

... in Philippi

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[0 : 0 0] Well, let us turn back to Paul's letter to the Philippians, and we'll read again at the very beginning. Philippians chapter 1, verse 1. 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.

Now, for the benefit of those of you who weren't at the service this morning, we spent some time thinking about the words of verse 1 that we find at the very beginning of this letter.

And as we said, you can come to a letter like this, and you can read the opening verse which describes who the letter is from and who the letter is for, and conveys a message of greeting.

And you can easily think that these verses are not necessarily that significant. And they are really, in many ways, a formality that allows Paul to make contact with this church.

But I hope that we were able to see this morning, and I hope that we will see again tonight, that far from being a formality, far from being simply a word of greeting, this first verse contains some vital truths, and indeed some wonderful truths for us in our Christian walk.

[1 : 3 5] And the focus of our attention today has been on the smallest word of all that we find in this verse, the word in. As we said this morning, the ESV translation doesn't completely bring out the literal words of the Greek, because what we have in the ESV is that it says to the saints in Christ Jesus who are at Philippi.

But in Greek, the words that are used are that this letter is to the saints who are in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi. That little word in is of vital importance.

And these believers in Philippi are in two places. They are in Christ and they are in Philippi.

This morning we focused on the first of these. The fact that these believers, and indeed every other believer, is in Christ. We describe that as union with Christ, whereby through faith we are joined, we are united to the Lord Jesus Christ.

And that is true of every Christian, and indeed that is at the absolute core of the Christian faith. Because when you read through the writings of Paul, you will again and again and again see this wonderful little word in, coming up repeatedly, whereby our status as Christians is one of being in Christ.

[3 : 0 5] And our union with Christ, the fact that we are in Christ, means that we are united to Christ in his death and in his resurrection. When Christ died, we as his people died with him.

And when Christ rose again, every single believer is raised to new life with him. We are united to Christ. As Paul says, if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his.

And the glorious truth of union with Christ is that everything that is Christ's is yours if you are a believer.

Everything that is his, everything that he is, is yours and is what you are as a believer. That means that for the Christian, the measure of your status is Christ himself.

Christ is the measure of your status. As we said in the morning, you think of Christ's righteousness, whereby he perfectly conformed to the law of God and where he perfectly represented everything that God is.

[4 : 19] That righteousness is now your righteousness if you are a believer. You think of the victory that Christ won over death. We think of his dying on the cross, whereby he was assaulted and attacked by all the force of evil and all the force of death.

And yet he withstood it all. And on the third day, he rose again victorious over death. Christ's victory over death is astonishing. But it's your victory too.

Because death is just as much defeated in your circumstances as it is in Christ's because you are united to him and his victim.

And we can think of so many things that Christ has that are now ours because we are united to him. You think of the access that Christ has to God the Father.

Christ is the only begotten Son. He is the one who can come to God at any time with absolute open access. Christ can approach God and he will be granted the deepest, closest, most intimate access that you could possibly imagine.

[5 : 36] You think of God and you think, well, the only one who could really get really close to God is Christ. And yet the access that Christ has is the access that you have, if you are a believer.

You have the same access to the Father through faith in Jesus Christ. You think of God's family adopted into the one family whereby we become the brothers and sisters of Christ and the children of God himself.

That's your family. You are part of that if you are a believer. Your place and your position in that family is as precious and as important as everyone else's.

And we can keep thinking of all the things that Christ has. You think of Christ's glory. Christ is utterly glorious. When you think of the word glory, you should be thinking in terms of worth, in terms of weight, in terms of something that is of immense value.

Christ is glorious beyond words. He is worth more than we can imagine. And if you believe in Him, you are worth that too.

[7 : 02] You are that precious. You are that important. Because you are united to Christ. And perhaps most amazingly of all, you think of how much God loves His Son.

You think of the immensity of the depth of love that God the Father has for God the Son. It is mind-blowingly big.

It is the deepest and most perfect and most wonderful love. I could never, ever, ever, ever describe to you how much God loves His Son.

