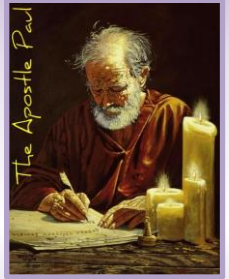


PHILIPPIANS

Joy In Christ



Lesson 02: The Prayer ... [PHILIPPIANS 1: 1-11]

PREVIEW

Both Paul and Timothy send greetings, as the servants of Christ to the church at Philippi, specifically addressing the leadership of the overseers and deacons. He calls the believers there “the saints in Christ”; he wants them to experience both grace and peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. He tells the Philippians that God will not cease doing His spiritual work in them. He mentions his imprisonment because of the gospel but still expresses a longing to be with them.

GREETINGS: (1:1-2)

The opening verse contains what is typically found in the letter greetings from Paul: (1) self-identification, (2) identification of associate(s), (3) identification of the audience, (4) a blessing, and (5) a prayer of thanksgiving (Romans 1:1-8; Colossians 1:1-3; 1 Thessalonians 1:1-2; 2 Thessalonians 1:1-3).

BONDSERVANTS (1)

Both Paul and Timothy were “BONDSERVANTS OF CHRIST JESUS”. They were literally Christ’s slaves bought and owned by Him. To Paul the term “BONDSERVANT” was a title of both dignity and humility. There was no greater position than to be the servant of Jehovah God.

SAINTS – BISHOPS – DEACONS (1)

The title “SAINTS” is descriptive of all genuine believers. It is not restricted to an elite group of spiritual persons, nor does it refer to a few who are declared to be “SAINTS”, years after their lives. The term “SAINTS” literally means “to set apart” or “SANCTIFY”.

The “OVERSEERS” are the chief presiding officers of the local church. The term literally means “OVERSIGHT”; comparable to the modern foreman. It is one of the three Greek terms used to describe the position of the main church officers. The other two are “ELDER” and “PASTOR” or “SHEPHERD”. These three English terms are used interchangeably to describe the functions of this position (Acts 20:17, 28; 1 Peter 5:1-2).

The “DEACONS” are those officials selected by the church to assist the elders. The term “DEACON” is a compound word in the Greek (*dia* – “THROUGH” and *konis* – “DUST”). The imagery suggests a man who quickly moves to perform his tasks and kicks up a trail of dust.

THE BLESSING (2)

The content of the blessing is twofold: “GRACE” and “PEACE”. The first word reflects a Greek concept (*GRACE*), and the second manifests a Hebrew approach (*PEACE*). Grace always precedes peace and forms the foundation for the latter.

THANKFULNESS: (1:3-11)

PAUL THANKED GOD FOR THE PHILIPPIANS (3)

PAUL’S GRATITUDE WAS PERSONAL. Paul’s gratitude was expressed “TO MY GOD”. God was not distant or impersonal to the apostle; rather, He was a loving Person who was directly and intimately involved in Paul’s affairs (Acts 27:23).

PAUL’S GRATITUDE WAS CONSTANT. The verb “THANK” denotes continuous action in present time. Paul gave thanks for the Philippians repeatedly, not just once.

PAUL’S GRATITUDE WAS ADDRESSED TO GOD. In ancient letters unearthed by archaeologist, the Romans and the Greeks began by giving thanks to their pagan gods. Here Paul directed his praise to the one and only God of the universe (1 Corinthians 8:5-6).

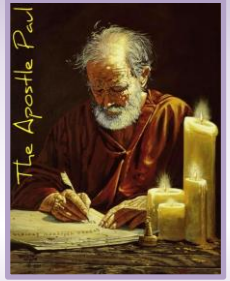
PAUL MADE REQUEST FOR THE PHILIPPIANS (4-5)

CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE REQUEST. “Prayer” and “request” are two translations of the same Greek word that refers to an entreaty or a supplication. In this passage the prayer is directed toward God only.

BASIS OF THE REQUEST. The foundation of the request was the “FELLOWSHIP” OR “PARTICIPATION”. Three features are in view. (1) The noun “PARTICIPATION” denotes sharing, holding something in common. Biblical participation involves believers with one another and with God (1 John 1:3). (2) Their participation centered “IN THE

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GOSPEL". Their fellowship advanced the message of redemption centered in Christ's death, burial and resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:1-4). (3) The Philippians' participation was constant ("FROM THE FIRST DAY UNTIL NOW"). It began at the time of their conversion under his ministry and it persisted.

PAUL HAD CONFIDENCE ABOUT THE PHILIPPIANS (6)

Paul did not place his confidence in the church per se; rather, he placed confidence in God who had saved them and who was working out His sovereign purpose through them. He knew that God always finishes what He starts.

The verb ("AM CONFIDENT") actually refers to a settled persuasion of mind that was the continuing result of a crisis decision in the past. Paul knew what God had done and was doing in his life, and he also knew that God would do the same in their lives.

PAUL HAD THE PHILIPPIANS IN HIS HEART (7)

Paul was often separated geographically from his beloved spiritual children, he frequently expressed his affection through public correspondence (1 Corinthians 5:3; 2 Corinthians 7:3; Colossians 2:5; 1 Thessalonians 2:17). He was always present in spirit, rejoicing and agonizing over what was taking place in their lives.

PAUL LONGED FOR THE PHILIPPIANS (8)

Paul used a solemn oath to support his loving concern for the church ("FOR GOD IS MY WITNESS"). The two words ("I LONG") are the translations of just one Greek word. It was used of the athlete who strained at the finish line to finish first. The sphere of desire was in "THE AFFECTION OF CHRIST JESUS".

ABOUNDING LOVE (9)

When sinners believe in Christ for salvation, the love of God is shed in their hearts by the initial indwelling and permanent indwelling of the Holy Spirit (Romans 5:5). They not only love God, but also love the children of God in whom the same Holy Spirit abides (1 John 4:19).

They are taught by God to love all fellow believers (1 Thessalonians 4:9), and this fact gives assurance of personal salvation (1 John 3:14). This implanted seed of love, however, must grow. It must be cultivated and manifested daily. It must not be limited or restricted.

DISCERNING APPROVAL (10A)

Believers must "APPROVE THE THINGS THAT ARE EXCELLENT". This action is the purpose or result of discerning love. The verb "APPROVE" was used for assaying metals. It means to test with the sense of approval.

BLAMELESS DEPORTMENT (10B)

Two qualities are given. First, the Philippians should be "SINCERE". The word literally means to be "JUDGED BY THE SUN". Ancient jars and vases were examined for disguised cracks by holding them up against the rays of the sun. Hypocrites can fool others, but God knows their thoughts and intents (Hebrews 4:12). Second, they should be "BLAMELESS".

RIGHTEOUS CHARACTER (11)

Righteous fruit can issue only from a righteous tree. Believing sinners have a justified position before a holy God, but they have the personal responsibility to put that new standing into practice (1 John 2:29; 3:7). Paul prayed that the Philippians might be permanently "FILLED WITH THE FRUIT OF THE RIGHTEOUSNESS". This fruit includes the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23), the fruit of evangelism (Romans 1:13), the "FRUIT UNTO HOLINESS" (Romans 6:22), the fruit of good works (Colossians 1:10), and the fruit of thanksgiving (Hebrews 13:15).

If Paul's prayer were answered, then the ultimate result would be "THE GLORY AND PRAISE OF GOD". The glory of God magnifies who He is, and the praise of God rejoices over what He has done. You cannot have one without the other; His attributes and His actions are inseparable.

