

SERMON NOTES

By Pastor John Paul Miller

The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Philippians

Philippians 1:1-6 – “Bound for Joy”

John Fawcett was born of poor parents in Lidget Green, Yorkshire, England, in 1740. He was converted to Christ at the age of sixteen through the ministry of George Whitefield. At the age of twenty-six he was ordained as a Baptist minister. He accepted a call to pastor a small and impoverished congregation at Wainsgate in Northern England. After spending several years at Wainsgate where his salary was meager and his family growing, he received a call to the large influential Carter’s Lane Baptist Church in London to succeed the well-known Dr. Gill.

As the day for the scheduled departure from Wainsgate arrived, with the saddened parishioners gathered around the wagons, Mrs. Fawcett finally broke down and said, “John, I cannot bear to leave. I know not how to go!” “Nor can I either,” said the saddened pastor. The order was soon given to unpack the wagons.

Out of that experience John Fawcett wrote the song, ‘*Blest Be The Tie That Binds*’. The first stanza contains these words:

“Blest be the tie that binds
our hearts in Christian love;
the fellowship of kindred minds
is like to that above.”

That song could have easily been written by the Apostle Paul about his beloved congregation in Philippi.

Philippians 4:1, *“Therefore, my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved.”*

No other church seemed to hold the place in Paul’s heart like that of the Philippian church.

It was founded by Paul on his second missionary journey (the first church in Europe).

Now some ten years later Paul writes to them from Rome in a prison under very difficult circumstances.

Yet these four chapters overflow with joy.

Philippians 3:1, "*Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you, to me indeed is not grievous, but for you it is safe.*"

Philippians 4:4, "*Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice.*"

In Chapter 1, Paul had joy in spite of his circumstances.

How?

His joy was in Jesus Christ (the single mind)

Philippians 1:20-21, "*According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death. For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.*"

Paul knew that his circumstances were under the control of a loving God and that his suffering for Christ helped do three things:

1. Strengthen the fellowship of the gospel (vs. 5)

Philippians 1:5, "*For your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now;*"

2. Promote the furtherance of the gospel (vs. 12)

Philippians 1:12, "*But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel;*"

3. Guard the faith of the gospel (vs. 27)

Philippians 1:27, "*Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel;*"

Us too!

We begin our study; we see Paul's joy in their fellowship.

Philippians 1:1-6, "*Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons: Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.*"

I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy, For your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now; Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:"

I. Paul's Greeting (vs. 1-2)

Philippians 1:1-2, "*Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons: Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.*

Notice three things:

1. The Servants (vs. 1a)

Philippians 1:1a, "*Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ,..."*

A. Paul – Notice he uses no apostolic title

B. Timothy – His name means, 'honor & God'; a native of Lystra was the son of a Greek father and a Jewish mother. As a young child he learned the scriptures from his godly grandmother Lois, and his mother Eunice. He was converted to Christ through Paul's ministry on his first missionary journey.

Notice Paul's love for him:

Philippians 2:19-23, "*But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timotheus shortly unto you, that I also may be of good comfort, when I know your state. For I have no man likeminded, who will naturally care for your state. For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's. But ye know the proof of him, that, as a son with the father, he hath served with me in the gospel. Him therefore I hope to send presently, so soon as I shall see how it will go with me."*

C. Their Position – "*the servants of Jesus Christ*"

Literally, slaves – Greek word *doulos* (bond slave)

Paul was born a slave on the Damascus road (Acts 9)

Timothy became a slave when he was led to Christ through Paul's ministry – Did you know that the sons of slaves automatically became slaves.

Paul's conception of the Christian life is that of slave hood.

Following Jesus – He came to serve (Philippians 2:5-7)

Philippians 2:5-7, "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:"

This is true of all Christians; we are bought with a price.

The unsaved are slaves of sin

Romans 6:16-19, "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness. I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness."

2. The Saints (vs. 1) "..., to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons:"

A. Who are the saints?

Literally – to set apart (as holy)

It's all Christians – nowhere in scripture is any person by proper name addressed as 'saint'. It is used in the plural collectively of the entire family of God.

When does a person become a saint?

At the moment of conversion – notice the words, "...in Christ Jesus..."

It's your position – notice the two positions:

in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi,

B. The Bishops – Greek = episkopos

Literally – over and sight

It's used of Jesus

1 Peter 2:25, "For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls."

It's used of the Spiritual Leaders

Also elders - Greek = presbuteros

Pastor or shepherd

Acts 20:17, " And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church."

