

1. GREETINGS AND THANKSGIVING: Philippians 1:1-5

by Brett Baggett on Sunday, May 31st, 2020

The Apostle Paul's letter to the church at Philippi is laser-focussed on "the surpassing worth of knowing Jesus Christ" (Phil. 3:8). In this letter, he reminds the Philippians who Jesus is, what He has done, and what that means for those who belong to Him. Paul is pouring his heart out while sitting in a prison cell for the sake of the gospel. To think—one of his most encouraging epistles was written while in chains! - Brett Baggett, introduction to Philippians Study Guide

I. THE SLAVES WHO WROTE IT (v.1a)

- **PAUL** (we are first aware of Paul at the end of Acts 7. Then he is said to be "ravaging" the church in Acts 8. And in Acts 9 He is rescued in dramatic fashion.)
- **Such a drastic change does Jesus bring about when he saves a sinner** that those who once killed disciples now make disciples! Paul is an example to you and I—**no one is so great a sinner that Jesus is not a greater savior!**
- **Q.** Do you need a drastic change in your own heart? Fear not. **Q.** Have you been drastically changed in your own heart? Praise God.
- **Now, Paul is the Apostle to the Gentiles.** In fact, he planted the church at Philippi (Acts 16). At the time of this letter, AD 62, Paul is in prison (likely) in Rome. Would you have guessed that he is in prison? He speaks of "Joy" 16x, of "Jesus" 50x. How? **As Tertullian wrote long ago, "The legs do not feel the stocks when the heart is in heaven."** That's Paul the Apostle, who wrote this letter.
- **Q.** Do you want to have joy beyond the walls of the world? Do you have want to have a peace rooted so deep you would be happily singing praises while being tortured in a jail cell? Come with me as we study together the book of Philippians.
- **TIMOTHY** (we first meet Timothy in Acts 16, when Paul travelled through Lystra. He became a traveling companion of the apostle and later a pastor of the church of Ephesus. He was a faithful brother who, as history tells us, was killed while bearing witness concerning Jesus during a riot in Ephesus.)
- **SERVANTS** (doulos).
- **Q.** How do you think of yourself in relation to Jesus?
- **To be a slave of Christ is more noble than to be a prince of an earthly King;** to be a slave of Jesus is more to be desired than any high estate our world offers! Rejoice, beloved, that Jesus would own you and call you His slave!

II. THE SAINTS WHO RECEIVED IT (v.1b, 3-5)

- **All the saints in Christ Jesus.** Saint is the identity of every person who is "In Christ."
- **Man made religion would tell you that you must achieve the status of sainthood through your works;** the gospel says you must receive the the status of sainthood by faith in Jesus' finished work!
- **From the weakest believer to the strongest; from the least sanctified to the most,** we all have exactly the same status before God. God loves you, Christian. He chose you. He called you. He regenerated you. He justified you. He washed you. He adopted you. He is sanctifying you. He will glorify you. Nothing can separate you from the love of God in Christ Jesus!
- **...who are at Philippi** (Acts 16: Lydia, Slave Girl, Jailor.) **...with the Overseers and Deacons. They were loved (v.3-4)**
- **...your partnership in the gospel.**

III. THE SOURCE OF THEIR EVERY NEED (v.2)

- **GRACE... PEACE...** ...from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.
- Father, see James 1:17

Servants = Doulos (130x)

- MEANING: slave, bondman, one who gives himself to another's will, devoted to another to the disregard of one's own interest.
- CF: **JESUS, in Matt. 10:24** "A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a doulos above his master." **JESUS, in Luke 17:10** "So you too, when you do all the things which are commanded you, say, 'We are unworthy doulos; we have done *only* that which we ought to have done.'" **PETER, in Acts 4:29** "And now, Lord, take note of their threats, and grant that Your doulos may continue to speak Your word with all boldness..." **PAUL, in Romans 1:1** "Paul, a doulos of Christ Jesus, called as an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God." **JAMES, in James 1:1** "James, a doulos of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ..." **JOHN, in Revelation 1:1** "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show to His doulos, the things which must soon take place; and He sent and communicated it by His angel to His doulos."

