

SOUTH GROVE FREE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH LONDON

Lord's Day Morning

Date 27th March 2022 Hymns Psalm 93v1-5 1st Version, Stroudwater, 394 402. Read: Philippians 1:1-5 Text Philippians 1:3-5

Series: Philippians (14) Title: Fellowship In The Gospel Expressed

The Apostle Paul in commencing his letter to the saints at Philippi, gave thanks to God for their fellowship in the gospel.

Remember the word **fellowship**, means **to partake, communion, to share the same.**

When it came to the gospel of Christ, there was agreement.

In taking the words of **verse 27** they had **one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel**, because the **fellowship in the gospel, centres upon the payment of sin and the pardon of sinners from the grace of God through Jesus Christ alone, applied to the heart of sinners by the Holy Spirit.**

Having thought of the essence or the meaning of fellowship in the gospel, I want to look at **the expression of fellowship in the gospel**, how Paul and Philippians practised or expressed, fellowship in the gospel with one another and apply such lessons to our own lives.

I FIRST, FELLOWSHIP IN THE GOSPEL IS EXPRESSED BY SUPPLICATING FOR ONE ANOTHER IN THE GOSPEL.

In taking the meaning of the word fellowship in the gospel, not only did Paul supplicate or pray for believers at Philippi, but the Church at Philippi prayed or supplicated for Paul.

Paul has already stated in **verse 4** **"always in every prayer of mine for you making request with joy.**

Also, in **verses 9-11** his prayer is recorded in detail.

But Paul praises God for a praying people, in the fellowship of the gospel. He said in **verse 19** “...**through your prayer**...”

God was answering their prayers not only as Paul laboured for the master but also while in jail.

The Saints at Philippi shared in their prayers the same desire to see Christ preached, the gospel defended, the gospel spread further, and Paul helped.

They shared the same mind set in prayer to serve Christ unto the praise of God.

Paul in praying for believers in other places, likewise encouraged them to pray for him.

Let me give one example though there are many, **Romans 1:9** “**that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers;**”

What Paul requested of the different churches in prayer for him, all centred upon gospel ministry, **Romans 15:30-31** “...**that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me, That I may be delivered from them that do not believe in Judaea; and that my service which I have for Jerusalem may be accepted of the saints;**

1 Thess 3:1 **pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you:**

Paul conveyed to the different churches in his letters that God was using their prayers to help them in his great trials, preaching, and therefore to keep praying for him.

God uses the prayers of His people to provide strength to His servants, as Paul stated in **2 Cor 1:11** **Ye also helping together by prayer for us,**

Believer you have the greatest ministry, praying for the preaching of God's word in this house and evangelism around the streets that God will prosper His work.

May the prayers of this Church, be for London, as **John Knox** the Scottish reformer prayed *give me Scotland or I die*.

Knox was a man of prayer- **Mary Queen of Scots**, said "*I fear the prayers of John Knox more than all the assembled armies of Europe.*"

Can I say to this congregation, I am thankful for your prayers for me and our family in the fellowship of the gospel, cease not to pray for us.

II SECOND, FELLOWSHIP IN THE GOSPEL IS EXPRESSED BY SUPPORTING ONE ANOTHER IN THE GOSPEL.

It is interesting to note this word **fellowship** is also translated by the word **contribution**, and it was used by Paul when he wrote to believers at Rome, but also highlighted in Philippians.

On that occasion in **Romans 15:26** God's people at Macedonia including the area of Philippi helped other believers, those who scriptures calls "...*the poor saints which are at Jerusalem.*"

It is clear from Paul's writings that the church at Philippi were a giving Church, a generous and supporting Church. They cheerfully gave to the Lord.

By giving unto the Lord's work they were supporting God's servants in the work. By giving to poor and needy saints they gave unto the Lord.

Paul himself knew this to be true, what he did say about the Church at Philippi during his own time of need. **Philippians**

4:15-16 “*Now ye Philippians know also, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only.*

“*for even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity.*” **Verse 18** “*having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, wellpleasing to God.*”

The word **communicated** is the word signifying *fellowship*, but the context is in giving, supporting God’s work financially.

The saints at Philippi sacrificially helped Paul in a practical way.

They could not travel as Paul did. They remained in Philippi as Paul travelled preaching the word, yet in true sense they went with Paul by their practical support.

And as a result Paul assured them, they would never lose out, for you can never out-give God.

Based upon their sacrificial giving, Paul said to the church in **Philippians 4:19** “*but my God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.*”

Notice, Paul states God supply **according to**, not out of. There is a big difference.

to give something out of something means at some point the supply will decrease, run out, but to give according to means there is an abundance.

Furthermore, God supply according to or in agreement with His Riches, in other words, His supply and giving is as Himself eternal, infinite and unchanging, love, goodness, He

can never run out of supplies, that's why he has all power to supply all your needs by or through Christ.

Every blessing we will receive from God comes through the person and sacrificial work of Jesus Christ.

Therefore, believer as we give to the Lord's work we support labourers in His service, think of missionaries, or special project's offerings we have as a church for youth work, to help labourers in the field of service, or need in Ukraine, families in need, it is all fellowship in the gospel, it is to partake in the ministry.

We may never get to go to Ukraine, Australia and see God's work and our missionaries, but we share in their ministry as we give, we support the work at home and abroad.

