

Thanksgiving and Prayer

Sermon 4 in the Philippians Series

Philippians 1:1-11

Today we deal with the first paragraph in the Book of Philippians.

I. Introductory Greetings v. 1

When you have a master like the Lord Jesus Christ – what could be better than to be totally sold out to Him and absolutely dependent in every way upon Him!

II. Grace and Peace v. 2

Here is the normal greeting almost always used by Paul.

The origin is from God our Father – and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Grace is a Greek greeting – while peace is more toward the Hebrew (like shalom).

III. Thanksgiving and Christian Love v. 3-8

A. Paul's Love for Them. v. 3, 8

B. Paul's Intercession for Them v. 4

C. Paul's Fellowship with them in the Spread of the Gospel. 5-7

Fellowship = koinonia

They were not ashamed of his chains.

They were partakers with him in God's grace.

Co-laborers – fellow saints – willing to sacrifice for the sake of the gospel.

They were not content to let Paul do all the “heavy lifting”.

To paraphrase the commentator Jean Daille

- 1) It is praise-worthy when Christians do not go into hiding when a fellow Christian is suffering for his faith.
- 2) It is even more praise-worthy when Christians seek to help a fellow Christian who is suffering for the gospel.
- 3) It is praise-worthy when Christians go out of their way, risk their own safety, and give of their time, treasure and talent to help a fellow Christian who is suffering for the gospel.

IV. Paul's Sincere Prayer v. 9-11

There are three main requests that Paul makes on their behalf in his intercessory prayers for them. They are divided up nicely in these three verses. (My own translation)

- A. v. 9 -- *And this I pray, that your love may be continually overflowing more and more in knowledge and all discernment.*

His prayer was that their love would be like a mighty, roaring river.

Not a wild river rushing to destroy all in its path.

A powerful river contained by two banks – knowledge and discernment

- B. v. 10 – *(I pray) for you to approve (after careful testing), the most excellent things, in order that you may be pure and blameless in the Day of Christ*

The most excellent things.

Their growing knowledge and discernment is put to use.

In the study of Christian Liberty – we talk about the *adiaphora* (things indifferent)

Paul uses the opposite of *adiaphora* here – the excellent things.

- C. v. 11 – *(I pray) that you would be filled with the fruit of righteousness, through Jesus Christ unto the praise and glory of God.*

The righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ Phil 3:9

The fruit of righteousness is the Fruit of the Spirit. Gal. 5:22-23.

V. Application: True Love requires Growth and Maturation

v. 9 – No specific object is given for love

- Paul wants their overall love to grow.
- The love he is speaking of is not a feeling.

Paul wants them to be characterized by love.

- A growing love for God
- This will naturally lead them to love one another
- They increase in love for the truth, as they know, understand and mature.

1 Corinthians 13:13 -- And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these *is* love.