But do you know that through union with Christ, that is how much God loves you. And when we see these things and when we think about these things, it is astonishing the level at which Christ brings us.

Christ is the measure of our status. And you could so easily, and I could completely understand if you sat before me tonight and you said, That's too much.

[8 : 20] You're going too far. Our status is not at that level. Well, I am going to read to you the words of the greatest theologian who ever lived.

And it confirms the reality of it all. The glory that you have given me, I have given to them. That they may be one even as we are one.

I in them and you in me. That they may be perfectly one. So that the world may know that you sent me and loved them.

Even as you loved me. Now of course that theologian is Jesus Christ himself. In the words of John 17.

That is how amazing our union with Christ is. By faith we are united to him.

[9 : 20] And everything that is Christ's. And everything that is Christ's. Becomes our. And in many ways that's why union with Christ is the central doctrine of the Christian faith.

We are saved by being united to him. We are rescued by benefiting from all of his works. We are preserved by being joined and kept in his hands forevermore.

And our glorification will be one that is done in Christ. Sharing in his glory at the end of the ages when Christ returns.

We as believers are in Christ. But there is another in in this verse.

Believers are in Christ. But these believers are also in somewhere else. The ESV says that they are at Philippi. But the literal translation is that they are in Philippi.

[10 : 24] In Christ and in Philippi. And it's this second in that I want us to focus on together for a short while tonight.

At a basic level this is simply describing the physical location of the believers. They dwelt in the city of Philippi. Which was in the sort of northeastern region of what we would call Greece now.

At this time it was part of Macedonia. And it was the first place that Paul planted a church in Europe. If you go back to Acts chapter 16. It's Paul's second missionary journey.

And we have that great moment when he has the vision of the man from Macedonia. Calling him over to help. And that's exactly what he did. He set off and they ended up at Philippi.

And there Paul planted a church. And it's very clear that Paul has a deep affection for the church here. In verse 8 of this chapter he says.

[11 : 25] God is my witness. How I yearn for you all. With the affection of Christ Jesus. And so as Paul writes this letter.

He is writing to Christians. Who are in a specific location. They are in Philippi. And I want us simply to ask the question.

Why is that important? Why does this matter? Why should we think about it? Well there are two main things that we are being taught by this statement.

Two key lessons that we have to learn. And the first of these is a lesson in ecclesiology. Now the word ecclesiology basically means the study of the church.

By this statement in verse 1. We are learning some vital truths about the church of Jesus Christ.

[12 : 25] If you look at what Paul says. He is literally saying to the saints in Christ Jesus. To the ones in Philippi.

And so implicit in that statement. Is the fact that there are believers in this city. But also there is the fact that there are believers elsewhere also.

And the same thing is revealed in many places in the New Testament. The beginning of the letter to the Corinthians is another example. Where it says to the church of God that is in Corinth.

Now that is an immensely important statement. Because the word church is singular. It is saying that Paul is writing to the one church of God.

But in particular he is dealing with a part of it that is in Corinth. And he is saying exactly the same thing here when he writes to the Philippians. He is writing to the believers who are there in a specific place.

[13 : 25] But who are also part of a wider body of Christ. And so this little phrase is highlighting two vital truths for us.

First of all it is reminding us that there is one church. And secondly it is telling us that this one church exists in different locations.

Now when Paul was writing this letter he was in prison in Rome. But his writing of this letter and his concern for the Philippians.

Was emphasizing the fact that there was a connection between the churches that Paul had established. And indeed between all the churches that had been established across the Mediterranean area.

Indeed Paul's reason for writing this letter was the fact that they had actually sent him a gift. If you go all the way through to chapter 4. Paul says I have received full payment and more and well supplied.

[14 : 30] Having received from Epaphroditus the gifts that you sent. A fragrant offering. A sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God. And so you see the connection that exists between Paul and between this church in Philippi.

Paul receives this gift and he writes this letter as a means of saying thank you. And while doing so he gives a lot of instruction to the church.

