

## Excellent Discernment

Philippians 1:1-11; Coast Community Church; Jackson Tran; 07-12-2020

*“For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.” – Philippians 1:6*

- **The Desire of Paul’s Prayer** (v. 9-10)
  - Biblical love demonstrates itself through actions (Eph. 2:4-7; 1 John 3:16; Rom. 5:8)
    - Paul recognizes the Philippian’s demonstration of love through their defense and proclamation of the gospel (Phil. 1:1-8)
    - He then goes on to pray for their love to *abound still more and more*
  - Paul prays their love would increase *in real knowledge and all discernment* (v. 9)
    - Love is sober and clear-minded
    - We can mix up our vocabulary and concept of love based on secular love
      - Speaking the truth in love is not merely speaking the truth nicely. It is about having real knowledge and discernment when speaking!
  - How are we approaching all that’s going on around us? What is our standpoint?
    - Is it one of anger and resentment against the governmental authorities for imposing upon our “religious freedoms?”
    - Is it one of fear of governmental authorities coming in and shutting down our church? Of taking us to jail if we don’t obey?
    - *Or are we instead approaching this from a place of humble submission to Scripture, full of love that abounds in real knowledge and all discernment?*
      - We must pray for ourselves and for each other as we approach this topic today (as well as all other topics) that our love abounds still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment
- **The Outcome of Paul’s Prayer** (v. 10-11)
  - *Approve the things that are excellent* (v. 10)
    - Paul uses words that paint a picture of a discriminating buyer who tests and examines a thing before purchasing
    - What does Paul mean by “excellent?”
      - Being able to make righteous decisions
      - Being able to discern between “more essential” and “less essential” issues (intrinsic importance)
        - That is, be able to know when something is so important that we must rebuke or break communion versus something that is not important enough to do so
    - We must stand firm in foundational and moral issues; we must not quarrel over small issues that can and should be overlooked
  - *Achieve greater sanctification* (v. 11a)
    - An outcome of growing in real knowledge and discernment is the future-oriented goal of being “*sincere and blameless until the day of Christ*”
      - *Sincere* means “pure” and “lacking mixed motives”

- Paul is praying that as the Philippians grow in love, they grow in their ability to shed their “pound of flesh” in decision making more and more
  - *Blameless* carries with it a “here and now” that looks forward to a future completion
    - It describes someone who does not stumble and does not cause *others* to stumble
  - As we approach the topic of decision making, especially in regards to the members’ meeting, we must seek this outcome so that we are making decisions that have as little “flesh” as we can, and with as little stumbling blocks as we can
  - Another outcome is to be filled with the *fruit of righteousness*
    - Common biblical metaphor (Ps. 1; Jer. 17:7-8; John 15:2-5)
    - Grow in the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Gal. 5:22–23)
  - *Glorification of God (v. 11b)*
    - This is ultimately the most important result of all
    - Whatever we do – in everything we do – it must be our aim to glorify and praise God
      - Race, politics, economics, even *entertainment!*
- **The Source and Power of Paul’s Prayer (v. 11)**
  - Jesus
    - Jesus is the source of everything; without Jesus we are nothing
    - Jesus was the fulfilment of God’s promise to Adam and Eve, to Abraham and Israel
    - Jesus lived a pure and sinless life, loving God and Man perfectly
    - Jesus was crucified for our sins; taking upon Himself the sins of the world and imputing upon those who have faith in Him all of His righteousness
    - Jesus was proclaimed King and Priest
      - He rules and reigns
      - He mediates to God on our behalf
    - Thus, we can fall on our knees and pray to the Father because of Jesus
  - The Father
    - We know our prayers are heard by the Father because of Jesus
    - We must pray to the Father for love, for real knowledge and all discernment; to approve things that are excellent; to be sincere and blameless; to be filled with the fruit of righteousness; and to glorify God in all we do
  - The Holy Spirit through the Holy Scriptures
    - The Holy Spirit has revealed His knowledge through His written Word
    - We must pray that the Holy Spirit opens our eyes, illumine our minds, and purify our hearts
    - We must read it, examine it, know it, and submit ourselves to it