

SOUTH GROVE FREE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH LONDON

Lord's Day Morning

Date Hymns Read: Philippians 1:1-5 Text Philippians 1:3-5

Series: Philippians () Title: Paul's Thanksgiving to God

When Paul wrote to the church at Philippi, it was roughly about 10 years later from his first visit.

Much had changed in 10 years, certainly with regard to Paul's situation.

When writing the letter of Philippians, Paul was in a Roman cell, held prisoner, And under the threat of death.

however, Paul remained strong in the Lord and lived in times of suffering by the help & power of God's might.

During his time in the prison Paul thought upon the believers at Philippi, and gave thanks to God for them.

The word **thank** in **verse 3** means **gratitude, to give thanks**. Throughout the message we will keep coming back to this word.

But this expression of thanks, in itself is amazing, Paul is locked up in Roman cell, yet his mind is filled with thankfulness to God.

Paul was able to count his blessings and name them one by one.

He gives thanks with a grateful heart to the Holy One of Heaven, even in the most severe, life threatening, and dangerous circumstances.

What a lesson there is for us men and woman, when you feel your own prison experience, lonely, isolated, persecuted, wounded, living among life threatening virus, all seems to be against you,

Paul instructs us in the book of Philippians chapter 4 to guard our minds, and think on spiritual things to lift our minds heavenward, reflect on God's purpose, because in barren days, the hardest of times, the darkest of days, God enables us to thank Him.

when Paul was saved by grace, God brought him aside for three years in the desert of Arabia as **Galatians 1:17** teaches.

During this time God made known to him Christ in all the Scripture.

Paul was taught the Gospel, his mind was filled with the word and will of God concerning the life & death of Christ but also his own life, what the Lord required of Him.

Paul learned by the sorrows and sufferings of Christ to give thanks to God.

When Lazarus died, whom Jesus loved, Mary and Martha are in tears, their heart is broken at the death of their brother, **John 11:33** teaches **Jesus wept**, He identified with the tears, sorrow and sufferings of His people, but Christ gave a word of comfort, then we read in **John 11:41** "...**Jesus lifted up His eyes and said Father I thank thee that thou hast heard me.**"

the word **thank** is the same word Paul used in **Philippians 1:3** ***I thank my God.***

Christ was thankful for answered prayer and the assurance that Lazarus would raise from the dead.

Mary & Martha realised the purpose of Christ's resurrection. Because Christ is the resurrection & life then all who trust in Him though they physically die yet shall they eternally live.

There is the Christian's hope at death, we shall rise again, at death we leave earth for heaven.

Our entrance into heaven rests upon answered prayer, **whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.**

Believer be thankful for answered prayer.

Read the letters he wrote to the churches, even Philippians and there find foundational teaching concerning the gospel of Christ.

Paul makes much of **Redemption Authorised by their Father accomplished in the person and work of Jesus Christ, and then Redemption Applied by the Holy Spirit on basis of Jesus Christ, in order to live out the gospel.**

Paul while in jail is filled with thanks for the answered prayer in Philippi, and that is the theme we want to speak on today Paul's Gospel thanksgiving.

It is due to the gospel saving sinners, that we give thanks to God.

I FIRST THE FOCUS OF PAUL'S GOSPEL THANKSGIVING.

Paul begins his thankfulness by focusing on thanksgiving for the Philippians but not because of the Philippians.

It is true they were on his mind and heart, but above all Paul says ***I thank my God.***

It is interesting to note the word **thank**, is also in the **present tense** meaning that Paul is continually, thankful to God.

Paul is saying concerning the saints of God at Philippi, I am continually thanking God for you.

I keep on thanking God for you at Philippi.

Paul does not praise himself. Paul does not seek to elevate himself as an attempt to feel good about himself in a bad situation. Paul didn't save any one.

Paul kept himself out of the picture, it was always his desire as he wrote in **Colossians 1:18** **that in all things He (Christ) might have the pre-eminence**. This includes giving thanks, continually expressing a thankful heart.

Paul remembered the days of old when God moved in gospel power and souls were saved, added unto the church, and began living for God.

He remembers when God answered prayer when they gathered for prayer.

Paul witnessed God start a work in the lives of sinners that He would not abandon.

This was not the only time Paul thanks God for saving sinners. **Romans 1:8** **"I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world."** Here is gospel thanksgiving.

This word **thank** means **gratitude, to give thanks, to be grateful**. The original word is **Eucharist** which means **thanks or giving thanks**.

The word **Eucharist** is made of two Greek words, **Eu** meaning **good** and the **Charis** which is the word for **grace**, therefore when Paul gives thanks to God for the Philippians,

Paul is thanking God for His eternal, infinite, immutable, goodness and grace demonstrated at Philippi toward sinners who deserved only to perish.

Believer it is of God's grace that you are saved. God freely choose to save sinners – underlining the infinite grace of the Gospel.

He could have willed to leave men on the road to destruction for their sin. He would have been just to do so. You see, no man deserves to be saved.

It should be remembered that if the saving of the sinner depended upon the sinner, no one would ever be saved, the reason being sinners love their sin, they are bent toward sin.

By nature every part of man is in bondage to sin, and on this basis man will always choose his sin.

That's why Paul gives thanks to God, the very fact any life is transformed in any place at any age, from any background, it was not due to Paul but God's goodness and grace alone.