The key point I want to emphasize is the fact that the New Testament church groupings did not exist as independent bodies. They did not exist in isolation from one another.

They did not simply focus on their own circumstances and forget that they were part of a wider church. Rather there was a connectedness between them.

And the letters in the New Testament and the missionary journeys. And all the greetings that you hear about that you read about in these letters. Are a testimony to that fact. That all of these churches remained connected to one another.

[15 : 38] And concerned for one another. Now it's vital that we remember that that would have been infinitely more difficult.

Two thousand years ago than it is now. Right now I can pull my phone out of my pocket. And I could phone somebody in the Mediterranean.

Or I could speak to somebody in Rome. Or to somebody in Africa. Or to somebody in America. We could go home after this service and go online and send an email to anyone we want. We could Skype. We could contact.

We can keep in touch instantly and easily. But I don't need to tell you that it was nowhere near as easy as that for Paul and for these believers.

And yet despite the distances. Despite the obstacles. Despite the complexity of the situation. They made sure that they remained connected to one another.

[16 : 38] And indeed they had such a concern for one another. It's wonderfully moving to read about the language that Paul uses.

He speaks about how he yearns for this church. And that's wonderful. But at the same time it's challenging.

Because I have to ask myself. Do I look at other congregations. And do I yearn for them? Do I yearn for the well-being of the churches across our islands?

Do I yearn for the well-being of the congregations in Glasgow and in Edinburgh and in London? Do I know anything about them? Paul had a concern and a connection with the people of God across the area and the region.

And that's one of the reasons why we are Presbyterians. Presbyterianism isn't intended to make things complicated. Presbyterianism is meant to establish a connection and a governance and accountability across the churches.

[17 : 53] The different church groups that meet. Presbyterianism is a means, an effort to maintain this connection that exists between, that should exist between congregations.

And that is something that should be there. And regardless of our views on church government, whether we are Presbyterians or independents or whatever we may be, this connection should be there.

There should be an interconnectedness between the church groups. Paul does not think in terms of one church in Rome or one church in Philippi and another church in Ephesus.

In Paul's eyes, they are one church in different locations. And that's why Paul can speak of the partnership in the gospel that he shares with these people.

Verse 5, he says, Paul and we are the same today.

[19 : 15] We are partners, part of a worldwide church. We are in partnership in the gospel with every other believer across all the nations to the very ends of the earth.

We work together and our single common goal is to fulfill the Great Commission, to spread the message of Jesus Christ and to glorify and honor our Lord and our God.

And this helps us understand a very, very intriguing passage that we have in this chapter. Read again at verse 14.

It's a very interesting passage that we have here. Paul says, Most of the brothers, having become confident in the Lord by my imprisonment, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.

Some indeed preach Christ from envy and rivalry, but others from goodwill. The latter do it out of love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel. The former proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely, but thinking to afflict me in my imprisonment.

[20 : 28] Now that's a fascinating passage, because it reveals to us, first of all, that even at this early stage, there were tensions and there were conflicts even within the church.

There were obviously people, Christians, preachers, who did not like Paul. For whatever reason it was, we don't know, but there was clearly tension.

And we have every reason to assume that Paul had not done anything to provoke that, but we don't know for certain what the background details are. But the consequence of it is what Paul describes here, the fact that some people are preaching the word, but they are actually doing so in a way whereby they will hope that they will undermine Paul.

And we think to yourself, well that seems so strange, but yet, I think it still happens. We still see places where Christ is preached, and where some people would gladly see their own congregations grow at the expense of others.

And we have to make sure that we guard against it. But what is really, really interesting is Paul's reaction. He describes this situation whereby then he has opponents in the Christian church who are trying to undermine him, and yet, in doing so, they're trying to build up their own congregations to preach Christ.

[22 : 02] Paul then says, what then? How do we respond to it? What do we do? And Paul's answer is absolutely magnificent.

Paul does not say we stop them. Paul does not say we separate from them. Paul does not say we keep them at arm's length. Paul does not say we stop talking to them.

