

SOUTH GROVE FREE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH LONDON

Lord's Day Morning

Date Hymns Psalm 34v1-9 T Winchester 82 620 50, 521 t 608, Read: Philippians 1:1-2 Text Philippians 1:1

Series: Philippians (10) Title: The Church At Philippi

Paul visited Philippi on his first missionary journey, now at the time of writing Philippians around 10 years have passed.

At some point, maybe near the end, of Paul's third missionary journey he was taken a prisoner to Rome, and kept in a cell.

The detailed events are recorded from **Acts 21:36** when he was led into the castle, right through to **Acts 28:16** when Paul and the other prisoners came to Rome.

In Philippians 1:**7**, he speaks about his bonds, in **verse 13**, he speaks about my bonds in Christ. Paul counted it an honour to suffer for the sake of Christ.

In going to Rome, Paul knew his earthly journey was soon to end, he desired in **Phil 1:20-21**, ***that 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 was assured at death he would be with Christ.

Do you have the same assurance, can you say whenever its God appointed time for me to die, to die is gain, it is well with your soul.

Paul used the prison cell in Rome not only as a pulpit to preach, but also as a printing press because it is from this cell in Rome that he writes his prison epistles, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians and Philemon.

Paul redeems the time and as he writes these letters, he clearly has a different audience in mind each time and different themes in each of those letters.

And that is certainly evident in this letter because it is a letter of joy, a letter exhorting and encouraging the church in Philippi to Rejoice Always in the Lord.

This epistle deals with life, its points us to Christ in every area of our lives.

Christ is the source of our joy. Paul shows How a Christian can rejoice in the Lord while living in a world so sinful. How a Christian can rejoice when called upon to suffer.

Paul shows believers, we answer everyday trials and tribulations, discouragements and disappointments, pressures and problems by having the mind of Christ, and living in the joy of the gospel.

Furthermore, The Philippians had been very gracious and supportive of Paul.

They had provided for him financially on more than one occasion. He wanted to express his gratitude for their unfailing support for the ministry and the unwavering love they had shown, upon their supply of Paul's need, he then said in **Phil 4:19** "*my God shall supply all your need your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.*"

He also extended a call for unity among the church. It appears there had been a dispute between two of the women within the church, and he desired them to maintain complete unity, **Philippians 4:2; 1:27; 2:2-4, 14**. Paul knew Biblical unity among God's people brings blessings.

It's the little things that cause disunity & disruption.

In **Chapter 3**, Paul address the spread of false doctrine, instructed God's people to have no confidence in the flesh.

Paul wrote to the Philippian believers showing that Christ is their all in all, their everything, and in living for Him, follow His example, and look to Him.

In Ch 1 Christ is the Saving one, ch 2 He is the Submissive one, Ch 3 Christ the sufficient one, Ch 4 He is the Suppling one.

Through much or little, in life or death, Christ will never let His redeemed people down, the good work God has started in a life at salvation, He will never abandon or abort, rather, He will do His good pleasure, and He will perform it unto the day of Jesus Christ.

Every sinner saved by the grace of God, will be in heaven with Christ.

Notice three things about the Church at Philippi.

I FIRST, THE SERVANTS TO THE CHURCH AT PHILIPPI.

Notice the opening words, ***Paul and Timothy the servants of Jesus Christ to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi...***

That is striking, Paul could have started as he did his other letters, **Paul an Apostle by the will of God**, called of God, and he would have been right do.

There is no reference to anything of the greatness of Paul, as a theologian, a skilful writer.

Paul was the leading teacher, minister at this time, he has a missionary's zeal, and pastors burden for the people.

However, according to **Phil 2:19** Timothy would become the permanent pastor of the church.

Paul in making the transition, shows Timothy is servant of Christ just as he was. Paul ministry was coming to an end, but Timothy's was only beginning at Philippi.

For that reason he displayed humility, he identified himself and Timothy to the Philippians **as a servant of Jesus Christ**.

As a servant of Christ Paul loved the people, he ministered to them. when Timothy takes up the work of God, he is a servant of Christ.

He will serve you not out of duty but love and affection to Christ.

The word **servant** means **bond slave**.

As bond slave was an individual bound to another in service, therefore, the word conveys the idea of the a servant, a closeness, binding ties belonging to another, obligated and desiring to do his will.

In this sense Paul is saying He and Timothy are the bond slaves of Christ, They were not their own but had been bought with the price of the blood of Christ.

By grace they are the property of Christ and were His servants exclusively as they belong to Christ, they are bound to Him, they lived to do His will.

They lived in submission to Christ.

in Serving Christ they served Christ's people by giving the word of God.

That is how they viewed their ministry as the Servants of Christ.

Therefore, believer we must consider the greatest and perfect servant of all the Lord Jesus Christ. His life of service was

completely devoted to God. It was prophesied of Christ though the words spoken of David at the time of writing, in **Ps 40:7-8** ***Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, ⁸ I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart.***

He later said in **John 6:38** ***“For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.***

He was devoted to accomplish the will of God. He said **John 14:31** ***“that the world know that I love the Father.”*** In loving the Father, **Eph 5:25** ***Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for it.*** Christ cares for His church.