You may be unwell or unable to go around the doors, give invitations out but as you give financially unto the Lord, those offerings go towards those leaflets and in a true sense, as those who do give out invitations, you equally have a supporting role, some in giving, some in going but all in the fellowship of the gospel.

III THIRD, FELLOWSHIP IN THE GOSPEL IS EXPRESSED BY SHARING WITH ONE ANOTHER IN THE GOSPEL.

Fellowship in the gospel is expressed by sharing one another burdens, and helping each other through them. it's a partnership,

Paul had not only shared with the Saints at Philippi in their burdens, but they had shared with his burdens in preaching the gospel, and support in jail.

notice **verse 3** “*inasmuch in my bonds, and in the defence and confirmation of the gospel, ye are all partakers of my grace.*”

Paul said to the churches at Galatia in **Galatians 6:2** “*bear ye one another’s burdens and so fulfil the love of Christ*”

The believer at Galatia were burdened down with many kinds of burdens, just like many today. There are some believers who carry more burdens than others.

Paul is teaching due to their union in Christ, the family of God, “*bear ye one another’s burdens...*”

The word **bear** means *to shoulder or join shoulders*. The idea of the word is *to support, to sustain, to help carry the weight or load*.

That is how the word is used throughout the New Testament. Notice, the bear refers in **Mark 14:13** “*bearing a pitcher of water*” In **Luke 7:14** it refers to carrying a coffin with the body of young boy, “*they that bare him stood still.*”

(Furthermore the word **bear** is in the present tense meaning *that is continuous*. Paul charges believers to continually shoulder or carry one another’s burdens.)

In taking the scene to carry a coffin there is support needed for none can carry a coffin alone, others are called upon for support, to help carry the weight.

Usually those carrying the coffin join themselves shoulder to shoulder and they continually carry it until it reaches its final location in the funeral service, the occasion in Luke they carried the coffin straight to Christ.

So we understand by this very word bear and the phrase bear one another's burdens, The family of God are to support, help and carry the burdens of others.

How do you do that?

How do you help one another to give support in burdens, I feel helpless and hopeless. They may be at a distance, well it's the application of the word **bear** which means **to shoulder one another or join shoulders**.

In other words, come along side the burdened one, support them through it all, the one under a load of care needs to know you are here for them anytime, be that voice for them.

They need a chat someone to talk to give them your ear. Or assure of prayers.

The Church at Philippi shared with Paul in the gospel, while he was in jail not only by prayer but also, sending support.

By sharing, bearing caring, helping one another we show the love of Christ. They demonstrated the love of Christ to Paul, they help bear Paul burdens, to abound in Christ likeness.

Peter taught burdened believers in **1 Peter 5:7** "**Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.**" **Psalm 55:22** "**Cast thy burden upon the LORD, and he shall sustain thee: he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved.**"

IV FOURTH, FELLOWSHIP IN THE GOSPEL IS EXPRESSED BY SUFFERING WITH ONE ANOTHER IN THE GOSPEL.

When it came to fellowship in the gospel, Paul suffered for the gospel's sake as did the Philippians. Yet Paul recognised in **verse 12** **the things that happened unto** him, where **unto the furtherance of the gospel.**

They shared the same mind set in their gospel stand, they were not ashamed of the gospel, to identify with Paul and like Paul suffer **unto the furtherance of the gospel**. suffering for the sake of Christ.

Paul said **verses 29-30** **"for unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him but to suffer for His sake, "Having the same conflict which ye saw in me, and now hear to be in me."**

The phrase **suffer for His sake**, means **to suffer on account of, or because of**. the moment the Philippians became Christians, redeemed by precious blood, there were hated for Christ sake or on account of their union with Christ.

It cost's to live for Christ,

In fact Christ taught His disciples this very truth, in **Matthew 5:10-11** ***Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*** **verse 12** ***"for my sake."***

Just as persecution is a reality we cannot escape it, so too is your position, prize, and place.

No temporal opposition can alter the eternal blessing which God's people possess.

Christ suffered, He experienced every sorrow for His people, and was victorious, assuring them of eternal blessings reserved for them.

That why Susana Spurgeon, I don't know how long this lasted for, but during the ministry, of Charles Spurgeon he was so intensely criticised that he became deeply depressed.

So his wife printed the beatitudes on a large sheet of paper and placed it above their bed.

The first thing Spurgeon saw in the morning and the last thing he read at night was our Saviour's glorious promise.

V FIFTH, FELLOWSHIP IN THE GOSPEL IS EXPRESSED BY SERVING ONE ANOTHER IN THE GOSPEL.

Paul in thanking God or the Philippians and their fellowship in the gospel, is rejoicing for their service in the gospel.

Ch 4:1 ... **Stand fast in the Lord my deary beloved.** He includes in **verse 3** "...**true yokefellow....women which laboured with me in the gospel,...Clement also, and with other my fellowlabourers...**"

Paul had served the Philippians faithfully. He surrendered his life to go at the call of God to preach the gospel unto them. He encouraged, prayed, supported and helped them in the fellowship in the gospel.

Likewise the saints at Philippi served Paul in the fellowship of the gospel but both did it unto the Lord, they served with Christ in view, because Christ is the greatest servant and Master to all who trust Him.

He served His people in earth by His life and death, purchasing their redemption by His blood, and now He continually serves His people in heaven praying for them on the basis of His own blood.

No one will ever love, pray, and support you like Jesus.

Know you know Him today as your Saviour?