Paul says, I don't care as long as Christ is preached. As long as the role of the church is fulfilled.

Whether Christ is preached in pretense or in truth, I will rejoice as long as Christ is proclaimed. And Paul's priorities are a wonderful, wonderful example to us all.

And all of this is reminding us of the fundamental truth that the locations may be different, but there is only one church.

[23 : 09] There may be many, many different groups in many, many different locations, but there is only one church. I remember this being brought home to me very simply, but very, very clearly in a lecture while I was at ETS.

It was a lecture in ecclesiology, and the lecturer stood up before the class, and he says, I would ask you a question. How many churches are there in Edinburgh? And of course, we all started looking at each other, and we were thinking, and we were counting, and we were thinking, well, you think maybe 100, maybe 200, and we started to fire guesses out at 100, 150, 200.

We had absolutely no idea, but we were guessing. And the lecturer gave a wonderful, wonderful answer, because he said, it's a trick question. There is only one. There is only one.

And that is a fundamental biblical truth, and it's one that we must all hold on to, and that we must all have as a foundational view of the church.

And this is why we have to say, even though it might sound controversial, we have to say that the concept of separate denominations is unbiblical.

[24 : 28] It is unbiblical, because in Paul's eyes, and in God's eyes, there is only one church.

And I know that it is not as simple as that, and I know that there are complications, and I know that there are some places that claim to be churches, and yet are not really in any way adhering to biblical Christianity.

That is another issue. The key point I want to emphasize is that your basic fundamental view of the church must be that there is one church.

And your basic view of division, or of isolation, or of separation, or of hostility, must be that that is wrong. Because there is only one church.

That is the biblical view. And we are a biblical church. And of course, all of this is backed up completely by everything that we have said already today about our union with Christ.

[25 : 38] This is the wonderful thing about theology. Biblical theology. When you listen to everything that the Bible says, everything fits together perfectly. Because the Bible says that there is one church, and the reason that it says that there is one church, is because the church has been united to one person.

We have been united to Christ. There is only one branch, one building, one temple, one body. We have been united to Christ. Therefore, we are one.

And the wonderful implication of that is that if we have been united to Christ, so has every other believer. And therefore, our theology of union with Christ must shape our ecclesiology in terms of the fact that there is only one church.

And that, of course, should shape the way we view other believers. We rejoice in the fact that we are united to Christ and that we share in all the privileges of that. But we must remember that every other Christian is united to him too.

And this emphasizes something that is of vital, vital importance. The fact that our salvation has a personal and a corporate nature.

[27 : 01] This is something that we must always, always hold on to. Faith in Christ is a personal thing. It's personal in the sense that nobody else's faith can save you.

You must believe yourself. Your wife's faith will not save you. Your parents' faith will not save you. Your children's faith will not save you. Your minister's faith will not save you.

You must believe. You must repent. You must put your faith in Christ. It is a deeply, deeply personal thing.

But the moment that you do that, the moment that you take that personal step of faith, you then enter into a corporate relationship with the people of God.

You enter into a vast company. You enter into a glorious kingdom. You become part of a wonderful, wonderful family.

[28 : 05] And that's why our view of the church should be held so high. That's why church is so, so, so important in the life of the Christian.

Because when we come together as people, like we are tonight, or any time we meet together in church, that is the outworking of our union with Christ. We are here because we are all united to Him and we are all united together if we are Christians.

Our church, our fellowship, our time together is where the body of Christ meets in union with Him and in union with one another.

It is of fundamental importance that we recognize that Christianity is ultimately not about me and not about you. It is about us.

It is a collective thing. It is a corporate reality. And this is immensely important for us nowadays because this is one of the many wonderful, wonderful ways in which Christianity is completely counter-cultural.

[29 : 19] Because the world is going this way, down a path of individualism where all that matters is me, where my self-expression and my self-desires and my self-achievement is all that matters.

That is the way the world is going but Christianity is going that way. Whereby we are a collective people. Whereby we love God and we love one another.

