

“Participating in the Gospel – Part 2”
Philippians 1:3-5
(Preached a Trinity, June 12, 2016)

I’m supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord’s Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I’ll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. After identifying himself and Timothy as the senders of the letter and describing the recipients of the letter – the congregation at Philippi with the pastors and deacons, and after pronouncing his apostolic blessing in **Verse 2**, Paul moves on in **Verse 3** to express his pastoral joy over this congregation.
"I thank my God in all my remembrance of you,"
2. As I expressed last week, it is a wonderful blessing for a pastor to look upon a congregation with such joy. I shared several things that might have contributed to this great joy for the Philippian church.
 - a. Surely their love for Paul was a source of comfort and joy for Paul. Paul had just received their generous offering to help with his needs. Knowing our brothers and sisters love us is a wonderful source of joy.
 - b. They willingly followed Paul’s leadership and example. This too would have brought Paul great joy.
Philippians 4:9 NAU - "The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you."
 - c. And, of course, there is always joy in serving Christ with an awareness of His call upon your life. There is joy in shepherding God’s people even in the face of the brokenness that plagues us all.
4. While all these things would have filled Paul’s pastoral heart with joy there is one thing about the Philippians that filled Paul with joy more than any other. They shared Paul’s passion for the Gospel.
Paul’s great passion was the Gospel.
1 Corinthians 9:23 NAU - "I do all things for the sake of the gospel,"
5. Paul was overwhelmed with joy because they shared his passion in the work of God’s redeeming grace in Christ. This world is suffering under the corruption of sin and Paul knew the only hope rested in the work of God through the Gospel.
Romans 1:16 NAU - "For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek."
6. The church of Philippi shared Paul’s passion for the Gospel. Like Paul, they were Gospel centered. They were Gospel laborers.
Philippians 1:3-5 NAU - "I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, ⁴ always offering prayer with joy in my every prayer for you all, ⁵ in view of your participation in the gospel from the first day until now."
ESV – “because of”

- a. Paul is saying in large measure that his heart was filled with joy because of their sharing in the great work of the Gospel.
- b. Paul's passion was the Gospel of Christ. He is saying that it was their passion too. The word for "participation" is *κοινωνία*. It is the word often translated "fellowship." In other words, there was a common sharing of the Gospel.
7. Last week I introduced the question: what does Paul mean that they were "participating" in the Gospel?
- There are two ways the Philippians were participating with Paul in the Gospel. Both display the Philippians devoting their lives to the Gospel.
- They were participating in the promulgation of the Gospel – they wanted to see it spread.
 - They were participating in the propagation of the Gospel – to bearing the fruit of the Gospel—they were living the Gospel. They wanted to display God's glory in the Gospel
- I. They were committed to the promulgation of the Gospel
- A. I shared that the Philippians followed the pattern of the early church – They were always speaking of Christ.
1. When the Church of Jerusalem fled the city because of persecution the Gospel was always on their tongue, in spite of the danger.
 2. The Philippians also had the Gospel as an integrated part of their lives. Jesus Christ was continually on their tongues. One way we know this was the opposition they were facing. Undercover Christians seldom face opposition – **Verses 27-29**
 3. If the Gospel isn't already at the center of our lives we need to pray that God would reorder our lives.
- B. Another way they were sharing in Paul's Gospel labors was through prayer
1. Paul often sought prayer for the success of the Gospel
2 Thessalonians 3:1 NAU - "Finally, brethren, pray for us that the word of the Lord will spread rapidly and be glorified, just as *it did* also with you;"
Ephesians 6:19-20 NAU - "*pray* on my behalf, that utterance may be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel, ²⁰ for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in *proclaiming* it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak."
 2. Paul understood that prayer was an essential aspect of the advance of the Gospel. It brought Him great confidence and joy knowing the Philippians were praying for him.
Philippians 1:19 NAU - "I know that this will turn out for my deliverance through your prayers and the provision of the Spirit of Jesus Christ,"
 3. We need to pray continually that God will bless the work of the Gospel both here and abroad. Pray for the preaching. Pray for God to bless your Gospel work.

