

# Philippians 1

v1

## ***“Paul and Timothy”***

- It's interesting to note that both Paul and Timothy are writing. We can't be certain how much influence Timothy had over the writing but Paul adds here Timothy's name to the authorship.
- Timothy is a young man and it is wonderful to see young men in ministry but I think it is so important to point out that Timothy was closely disciplined/mentored by Paul. Timothy was not left to his own devices to make a name for himself. He was tutored and lead by Paul and clearly was a good student.
- We have far too much emphasis and responsibility placed on the youth these days and it is catastrophically detrimental to the church! It shows a lack of interest and laziness in the middle aged, it despises the elders and leaves the younger people with no discipline, experiential wisdom or examples to emulate.

## ***“bond servants of Christ Jesus (the Messiah)”***

- The only name that any apostle cares about. They are not followers of Mary, monks of the order of John the Baptist... They are not anything save bondservants to Christ Jesus! It is Him only and always that we are to do with! He ALONE is our Saviour, Mediator, Redeemer and Friend.
- The term bondservant is best understood but understanding the teaching in the law. It is not something taken/said lightly.
- Exodus 21:5-6 *And if the servant shall plainly say, I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free: [6] Then his master shall bring him unto the judges; he shall also bring him to the door, or unto the door post; and his master shall bore his ear through with an aul; and he shall serve him for ever.*
- They were servants who loved their master and all of His provision and they had no desire to ever leave His household. They loved Him.
- Bond servants had chosen such a life, they had not been forced or selected. They chose in freely given love to serve Him! This is a vital truth of the gospel. God's gift of free will to men that they might choose to love Him back. It is a truth consistent in scripture.

v3-4 & 8

## ***“I thank my God in all my remembrance of you. [4] In every prayer of mine I always make my entreaty and petition for you all with joy (delight).” “For God is my record, how greatly I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ.”***

- What a lovely heart that in “every prayer” he lifts these people up before The Lord. He remembers them with thanksgiving and joy/delight.
- Is there anyone who has this place in our prayers? Is there anyone who has this place in our heart?
- Consider that these people are not blood kin, they are not childhood friends, they are not that close in the flesh/physical life. But they are the dear, sweet body of Christ in a time where to have likeminded true believers was a precious blessing. It is as precious as to have Christ Himself for it is His body. It is Christ within them that is so precious.
- I'm convicted that I cannot think of a church, fellowship or body of believers that I have such a heart of prayer for. Oh Lord, teach me to pray and lead me into this tender, compassionate, grateful heart.

v5

## ***“For your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now;”***

- These are a people who truly understand the Gospel. They have received the Good News of Jesus Christ, they have believed His word, they are Born Again and filled with The Holy Spirit. They have received their mina (Luke 19:12-27) and they are investing it in the Kingdom of God.
- They are “fellow labourers” with Paul. It is only those who have truly received the Life of Jesus that have such a heart. They are branches connected to the Vine (John 15:4-5) and His life is freely flowing through them. They are vessels of The Lord who let His life live and His light shine through them.
- It wasn't just an offering, it wasn't a lively service... They fellowshiped in the Gospel. They shared in the work, shared in the burden, they served and worked alongside Paul and Timothy.
- Would Paul say this of me? Am I so given to the work?

v6

## ***“He Who began a good work in you will continue until the day of Jesus Christ, developing and perfecting and bringing it to full completion in you.”***

- Oh what a wonderful, indescribable promise! Hallelujah! What a Saviour! What a loving Father! What a faithful and compassionate friend! Even in our weakness, failure, faithlessness and sin... He will be faithful, He will continue. Even when we fall, He is long suffering and compassionate, His goodness will lead us to repentance, His Godly sorrow will perform a precious work within us.
- Oh, what a blessed life for the believer. What a hope, what an assurance to cling to. He is going to continue to work in me, He will make me less and less like me and more and more like Jesus, He will develop me and bring me to completion in Him! Oh Lord, may I be pliable in your hands. Have your way in me.

v9-11

## ***“that your love may abound yet more and more”***

- The next two verses build on this in practical detail, but this is the sum. That their love, their witness and testimony, their identification with Christ grow more and more in it's outworking and display. That the humility, selflessness, strength and love of Christ would be seen in their faithful service, conversation and conduct.
- Are we growing in love? Are we decreasing as He increases? (John 3:30) Are we becoming more selfless, preferring others more, less defensive, quicker to sing His praises and to seek and surrender to His will?
- Is my love abounding more and more? Are the fruits of His righteousness being produced in my life? Fruits that glorify my Lord, my Master and Saviour? Fruits that honour my Father... Does the world see these fruits in my life? Oh Lord may they see the fruit of your life flowing through me!