Saints = Hagios (248x)

- MEANING: most holy thing; one who has been set apart for service to God; consecrated one.
- CF: **Paul, in Col. 1:12** "...giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the hagios in Light."

Overseer = Episkopos (5x)

- MEANING: "Curator, Guardian, Superintendent, Bishop; a man charged with the duty of seeing that things to be done by others are done rightly. In the New Testament, used interchangeably with Elder/Pastor."
- CF: **Paul, in Acts 20:28** "Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you episkopos to shepherd (*pastor*) the church of God which He purchased with His own blood." **Peter in 1 Peter 5:1-2** "So I exhort the elders (*presbyteros*) among you, as a fellow elder (*presbyteros*) and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed: shepherd (*pastor*) the flock of God that is among you, exercising episkopeo."

Deacons = Diakonos (29x)

- MEANING: "a waiter (at table or in other menial duties), minister, servant."
- CF: **Acts 6:2-3** "And the twelve summoned the full number of the disciples and said, "It is not right that we should give up preaching the word of God to diakoneo (serve tables). Therefore, brothers, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we will appoint to this duty."
- **Romans 16:1** "I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a diakonos (servant) of the church at Cenchreae..."
- **1 Timothy 3:8-10** "Diakonos likewise must be dignified, not double-tongued, not addicted to much wine, not greedy for dishonest gain. They must hold the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. And let them also be tested first; then let them serve as diakonos if they prove themselves blameless."

Grace = Charis (159x)

- MEANING: "Unmerited Favor, Ill-deserved Credit, Loving-kindness, Underserved Gift."
- CF: **Luke 1:30** "And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found charis (favor) with God." **John 1:16** "From [Jesus'] fulness we have all received charis (grace) upon charis (grace)."

Peace = Eirene (92x)

- MEANING: *subjective* "Set at one again, Rest, Quietness; the tranquil state of a soul assured of its salvation through Christ Jesus, and so fearing nothing from God and content with its earthly lot, of whatsoever sort that is."
- CF: **OBJECTIVE Romans 5:1** "Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have eirene (peace) with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."
- **SUBJECTIVE John 14:27** "Eirene (peace) I leave with you; my eirene (peace) I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid."
- **Phil. 4:6-7** "do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the eirene (peace) of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

The Apostle Paul's letter to the church at Philippi is laser-focussed on "the surpassing worth of knowing Jesus Christ" (Phil. 3:8). In this letter, he reminds the Philippians who Jesus is, what He has done, and what that means for those who belong to Him. Paul is pouring his heart out while sitting in a prison cell for the sake of the gospel. To think—one of his most encouraging epistles was written while in chains!

In Philippians Paul presents Jesus as the one who makes us saints (1:1), works in us both to will and to work for His good pleasure (2:13), and as the one who will bring us to completion when He returns (1:6) having secured our citizenship in heaven (3:20-21). In other words, He has justified us, is sanctifying us, and will one day glorify us to the glory of God the Father.

But that is not all Philippians contains. In this heartfelt correspondence, Paul explicitly reveals the surpassing worth of knowing Jesus personally. He proclaims knowing Jesus is better than being free from prison or free from suffering (1:13, 29). Being like Christ is superior to being selfish or apathetic (2:3,12). Cherishing the Lord exceeds clinging to self-righteousness or obtaining worldly gain (3:3-8). Being accepted by Christ Jesus the Lord is more desirable than living in the past with regret or living now for the praise of men (3:12-19). The great promise of Philippians is this: if you know Jesus personally you have everything you need for everlasting happiness. You can suffer, hunger, be brought low or in great need—and yet joyfully face it all through Christ who strengthens you (4:12-13).

Jesus accomplished all of this by emptying himself of his glory, taking the form of a servant, and submitting to death on a cross for our sakes (2:7-8). Great was the cost and great are the promises he bought! May God use this study of Philippians to broaden our understanding of who Jesus is, grow our desire for holiness, strengthen our hands to serve one another, and deepen our love for Jesus as the one of surpassing worth.