nothing less than the favour of God, the unmerited favour of God, he says, be unto you.

grace. And just like the word grace, I think that the word peace has a lot more depth to it than just a form of common greeting.

If grace is the unmerited favour of God towards us, then peace is the result of that favour. Here at the very beginning of his letter, he gives to us the heart of the gospel, which is grace and peace.

Remember when Jesus was born into the world, the angels sang, glory to God in the highest and on earth peace goodwill to old men. They taught that we would know peace through the one that was born.

Remember Jesus when he speaks of peace to his disciples, he says, peace I lay with you, my peace I give unto you, not as the world giveth, give I unto you, let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

[ 32 : 30 ] And you will recall that after his resurrection when the disciples assembled in the upper room that same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut, when the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst and said unto them, peace be unto you.

You see, the greatest need for any sinner is to know God's grace and peace. That's the greatest need for you and I, to know God's grace and peace.

And these two are always united together in that order. When with grace comes peace, when grace comes, peace comes.

And here you find that Paul needs a source of that grace and peace. They are from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

You see, peace can be considered in two ways. First, by the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross.

[ 33 : 43 ] Jesus gives us peace with God. You see, that is our greatest need, to have peace with God, to be restored into that fellowship and communion with God that was broken by sin, to be restored into that fellowship and communion, to have peace with God, to be reconciled to God.

Because as we are by our sinners, we are apart from God. The Bible says that we are at enmity with God.

And the greatest need is for that enmity to be taken away and for me and you to be reconciled to God, to have peace with God.

This is what Paul refers to when he writes his letter to the Romans and he says, therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

And flowing from peace with God, there is the peace of God. peace of God.

[ 35 : 08 ] And the peace of God is that ministry of the Holy Spirit that gives us that inner peace of conscience which arises from an assurance of sins forgiven and being reconciled with God.

This is the peace of which later on Paul writes, and the peace of God which passeth all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds through Jesus Christ.

Matthew Henry writes in his commentary, when Christ was about to leave the world, he made his will. His soul he bequeathed to his father.

His body he bequeathed to Joseph to be decently interred. His clothes fell to the soldiers, his mother he left to the care of John, but what should he leave to his poor disciples, that had left all for him, silver and gold he had none, but he left them with what was infinitely better, his peace.

When we find peace it is only because God first comes to us in grace. Tonight God is coming to you in grace.

[ 36 : 39 ] He is coming to you in the gospel. He is coming to you in grace. And if you are going to find peace, peace with God and peace of conscience through the assurance of your sins being forgiven and being reconciled to God, then you must respond to his grace.

You must come to God through the Lord Jesus Christ. You ask what is or what should be my response to his grace?

Well, earlier today we spoke of that response that Paul told the Romans jailer he had to give and that was believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.

This is the response to the gospel that will bring peace, peace with God and the peace of God into our experience.

peace. Yes, when we find peace it is only because God first comes to us in grace and if you are going to find peace then you must respond to his grace and how do you respond?

[ 38 : 03 ] By trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ. So here is Paul and at the very beginning of his letter to this church at Philippi to whom he is so attached and for whom he has such affection he says grace be unto you and peace from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.



Well may the Lord bless our thoughts upon his word this evening. Let us pray. Eternal and ever blessed Lord we give thanks to thee again for the gospel or for the good news of Jesus Christ as we come O Lord before thee and we confess that we are sinners that we sin in thought and word and in deed.

We confess O Lord that our sin has broken that fellowship and communion with thee but blessed be thy name for thy grace which can restore us back into that fellowship and communion with thee and we give thee thanks O Lord that thy longing is that sinners such as we are be brought to reconciliation with thyself to be reconciled with thee and so we pray O Lord that we would indeed respond to thy grace to the offer of thy grace in the gospel by believing in the Lord Jesus Christ by trusting yourselves to the Lord Jesus Christ and we ask O Lord that those of our number who have trusted in the Lord Jesus Christ who have been reconciled with God who knows to have peace with

God and who knows the peace of God through the ministry of the Holy Spirit and the assurance of our sins being forgiven and being reconciled to thee we ask O Lord that we would continue to have a consciousness of peace of God in our hearts that would leave us O Lord to be strengthened and encouraged in our faith and in our witness O Lord we ask that thou would continue with us and may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit abide with you all now and forever more Amen