Whereby we are a family. Whereby we are all part of that one wonderful body. In the morning we said that we are saints in the sense that we are set apart.

But when you are set apart you are not set apart to isolation. You are set apart to belong to a new group. To a new kingdom. To a new family.

And so our ecclesiology has to be collective in terms of the unity of the church. But it is also specific in the sense that this church is located in different locations.

[30 : 28] Paul was writing to the part of the church that was in Philippi. You are the part of the church that is in Garibaldi.

Christ. And we worship and serve and work as part of Christ's worldwide church. So Paul is giving us a vital vital lesson in terms of ecclesiology.

That's the first lesson. But the second lesson is equally if not even more important. And I want us in many ways to focus our attention more mostly on this.

because Paul is not just teaching us about ecclesiology when he says that these people are in Philippi. He is also teaching us a vital lesson about mission.

Paul is teaching us about mission. and this phrase in Philippi is teaching us a vital lesson in terms of how we go from Sunday into Monday as Christians.

[31 : 42] We are here together as God's people. We are here to worship. We are here to bask in the glory of the gospel as we read it in God's word. But tomorrow we have to go back to work.

or we have to go back to school or back to college or back to our homes back to whatever duties and responsibilities we have.

How do we do that? How do we go from Sunday into the rest of the week? Well Paul is reminding us of the fundamental truth that these believers were in Christ but they were also in Philippi.

they were in a specific location and they were surrounded by people who needed to hear the gospel. In other words they were in a mission field.

They were in a mission field. And Paul is emphasizing in this verse that as Christians we are not to ever live in isolation from the rest of the world.

[32 : 47] These people these believers were in Philippi and that means that they had a huge opportunity to witness and to serve and to spread the gospel. And exactly the same is true of you.

You are in point and point is a mission field. Point is a mission field.

The free church has what's called the missions board. There are various boards which coordinate the activities of the church. They report to the general assembly.

There's a board for ministry. It's called the board of ministry obviously enough. And that's what looks after applicants for the ministry. It looks after ministers and their working conditions etc.

etc. You have the board of trustees which I don't really know what they do but they seem to be in charge of all the money. You have the seminary board which obviously looks after the seminary and you have the mission board.

[33 : 51] Now the missions board used to be two separate boards called the home missions board and the international missions board and a year ago they were joined together into one which was in many ways a helpful and wise thing to do.

But the distinction between home missionaries and international missionaries is an important one for us to remember. Because in terms of international mission if you are going to have international mission you need to have international missionaries.

People who go from our country to others. And I'm sure that you all know of people who have done that. Some of you maybe even have done that at times yourselves.

In order to do international mission you need international missionaries. But the board also takes care of home mission. And what do you need in order to do home mission?

You need home missionaries. And who are the home missionaries? You and me.

[35 : 02] And the reality is is that if you are a Christian you have a choice. Your choice is not am I going to be a missionary or not. Your choice is simply this. Am I going to be an international missionary or am I going to be a home missionary?

Because whether we are here or there if we are home or if we are abroad we are in a mission field. These saints were in Philippine and that was their mission field.

You are in point or in Stornoway if you work there or wherever you will be tomorrow you are in a mission field. And this is where we come back to the word saints that we have in this verse.

As we said this morning and earlier on the word saints comes from the word holy which basically means to be set apart. Somebody that is set apart.

Somebody that is different. You are set apart. You are a saint. And these saints were in Philippine. You if you are a Christian are a saint in Garibaldi or in whichever part of point you live or wherever you may be from a day to day.

[36 : 25] You are a saint. But your lifestyle must reflect that. Your lifestyle must reflect that.

we are in Lewis. I am in Carlisle. You are in Point. And there people can see us. And tomorrow wherever you are you are visible to the world.

And that is a marvellous marvellous marvellous opportunity. Because there as God's people you can be seen. But that means that our conduct must be such that they can see that we are saints.

It must be visible. It must be obvious. It must be something that people can see. I know of a minister who started not that long ago in his first charge.

And when he came to that first charge he met somebody in the community where he had gone who had worked with him for a while in his previous job before he became a minister.