It's only because of God's grace and goodness in the gospel that Paul can say the personal words **my God**, as can any believer.

What is also interesting this same word **thank**, the original word **eucharist** meaning **thanksgiving, gratitude** is also the same word to describe the Lord's table, and what do we do at the Lord's table we give thanks to God alone for His and goodness and grace through the sinless, submissive life and substitutionary, sacrificial death of Jesus Christ.

In **1 Cor 11:24**, Paul uses is the same word **thank** spoken by Christ at the establishment of His own table of remembrance.

Paul in **1 Cor 11:24** is quoting from **Luke 22:17&19-20** **“ He took the cup, and gave thanks... He took bread, and gave**

thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you... Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you.

The bread and the cup symbolised the body and blood of Christ, His wounds and sufferings, the shedding of His blood.

Christ was teaching His people to give thanks for His life, wounds and blood that paid their ransom.

At the table we continually thank God for Jesus Christ, and we offer our thanks to Christ for laying down His life a ransom to save our souls.

Therefore, men and woman in thanksgiving ascribe all thanks to almighty to God, for He alone is worthy to be praised.

Remember the time in **Luke 17** when Christ healed the 10 lepers physically but also spiritually, **verse 14** ***“they were cleansed.”***

Verse 15-18 ***And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God, ¹⁶ And fell down on his face at his feet, giving him **thanks**: and he was a Samaritan. ¹⁷ And Jesus answering said, Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine? ¹⁸ There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger.***

Each one here today who are saved by the grace of God, redeemed by precious blood of Christ, and called by the Spirit, are a trophy of sovereign grace, an answer to prayer,.

Therefore we have much cause to thank God

Have you taken time to give thanks unto God for transforming your life, lifting you out of the dunghill of sin, the kingdom of

Satan delivering into the Kingdom of Christ, to find in Him a refuge safe and secure.

Unsaved one, to have your sins washed away, you must trust in Christ alone, ask His forgiveness.

II SECOND, THE FONDNESS OF PAUL'S GOSPEL THANKSGIVING.

"I thank my God upon every remembrance of you."

The word **remembrance**, refers **memory, to recollect.**

He remembers their acceptance of the Gospel. There is a recollection of his time at Philippi.

Around 10 years may have past, but it seemed like yesterday to Paul.

Paul love for the saints at Philippi, was like Jacob's love for Rachel where he served her Father Laban 14 years to take Rachel as wife, those years seemed by a few days. The years flew in.

Paul's mind is still fresh, he remembers the start and growth of the church.

He witnessed the good news spread through the city. Also the founders of the church, and their fellowship in the gospel.

Paul remembers how families were united in the gospel. He remembers how they served God together in gospel ministry, and they encouraged Paul, and continued to do so. There was a close bond between Pastor and people.

Paul said in **Philippians 2:25** ***"...Epaphroditus, my brother, and companion in labour, and fellowsoldier..."***

Philippians 4:3 ***"And I intreat thee also, true yokefellow, help those women which laboured with me in the gospel,***

with Clement also, and with other my fellowlabourers, whose names are in the book of life.

the phrase **yokefellow** means **a companion, united together, yoked bonded together.**

In other words the Philippians served in the gospel both men and woman as one with Paul.

They came alongside to help Paul and see the gospel spread further into Philippi and Europe.

Paul thanks God for it. He recollects times of evangelism, prayer, fellowship.

Even in Jail they continued to minister to Paul, sending support.

When God called Moses to build the Tabernacle, Moses could not build it alone, He delivered the Lord's word to the congregation of Israel, concerning building a place where God would meet with His people. **He needed fellow labouers, true yokefellows, those would support the work of God.**

Ex 25:21 **And they came, every one whose heart stirred him up, and every one whom his spirit made willing...**

the words **stirred up** means **to be lifted up or to carry**. The idea of these words **is to act or move with a purpose to carry something out to fulfil a desire.**

They purposefully desired to do the Lord's work in that part of the land. **Verse 22** **"And they came, both men and women, as many as were willing hearted..."**

The word **willing**, (means **to incite or impel**. It) describes their devotion completely to the Lord.

Above in helping Moses they were really serving God, **verse 21** ***“And they brought the LORD's offering to the work of the tabernacle of the congregation...”***

They gave themselves their talents, time, tithes, materials, unto God for His work.

The Philippians gave themselves to their work. Paul's mind is filled with Gospel thankfulness and Gospel memories.

Many of you have gospel memories with previous ministers of this congregation, some like me have just started to attend,

I pray that we will build gospel memories as we labour together, see the gospel spread throughout London, England, UK and further field, seeing Believers strengthened in the faith, sinners saved by faith alone in Christ alone, families united in Christ.

May God give true yokefellow, men and woman striving together, willingly devoted to Christ and His cause, praying together in this work in this place.

As believers in **Neh 4:6** ***“...the people had a mind to work.”*** The word ***“mind”*** in **Neh 4:6** is translated from a Hebrew word meaning ***“heart.”*** Therefore, to have a mind to work means that the people had their heart in their work. They gave their all.

Is your heart in the work of God?

Knowing in **1 Cor 3:9** ***For we are labourers together with God...”***

For years the gospel seed has been sown and watered this London among this people let us look to God alone who gives the increase, Let it come o Lord we pray thee,

let the shower of blessing fall, for we give all thanks to you.