Isaiah 42:1, 52:13, records God the Father who says of Christ, ***“Behold My Servant...”*** Therefore, in the work of redemption, Christ is the Supreme and perfect Servant of God, the Bond slave of God, fully surrendered to God.

Let us never forget that for Christ to save and redeem His people He undertook the lowly position of the servant.

Paul and Timothy were the servants of Jesus Christ.

Oh believer, the Lord may not call you to be a minister or leave England as a missionary to another country, however, we are all called to be bond slaves of Christ, the servants of God, to surrender our lives to Him, to be willing to do whatever He tells me to do, even the smallest & lowest of tasks.

To be willing to go wherever He leads me go. To delight and devote ourselves to Him.

May our lives be consecrated to Him. Give Him our treasures, time and talents. And in serving the Lord we serve one another, bearing one another burdens. Paul said in **Eph 6:6**

“as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart;

The love of Christ for our souls motivates us to serve Him.

II SECOND, THE SAINTS AT THE CHURCH AT PHILIPPI.

The word **saints** means **holy ones**. It is a word Paul uses in other letters to churches, to name only two Ephesians and Corinthians.

The meaning or usage of the word is not the same as the RCC give when they speak of dead or elevated saints to pray to and worship. such is false worship. praying for the dead and to the dead.

Rather, it is a name given to all true believers, those who are born again by the Spirit of God.

They are the called out ones, that is called out of a fallen world, set apart ones, separated ones, sanctified ones, holy ones.

The church of God is beloved and chosen, the for whom Christ died. ***The Father has Authorised their redemption, the Son has Accomplished their redemption and the Holy Spirit has applied their redemption.***

It teaches the believer's **position** in Christ and the believer's **progress** through Christ, by the help of the Holy Spirit.

One is **Justification** that is a final full complete and secure position of the saints now, whereas the other is **sanctification** that is the continual striving, the progress of the saints, to live as holy as it is possible for a saved sinner to be.

It is a life set apart by and for God. It is striving daily to obey God's word and walk in His ways, as He said in **1 Peter 1:16** "***be ye holy for I am holy.***"

The more the believer matures, develops in sanctification, the things of the world will grow dim, and be replaced by a love and longing for Christ.

1 Thess 4:3 teaches "***this is the will of God, even your sanctification.***"

They are called saints not because they were naturally holy but through the delivering and transforming power of the gospel, they are given power to live holy lives unto the glory and praise of God.

Believer, His divine power has given us everything we need to live for God and walk in His ways.

III THIRD, THE STRUCTURE OF THE CHURCH AT PHILIPPI.

with the Bishops and deacons."

The Church at Philippi had in place structure, church government, men in office, but these men or their positions were not above everyone else, they were not elevated men, rather men full of the holy Spirit, chosen by the members of the congregation to attend the spiritual and practical matters in the church, to care for the members.

While the offices are distinct and different callings, yet they are united in their aim to serve Christ as Bishops, Elders, and deacons committee men in Christ's church for the Glory of God.

They laboured together as one in the work of God, as instructed in **Phil 1:27** "...***that ye stand fast in one spirit,***

with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel.”

Paul also refers to these two offices in relation to Church government in **1 Tim 3:1** he refers to **the office of a bishop**; and in **vs.10 & 13** he refers to **the office of a deacon**. **These are the only two offices within the Church.**

This is a very important reference for it clarifies that the congregations of the 1st century Christian church were bodies of believers in Christ, with a plurality of elders and deacons serving among them in terms of oversight and rulership in church affairs

The word **Bishop** is another name **for elder or minister**. In **Acts 20** the men who are described as **elders** in **v17** are in **v.28** referred to as **overseers**, and the word translated "**overseer**" is rendered **bishop** in **Phil 1:2 & 1 Tim 3** and elsewhere.

Also Bishop means **shepherds** in **1 Peter 5**. They feed the flock of God by the word, teaching and preaching Christ. They are the spiritual oversight of the church.

See the different terms for the one office.

The name **deacon** means **one who serves**, the service of the deacon pertains to the temporal, the material, and the financial aspects of Christ's Church.

But the deacon should never forget that his service is in some way a means of promoting the growth of saints and the redemption of sinners.

Peter, tells the church in **1 Peter 2:25** Christ is the **Shepherd and Bishop of your souls**. The word **deacon** meaning **to serve or minister** is also the word used in **Matthew 20:28**

“Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many. Christ said in Luke 22:27, “I am among you as He that serveth (or ministereth, serves or acts as a deacon.”

Those who fulfil such roles within the Church must look to Christ as their Supreme example, and carry out their roles in a Christ like manner concerning the redemption of sinners for the extension of God’s kingdom.

Christ is the perfect Bishop, elder, shepherd of His flock. He is also the perfect deacon who serves God doing His will.

That means we ought to be praying for men sent of God, filled with the Holy Spirit for such roles as future elders and deacons in this Church.

Men who will carry out their ministry with a Christ like manner, a zeal for the house of God, and busy about their fathers business.

Such men will only be chosen from church membership.

The saints at Philippi had godly and Biblical structure, always directing saints and sinners to redemption by faith in the cleaning blood of Christ.