[37 : 37] And he was chatting to him and they were talking about the fact that they worked together. And this man in the community said to the minister, I had no idea that you were religious.

And it almost had come as a surprise to him that this man was now a minister. Although he had worked together, he didn't know.

Now, that minister must have been doing something wrong. Now, I am not one of these people who will advocate being heavy in terms of your gospel witness.

I don't think that putting anything down anyone's throat is productive. But we can go too far the other way as well. And this minister, had not made it clear that he was a Christian.

He had worked with someone for a number of months, and yet they did not know. Now, something was wrong there. Something was wrong.

[38 : 48] And the reason I can be so hard on that minister is because it was me. Our conduct must show that we are saints.

That's what Paul says in verse 27. Let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come to see you or am absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel.

Our manner of life must be worthy of the gospel. And this is where we are being reminded of the crucial balance between being in the world, being in touch with people, being in contact with people, and yet at the same time we must be saints.

We must be different. Remember a saint is one who has been set apart, taken out of the kingdom of darkness and set apart and brought into the kingdom of life, removed from the kingdom of evil and brought into the kingdom of God.

We are set apart, we belong to a different way. And that means that as we go through life we must be different. If the world is going to be selfish, then we must be different.

[40 : 07] We must make sure that we aren't. If the world puts itself first and puts its own success first and its own achievement and its own possessions, we are not going to be. If the world is going to be greedy and constantly seeking more and more and more, we have got to be different.

different. If the world is going to be easily angered, whereby we blow our top if somebody pulls out in front of us in the car or if somebody makes a mistake at work and we lay into them.

If the world is doing that, we are going to be different. If the world is doing what is right in its own eyes, we must be different.

The world today is characterized by the God of self-expression, whereby our morality and our conduct and even our laws must be shaped by the fact that we have to be true to ourselves.

That whatever I believe I am, whatever I feel I must be, that is how I must live. The world today is dominated by self-expression, but the way of the kingdom of God is not self-expression, it is self-denial.

[41 : 18] self-expression because you and I know that there is something fundamentally wrong with the self of every one of us. Self-expression means self-indulgence, and if you are indulging self, you are indulging sin, but Christ tells us to deny ourselves and to be different.

And that means as Christians, our conduct must be different. And this is where union with Christ is not just a wonderful theological reality, it is also a life transforming truth whereby our lives are changed.

It is our transforming truth in our lives. Paul writes about this in Romans 6, you must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body to make you obey its passions.

Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness, for sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under the law, but under grace.

Our union with Christ should transform us to live different lives. And there is so much wonderful teaching in the New Testament as to how that should shape itself, and perhaps the best place to go is to the Sermon on the Mount, whereby Jesus teaches us how he wants his people to live.

[42 : 56] It is a reminder that as God's people we must constantly shun sin. we should be ruthless with sin. If sin tempts us, if sin manifests itself towards us, we should be ruthless with it, keeping it as far, as far away as possible.

That is what Paul speaks about. Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but we should shun sin and turn away from it.

Now, every single one of us as God's people, we struggle with sin. We all, all struggle with sin. And I'm sure all of us can think of something today, even in the last hour, whereby we have sinned.

But I want to remind you that if you struggle with sin, if you battle with sin, if sin is a constant enemy in your life, that is a wonderful thing.

Because if you are battling with sin, it tells you that you are no longer sin's friend. You are sin's enemy. And that is how we want to be.

[44 : 17] We want to be in opposition to sin. We want to be in conflict with sin. And yes, we are weak in terms of that conflict, but Christ himself dwells in us by his spirit.

and through that spirit working in us, we can shun sin. We can turn away from it. We can walk a new path. We can follow Christ.

His law is being written on our hearts by his spirit. And as those who are united to Christ, we walk in a new way.

So if you are united to Christ, you are different. You are no longer a friend of sin. You are an enemy of sin. You are no longer in the realm of darkness.