Acts 20, 28, " Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood."

1 Peter 5:1-2, " The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind;"

It's only a Man!

1 Timothy 2:12 - 3:7, "But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression. Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety. This is a true saying, if a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work. A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach; Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous; One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?) Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil. Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil."

Supported by the Church

1 Timothy 5:17, "*Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine.*"

C. The Deacons – Greek = diakonois (through dust – to stir up dust)

Called to assist the Bishop-Pastor-Elders

Also Men

1 Timothy 3:8-13, "*Likewise must the deacons be grave, not doubletongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre; Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience. And let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless. Even so must their wives be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things. Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well. For they that have used the office of a deacon well purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.*"

Illustration: Acts 6

A woman? (Phoebe)

Romans 16:1, "*I commend unto you Phebe our sister, which is a servant (diakonis) of the church which is at Cenchrea:*"

3. The Salutation (vs. 2)

Philippians 1:2, "*Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.*"

A. The context of the blessing is twofold: Greek (Grace) & Hebrew (Peace)

1. Grace – it's the Greek concept = charis

a) we are saved by Grace

Romans 3:24, "*Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:*"

b) we are sanctified by Grace

Romans 6:14, "*For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.*"

c) we serve by God's Grace

Romans 12:6. *"Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith;"*

d) we are given God's Grace in suffering

2 Corinthians 12:9, *"And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me."*

Paul opens the letter with Grace (1:2) and closes it with Grace (4:23) – Just like our lives!

Jonathan Edwards – "What begins with grace, ends in glory!"

2. Peace – the Hebrew greeting = shalom

There are two kinds of peace:

a. with God (1:2)

b. of God (4:7) – it's not the absence of strife

Notice that Grace always comes before peace

Why is that?

You can never experience the Peace of God until you've first experienced the Grace of God.

B. What is the source of this Grace and Peace?

"... from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ."

It's from two persons within the divine being or God-head.

Paul uses one preposition 'from', so linking the father and son as the common source.

This affirms the deity of Jesus – also He's called 'Lord'.

And its mediated to the believer through the indwelling ministry of the Holy Spirit.

Have you experienced His Grace and Peace?

II. Paul's Gratitude (vs. 3-6)

Philippians 1:3-6, "I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy, For your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now; Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:"

Paul was in chains, but he wasn't crying

He was in prison, but wasn't pouting

He was thankful and thoughtful of others

Notice the key in verses 3-8, each verse contains the mention of 'you'

(vs. 3) "...remembrance of you."

(vs. 4) "...prayer of mine for you..."

(vs. 5) "...your fellowship..."

(vs. 6) "...good work in you..."

(vs. 7) "...I have you in my heart..."

(vs. 8) "... I long after you..."

Paul had joy because he was others-centered, and had an attitude of gratitude.

Notice these three things:

1. Paul thanked God for them (vs. 3)

Philippians 1:3, "I thank my God upon every remembrance of you,"

'thank' – is a present active indicative, it denotes continuous action in present time.

Paul was always giving thanks; he was thanking God

How about you?

Are you thoughtful and thankful of others?

How often do you think of others?

2. Paul prayed for them (vs. 4-5)

Philippians 1:4-5, "*Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy, For your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now;*"

It's possible to be thoughtful and thankful of others and still not pray for them.

Notice the words in verse 4: 'prayer' and 'request', are the same Greek word – it refers to an entreaty or supplication.

1. it happened when Paul prayed
2. "*Always...*"
3. he prayed for all of them – "*...for you all...*"
4. he made his requests – "*...with joy,*"
5. notice the basis for Paul's prayer (vs. 5) "

"For your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now;"

Do you pray for others?

Do you support God's work?

3. Paul was confident about them (vs. 6)

Philippians 1:6, "*Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:*"

Paul's confidence was not in man, it wasn't in the Philippians, it was in God.

Confident refers to a settled possession of mind and will.

- a) God began a work in them
 - 1) Notice who did the work – God!
 - 2) God had chosen them
 - God had called them
 - God saved them
 - God was keeping them
 - 3) It was a good work
 - salvation
 - sanctification
 - service
 - 4) the work was begun in them

Philippians 2:12-13, "Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure."

b) God will finish the work in them

1 Thessalonians 5:24, "Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it."

Notice He will complete it!

The completion date – "...the day of Jesus Christ:"

Romans 8:28-30, "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified."