

## PHILIPPIANS – FIRST MESSAGE

### **TEXT: PHIL. 1:1-11**

#### **Introduction:**

1. On the apostle Paul's second missionary journey, he traveled as far as Troas (Troy), located on the northwest coast of Asia Minor, across the Aegean Sea from Greece.
2. One night, in a vision, a man from Macedonia appeared to Paul, saying, "Come over into Macedonia, and help us" (Acts 16:9-15).
3. So apparently Lydia was the first known Christian convert on the continent of Europe. The Lord allowed difficulties to arise, and out of this turmoil more souls were saved and a local church was established (Acts 16:16-34). Paul's epistle to the Philippians was written about ten years later.
4. Philippians was one of the apostle Paul's four "Prison Epistles," the others being Ephesians, Colossians, and Philemon.
5. Philippians is one of the most personal and affectionate of Paul's epistles. It is evident that Paul loved this church that he had established.

#### **I. PAUL'S SALUTATION (1:1, 2)**

1. Timothy is linked with Paul (1:1). He had been with Paul when they first visited Philippi (Acts 16:1ff). And now he is with Paul as Paul opens this letter.
2. Paul and Timothy are "the servants (literally, bondservants or slaves) of Jesus Christ" (1:1).
3. The epistle is addressed to "all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi" (1:1). Paul loved all the saints. All born again believers are saints. "Saint" means one who is set apart unto God and from the world. The word means "holy" or "sanctified." That should be the position of every child of God.
4. There are only two offices in the New Testament church: bishops (or pastors or elders) and deacons (1:1; cf. I Tim. 3; Titus 1:5-9; Acts 20:17,28; I Peter 5:1-4). The idea of a bishop presiding over a number of churches is foreign to the New Testament.
5. The first deacons were chosen in Acts 6. Their qualifications are similar to those of the pastor.
6. "Grace" always precedes "peace" (1:2) in all of Paul's epistles. One first has to experience God's grace before he has peace with God. "Grace" was the general Greek salutation, and "Peace" the Hebrew.

#### **II. PAUL'S LOVE FOR THE SAINTS AT PHILIPPI**

1. Paul's love for them was manifested in several ways: first of all, he thanked God for them (1:3).
2. Secondly, Paul was "always" praying for them (1:4). Here we see two aspects of prayer: thanking God (1:3), and asking God (1:4).
3. Paul was in prison but he was full of "joy" (1:4). The word *joy* appears 19 times in this epistle. The Lord Jesus Christ is named 18 times in chapter 1 alone. It is a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ that brings joy to a person's life.
4. "For your fellowship in the gospel..." (1:5) – what a wonderful phrase. They were as dedicated as Paul was in getting the Gospel out to a lost and dying world.
5. The gospel is emphasized in this epistle (1:5, 7, 12, 17, 27 twice; 2:22; 4:3, 15).
6. The word "fellowship" means "partnership" and includes their financial support (cf. 4:15-19).
7. Paul was "confident" (1:6) that God would see them through until "the day of Jesus Christ," i.e. the rapture. One Christian put it this way: "The Lord always looks at His people as they will be when they are done."
8. Agostino d' Antonio was a sculptor from Florence, Italy who worked for some time on a huge piece of marble. Finally he gave up, saying: "I can do nothing with it." Other sculptors also worked on it but they too gave up the task. The huge piece of marble was discarded and lay on a rubbish heap for 40 years. One day Michelangelo happened to see the big stone and brought it to his studio. He began working on it. A friend questioned him and he said, "It is David!" The friend could not see it but soon Michelangelo finished the job.
9. "The work which His goodness began,  
The arm of His strength will complete;  
His promise is Yea and Amen,  
And never was forfeited yet." – Augustus M. Toplady.
10. The work God does for us – salvation; the work God does in us is sanctification; and the work God does through us is service. This is the real basis for true Christian fellowship. It is not just sitting around eating or talking. It is God working through us every day. Another indication of Paul's great love for the saints at Philippi was that they were in his heart (1:7).
11. They were "partakers" (1:7b; similar word to "fellowship" – 1:5) of the grace of God. Paul is saying that they were partners in the gospel.
12. Paul's tender feelings for them is expressed in 1:8 – "For God is my record, how greatly I long after you all in the bowels (literally, "tender

feelings” or “affection”) of Jesus Christ. Moule says this verb “breathes the deep family affection of the Gospel.”

### **III. PAUL’S PRAYER FOR THE SAINTS AT PHILIPPI**

1. Let’s look at Paul’s prayer requests: First, he prayed that their love would abound “yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment (discernment)” (1:9). Please pray that God gives your pastors knowledge and discernment.
2. Secondly, that they would “approve things that are excellent” (1:10a). Sometimes it is a trial and error process as when we began our building search. But the Lord led us to the right building – we were able to “approve things that are excellent.”
3. Some things are good but not necessarily God’s will for us. We must “approve (test or discern) things that are excellent.”
4. Thirdly, that they would be “sincere and without offence till the day of Christ” 1:10b). Our English word “sincere” comes from a Latin word *sincerus*, which means “without wax.” When a man discovered a crack in a vase or some other vessel, he would fill it in with wax so that one could not tell that it had been broken. Then he would sell it as brand new. Oftentimes a customer would buy such an item and take it home only to discover the wax later on. Perhaps he noticed it on closer inspection, or maybe the hot sun would start to melt the wax. He would go back to the merchant and say: “Give me one *sincerus* – without wax.”
5. We should be “without offence” (1:10), but the Gospel certainly will offend some people. This means “blameless,” not “sinless.” Blameless implies right motives (cf. I Cor. 1:8).
6. We should keep on serving God with joy “till the day of Christ” (1:10b) – this is the second reference to the rapture (cf. 1:6).
7. Scofield says: “The ‘day of Christ’ relates wholly to the reward and blessing of saints at His coming, as ‘day of the Lord’ is connected with judgment” (p. 1212).
8. Finally, Paul’s fourth request is that they be “filled with the fruits of righteousness” (1:11), i.e. the fruit of the Spirit (cf. Gal. 5:22, 23) or what are commonly called “Christian virtues.”

### **CONCLUSION:**

I pray that Bible Baptist Church would be a church characterized by the love of Christ. And that we would be a people in whom the life of Christ produces the fruits of righteousness “unto the glory and praise of God.”

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