

THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE GOSPEL

(Part Two)

TEXT: Philippians 1:1-7, 12, 27-30

INTRODUCTION: Second only in frequency to the recurring theme of **joy** in Paul's letter to the church at Philippi is his mention of the **gospel**. What caused the apostle to be so joyful and thankful toward these Philippians? It was their "fellowship in the gospel" (verse 5). Obviously both his joy and theirs was **gospel joy**.

The gospel implies much more than the mere "good news" of Christ's death, burial, and resurrection. It carries with it the necessity of a response to it. It implies the proclamation of a message. It demands moral obedience and a lifestyle that is consistent with it. It points to Christ's sinless life as well as His death and resurrection. And – perhaps most unpopular of all its implications – the gospel's boundaries define our spiritual fellowship. We must defend the gospel and separate from those who deny it or preach a false gospel.

OUTLINE: What does true "fellowship in the gospel" entail?

- I. **Salvation** (v. 3)
 - A. The feat of God
 - B. The "fellowship of the Spirit" (2:1)
- II. **Sacrifice** (vv. 5, 6; 4:15, 16)
 - A. The effect of gratitude ("*from the first day...*")
 - B. The work of grace ("*he which hath begun a good work in you*")
 - C. The mark of genuineness ("*until now... will perform it...*")
- III. **Suffering** (v. 7)
 - A. Partakers of grace
 - B. Partners in the defense of the gospel (vv. 17, 27)
 1. Standing for the **essentials** of the gospel
 2. Standing for the **exclusivity** of the gospel
 - C. Partners in the confirmation of the gospel (Tit. 2:10)
- IV. **Surrender** (v. 12)
 - A. The response of a spiritual man (Acts 16:6-10)
 - B. The realization of Romans 8:28

CONCLUSION: Is the gospel at the center of our thinking and the motivation for our actions? Do we do what we do *“for the gospel’s sake”* (Mk. 8:35; 1 Cor. 9:23)? Do the boundaries of the true gospel define the extent of our *“fellowship in the gospel”*? Are we living so as to commend the gospel to the consciences of men? Do we have enough discernment to know when the true gospel is under attack? These questions are pointed ones, but they are certainly suggested by Paul’s epistle.

Paul’s joy was all wrapped up in the success of the gospel. Personal trials, suffering, inconveniences, even loss of freedoms and privacy, were gladly embraced as long as they resulted in opportunities to share the glorious gospel. May God give us this same gospel-mindedness!