v12

***"Now I want you to know and continue to rest assured, brethren,"***

- Paul is so concerned that they are not discouraged or distracted by his current hardship.
- When Paul, himself has much reason to be frustrated, fearful, discomfited, He is careful to comfort and assure others that He is safe and right where God wants him to be. What a lovely tender heart of a shepherd/father that would think this way.
- What a precious faith and trust in our Lord Jesus Christ. Do we have such a rejoicing heart in the middle of our troubles? Do we have such trust and dependence of Christ?

***"what [has happened] to me [this imprisonment] has actually only served to advance and give a renewed impetus to the [spreading of the] good news (the Gospel)."***

- He makes it so clear that The Lord is fulfilling His sovereign purpose in all things. He glorifies The Lord, and glories that God is making all things work together for Good!
- Paul is not complaining, he is not panicking, he is not worried... He is content to serve The Lord wherever that leads/places him.

v18

***"so long as either way, whether in pretence [for personal ends] or in all honesty [for the furtherance of the Truth], Christ is being proclaimed?"***

- This is a fascinating verse. Paul is not so concerned with the heart and motive of these men so long as Christ is being preached.
- Note that Paul talks about the motives of some men using words that are fleshly and sinful. He is not promoting these men or speaking well of their ministry. He is not implying that their work is fruitful or holy.
- Paul has many reasons to grumble and complain. He has gone through so much but yet his focus is on The Lord. He rejoices that it is Christ that is being preached. So long as people are being taught about and directed to Jesus then let them preach and trust The Holy Spirit to lead them and mature them.
- It is worth remembering that at this time there was not an over saturation of the Gospel message. The West today has so much confusion and so many different iterations of "Christianity" that Paul could not have written such a statement in this day. Paul wrote this at a time when the message was new and was being spread across the world. The message, likely, would have remained largely unchanged despite the fleshly motives.

v19

***"this will turn out for my preservation (for the spiritual health and welfare of my own soul) and avail toward the saving work of the Gospel."***

- Paul carefully credit their prayers as a major factor in this.
- He does not look to his physical condition and the earthly hindrances that he is going through. He is concerned with and rejoicing in the Spiritual victory that is taking place. He is rejoicing in the Sovereign hand of God and the work that He is accomplishing despite the outward captivity.
- He has every confidence that He will grow more in The Lord and that God's Word will not return void!
- This is faith. This is a heart and mind that is fixed on the the knowledge of Jesus Christ.

v21

***"For me to live is Christ [His life in me], and to die is gain [the gain of the glory of eternity]."***

- Paul's motivation is Jesus. Paul's reason for living is Jesus. Paul's source of life, joy and peace is Jesus.
- Jesus only and Jesus always. There was nothing else.
- We seem to have so many desires, dreams and ambitions. We make plans and preparations for so many things that we want. If we were to lose all those dreams we would consider life as pointless, wasted or futile... But for Paul there was only one thing. His Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.
- So many of us fear death. We fear losing all that we have in this life. We fear the unknown... But Paul had no fear, He had no doubt or uncertainty. Paul knew with assurance that to die was a wonderful transfer from a world of pain and suffering to the very presence of God where there would be only Him, His joy unspeakable and pleasures forevermore.

v22-24

***"But I am hard pressed between the two. My yearning desire is to depart (to be free of this world) and be with Christ, for that is far, far better;"***

***"But to remain in my body is more needful and essential for your sake."***

- Paul's one, burning desire was to be with Jesus. He longed for the day that he would be promoted to Glory!
- I remember reading this shortly after I was Born Again and asking myself... Do I have a desire to depart? Do I have a desire to leave this life to be in the presence of Jesus? It has amazed and disappointed me over the years to discover how many "Christians" are scared to die and have no desire to be with Jesus! Praise God I can truthfully say that I cannot wait to depart this life and to be with Jesus in glory! Oh Lord to be with you is FAR BETTER than anything that this world can offer! Far better!! Words fail to describe His beauty and my desire to be with Him.
- But let us remember that God is the author of our faith and that He is Sovereign over our lives! If we are here then we still have work to do for our Heavenly Father. To stay is more needful! On one hand that can seem like a disappointment compared to going to Heaven to be with Jesus... But oh the Joy of being a vessel that God can use! Hallelujah!! What a Saviour!! Hallelujah, that He can redeem me and transform me and make me a vessel for His glory! This is a mighty great privilege, and I would not want to swap it for anything! Have your glory in my life Lord. May your testimony be seen and praised! It's truly just so wonderful to know that, as we surrender and yield to The Lord, He can and does use us for His will and purposes! That is truly incredible!

