

Subject: *Christian Fellowship in the Gospel, Part 2*

Scripture: *Philippians 1:1-7*

In the book of Philippians, Paul mentions the gospel 9 times. He refers to the gospel in this first chapter alone 5 times. It is obvious that the gospel was on his mind and heart. Paul wrote about fellowship in the gospel (Phil. 1:5), defense and confirmation of the gospel (1:7), furtherance of the gospel (1:12), defense of the gospel (1:17), striving together for the gospel (1:27), serving in the gospel (2:22), laboring in the gospel (4:3), and spreading the gospel (4:15).

After words of introduction and greeting (1:1-2), Paul writes to them about gratitude and assurance (vs. 3-7).

1. PAUL'S GRATITUDE FOR THEIR FELLOWSHIP IN THE GOSPEL

His statement in verse 3 is one of the best things that could ever be said of a church or a Christian. Every time Paul thought about these believers in Philippi he was thankful and he prayed with joy. He was thankful for their fellowship in the gospel, the common bond they had in Christ and salvation.

A. They believed the truth of the gospel

1 Corinthians 15:1-4 ¹ Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; ² By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. ³ For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; ⁴ And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures.

B. They experienced the power of the gospel

Romans 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

1 Thessalonians 2:13 For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.

Paul remembered well the time when he first went to Philippi and gave the gospel to Lydia and the Philippian jailer, and how they were converted when they heard and believed the gospel.

2. PAUL'S CONFIDENCE IN GOD'S WORK OF SALVATION

Paul was confident that God would perform (complete) the good work He began in them. That was the work of salvation. Paul was confident that God would finish His work of

salvation. This is one of the greatest verses on eternal security in the Bible. How do we know that once we are saved we will always be saved? The answer is simple...it's because salvation is the work of God and He always completes whatever He starts. He never leaves anything half done. When we think about God's work in salvation there are two parts to that work:

A. God's work of salvation is accomplished by Christ

John 19:30 *When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.*

B. God's work of salvation is applied by the Spirit

The Lord opened Lydia's heart by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit brought conviction to the jailer so that he cried out "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"

God's work of salvation involves a sequence:

C. God's work of salvation has a commencement ("from the first day") – conversion

D. God's work of salvation has a continuation ("until now")

Paul is writing to these believers some 11 years after he first met some of them and led them to Christ. They kept on believing and living for Christ.

E. God's work of salvation has a completion ("the day of Jesus Christ")

The sequence of salvation can never be broken because God is the one who saves. Salvation is the work of God and not the work of man.

Romans 8:28-30 ²⁸ *And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.* ²⁹ *For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.* ³⁰ *Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.*

Hebrews 7:25 *Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.*

The good work of salvation is a work of grace (vs. 7). They had been transformed into new creatures. This good work of grace would be completed. Paul's confidence rested in God's purpose and power to continue the process of sanctification and bring them to final glorification. The day of Jesus Christ is a term that describes final salvation, reward, and glorification of believers. The Biblical teaching of God's preservation of the saints (eternal security) is described in many ways. It is...

- A faithfulness that will never be removed (Ps. 89:33; 138:8)
- A life that will never end (Jn. 3:16)
- A spring of water that will never cease to flow (Jn. 4:14)
- A gift that will never be lost (Jn. 6:37, 39)
- A hand from which God's sheep will never be snatched (Jn. 10:28)
- A chain that will never be broken (Rom. 8:29-30)
- A love bond that can never be severed (Rom. 8:38-39)
- A calling that will never be revoked (Rom. 11:29)
- A foundation that will never be destroyed (2 Tim. 2:19)
- An inheritance that will never fade (1 Pet. 1:4-5)

Paul had a deep love for this church. Though separated from them by many miles, Paul kept this church in his heart. They were a part of Paul's life wherever he went. Paul felt like the church was together with him in his imprisonment and ministry and also in the defense and confirmation of the gospel. Paul's stand for the gospel was the reason he was in prison and he was blessed to know the church was standing with him in the defense and confirmation of the gospel (vs. 7). "Defense" refers to Paul's ministry of answering the critics of the gospel. "Confirmation" refers to Paul's ministry of fixing the message of the gospel firmly in the hearts of believers.

The first part of this letter describes the fellowship that believers have in the gospel. This is a rich, deep, true, real, lasting fellowship when we come to know Christ as our Lord and Savior and live in fellowship with others who know Christ as their Lord and Savior.

*I'm so glad I'm a part of the family of God
I've been washed in the fountain, cleansed by His blood!
Joint heirs with Jesus as we travel this sod;
For I'm part of the family, the family of God.*