You are in the kingdom of God. You are wonderfully and gloriously different. But the vital truth that the words in Philippi remind us of is the fact that people have got to be able to see that you are different.

[45 : 24] different. People have got to be able to see that you are different. And the only way that the world is going to see that you are different is if you are in the world.

Now that is perhaps different to something that you might have heard or might have thought. We often think that as Christians we should keep ourselves back, back, back, back, back.

Paul does not say to these people, get out of Philippi. He says you are in Philippi. And we have got to be in the world if people are going to be able to see that we are different.

We have got to be involved. We have got to have contact with people. You as God's people have got to be in point and in Stornoway and in this community round about us.

You have got to be there because if we keep our distance from other people they are never going to see that we are different. And their judgment of us will be based on their own misunderstandings.

[46 : 27] And so many people think that the church is an exclusive club where we gather each week to look down on the rest of the world. And you and I know that that is completely untrue and yet that is what people think.

And we have got to show them what the truth really is. And so the rule I want you to remember whether you are a young Christian or an old Christian or whatever your circumstances are, the rule that Paul is reminding us of here that we must remember is that we must be involved and we must be different.

Be involved but be different. And both of these are absolutely essential. We must not neglect either of them. Because we are never going to reach the world around us here in Point or in Carlyway or wherever.

The world of people who are dying in sin and who are desperately in need of a saviour and yet who are completely blind to the fact that anything is wrong. We are never going to reach them if we keep our distance.

And if we give the impression that we are superior and that we don't want to have anything to do with them. We will never ever reach them. But neither will we influence them in any good way if when we are involved in no different from them.

[47 : 48] We must be involved but we must be different. Some people have made the mistake of thinking that being different means being separate. And people have thought that as Christians we should have little or no contact with the world around us and with the communities in which we live in.

That is not what Paul is saying. But other people have made the mistake of thinking that being involved means being identical. So that if there is something going on in your community or in your social circle or whatever it is that you should be part of that and you should throw yourself into it to the fullest degree in exactly the same way as everybody else.

Neither of these positions are correct. Neither of these extremes are right. The rule that Paul is reminding us of is that we must be involved but be different.

And that applies in so many areas of life. If you like sheep then be involved in sheep. Be involved in the crofting.

Be involved in the lambing and then you can tell I don't know anything about sheep. I don't really know what they do. But if you like sheep be involved but be different.

[49 : 05] Be different in your speech, in your conduct, in your priorities, in your dealing with other people, in your sharing of common grazing, in your sharing of your resources.

If you like football, be in the football team but be different. If somebody makes a mistake, don't go off the head of them.

If you lose, don't go mad. If somebody makes a mistake, don't get frustrated. But be different. And if you can't play football without turning into a raging bull, then don't play football.

But if you like football and you can remain different, then do that. Be involved but be different. If you have friends who aren't Christians, be their friend.

different. But be different. Yes, have fun with them. Yes, laugh with them. Yes, pursue your hobbies with them. But be different.

[50 : 14] And if they are stepping over the line of what you know is right, whether in terms of socializing, or in terms of drinking, or in terms of relationship, or in terms of what they find entertaining, then be different.

be involved, but be different. Always remember that you are a saint in point.

You are a saint in stormway. You are a saint wherever you go. And may your behavior always be shaped by that.

and so Paul is highlighting for us two vital, vital truths. I've just looked at the clock. I'm so sorry, it's far too late.

Two vital, vital truths that we must, must remember. Both in terms of ecclesiology, that we are part of that church that is across the whole world, but also that we are in our own communities, and in our own villages, and in our own workplaces, and we should live our lives accordingly.

[51 : 38] And so I hope you see that far from being just a word of greeting, the words of Philipians 1 1 remind us of some vital, vital truths, and they revolve around this beautiful little word in.

You are in Christ, and if you are not a Christian, you can be in him tonight, you can be in him tonight, if you put your faith in him.

But if you are a Christian, remember that wherever you're going to be tomorrow morning, you are going there as a saint, as somebody united to Christ.

May that be what shapes our lives. who are■■■■