v25-26

***"And having this confidence, I know that I shall remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy of faith;"***

***"That your rejoicing may be more abundant in Jesus Christ through my coming to you again."***

- Paul's conversation and focus is not on being free and being able to "live his life". There is no complaining or lamenting of his circumstances. He gives the devil no credit, he never asks for prayer against the devil and these chains... No, he is rejoicing in The Lord!!
- His heart is completely focused on the greatest honour of being able to be about his Heavenly Father's business.
- Paul is confident and eager to see them again for THEIR joy. He desires to encourage and teach them more about The Lord. He is keen to serve them with the Gospel When we would expect anyone to be struggling and complaining and looking at their poor luck, Paul is thinking of others, and he is clearly joyful by the thought of going to serve them. Paul is excited to go and teach and encourage these precious believers.

v27

***"Only be sure to conduct yourselves in manner of life worthy of the good news (the Gospel) of Christ,***

- Paul has spoken with much tenderness, joy and love so far but goes on to give them this exhortation/encouragement to continue...
- "worthy of the Gospel" – That is a high benchmark. Not that it is something to achieve in our own strength, in the flesh. It can only come from walking in the Spirit and not fulfilling the lusts of the flesh. Let us be mindful to keep ourselves and to be careful to stay unspotted by the world. May we remain faithful in the small things, faithful in prayer, faithful in service, faithful in praise and intercession and meeting together.
- Paul reminds them, as we are reminded so often in scripture, that they are responsible for working out their own Salvation. There is a requirement for us. There is a work involved for us in the testimony of The Lord. We must actively abide in Him. We must be putting off the old man and putting on The Lord Jesus Christ.

***"that you are standing firm in united spirit and purpose, striving side by side and contending with a single mind for the faith of the Gospel."***

- This truly is a beautiful testimony for a group of believers.
- Only The Lord could create and maintain such a reality and reputation in people. This can only come from a people who are abiding in Christ, who are loving and preferring one another, who remember how much they've been forgiven so that they love much. Only those who are daily taking up their cross and following Jesus. Only those who are walking in The Spirit...
- Oh Lord may you raise up your testimony in your people. Lord draw our hearts to serve you in humility and joy, preferring others, serving your body, denying ourselves... May we decrease so that you may increase in our lives and within our churches/fellowships.
- As each one dies to self then each one becomes more like Jesus and has more love, compassion, patience and encouragement for those around them.

v28

***"such [constancy and fearlessness] will be a clear sign (proof and seal) to them of [their impending] destruction, but [a sure token and evidence] of your deliverance and salvation, and that from God."***

- *Romans 8:31 What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?*
- We have no need to fear anything at all besides Almighty God. As we abide in the secret place of The Most High not even the devil can touch us there. We have nothing to fear or even worry about. To fear at all reveals a lack of faith in The Lord and this will only produce bad fruit. It is a testimony of weakness and failure to anyone who is looking on.
- But when we walk in faith of the knowledge of God then we walk in demonstration of His power and become a clear sign of the truth of His word and therefore of "their impending doom"

v29

***"For you have been granted [the privilege] for Christ's sake not only to believe in (adhere to, rely on, and trust in) Him, but also to suffer in His behalf."***

- How counterintuitive this is to the flesh. The flesh will not receive this. The flesh cannot glory in suffering for Christ.
- How precious it is to the believer who knows and understands this truth... To be counted worthy to suffer for His name.
- *John 15:20-21 Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also. [21] But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me.*
- *Acts 5:41 And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name.*
- *1 Peter 4:14-16 If you suffer abuse [because you bear] the name of Christ, blessed are you [happy, fortunate, in God's favor and salvation, regardless of your outward condition], because the Spirit of glory, the Spirit of God, is resting upon you. On their part He is blasphemed, but on your part He is glorified. [15] But let none of you suffer as a murderer or a thief or any sort of criminal, or as a mischief-maker (a meddler) in the affairs of others [infringing on their rights]. [16] But if [one is ill-treated and suffers] as a Christian [which he is contemptuously called], let him not be ashamed, but give glory to God that he is [deemed worthy to suffer] in this name.*
- It truly is an honour to suffer for His sake. For His glory and in His service! Oh to be counted worthy for such an honour.