C. The Philippian church also participated through sharing their financial resources **Philippians 4:15-18 NAU** - "You yourselves also know, Philippians, that at the first preaching of the gospel, after I left Macedonia, no church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving but you alone; ¹⁶ for even in Thessalonica you sent a *gift* more than once for my needs. ¹⁷ Not that I seek the gift itself, but I seek for the profit which increases to your account. ¹⁸ But I have received everything in full and have an abundance; I am amply supplied, having received from Epaphroditus what you have sent, a fragrant aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well-pleasing to God."

1. Paul was writing from prison. It was more like a house arrest. He was under guard at all times. He was required to provide for his own provisions. Even though Paul was imprisoned he was still preaching the Gospel.

Philippians 1:12-13 NAU - "Now I want you to know, brethren, that my circumstances have turned out for the greater progress of the gospel, ¹³ so that my imprisonment in *the cause of Christ* has become well known throughout the whole praetorian guard and to everyone else"

2. The Philippians were excited to share in meeting Paul's expenses. In doing this they were participating in the work of the Gospel.

3. In giving to the church you are participating in the work of the church. Your tithes enable me to focus more of my time on study. Through your giving you can also participate in missionary work without ever leaving your town. We prioritize this in our church covenant.

"to contribute cheerfully and regularly through the tithe for the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the gospel through all the nations."

II. Paul was also filled with joy because they were participating in the propagation of the Gospel – in bearing the fruit of the Gospel.

The Philippians shared in Paul's gospel by receiving the Gospel and then being partakers of the grace of the Gospel. They were living the Gospel.

A. As Christians we all share in the grace of the Gospel

Philippians 1:7 NAU - "it is only right for me to feel this way about you all, because I have you in my heart, since both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, you all are partakers of grace with me."

1. We all share in the resurrection power of Christ. The Gospel is always lived outwardly – we reflect the grace of the Gospel.

2. The Gospel is always transforming. Those who receive it have been raised from death to life; from darkness to light, from corruption to incorruption. In **Chapter 3** Paul writes of resurrection power

Philippians 3:9-10 NAU - "and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from *the Law*, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which *comes* from God on the basis of faith, ¹⁰ that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection"

3. The Philippians were fellow partakers of this resurrection power, this Gospel grace. This was a great source of joy for Paul.

4. The Christian shares in both the labors and energies in spreading the Gospel as well as the outward demonstration of the reality of the Gospel in our own lives.

This is the grace Paul is referring to in **Verse 7**

B. What are some of these Gospel graces? Paul speaks of several.

1. We share in a universal love for one another. Sharing with the Philippians in this grace brought Paul great joy.

Philippians 2:1-2 NAU - "Therefore if there is any encouragement in Christ, if there is any consolation of love, if there is any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and compassion, ² make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose."

 - a. This doesn't mean our love has been perfected. This is why Paul is encouraging them to love more and more

Philippians 1:9 NAU - "And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more"

Philippians 2:1-2 NAU - "make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose."
 - b. They had already demonstrated this love through their generous support of Paul. What a joyous love.
2. In the Gospel we share a common unity

Philippians 1:27-29 NAU - "Only conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or remain absent, I will hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel; ²⁸

 - a. The Gospel makes us one body in Christ
 - b. Paul rejoiced that they were sharing in this unity together with him
3. In the Gospel we share a common experience of suffering for the sake of the Gospel.
 - a. This too is a grace from the hand of God.

Philippians 1:29 NAU - "For to you it has been granted for Christ's sake, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake"
 - b. Paul speaks of fellowship in the sufferings of Christ in **Chapter 3**

Philippians 3:10-11 NAU - "that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; ¹¹ in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead."
 - c. Paul was joyous at their willingness to suffer with him for the cause of the Gospel

Philippians 2:17-18 NAU - "But even if I am being poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I rejoice and share my joy with you all. ¹⁸ You too, *I urge you*, rejoice in the same way and share your joy with me."

Conclusion:

1. One of the distinctives of our church is a commitment to evangelism. We join Paul and a long line of Gospel believers with a desire for Gospel promulgation, a desire to proclaim Gospel truth to the nations. We share common fellowship with all who proclaim the Gospel of Christ. We give of our time and our resources that the Gospel of Christ might go to the ends of the earth.
2. But we must also desire the Gospel to be displayed through our lives. If our lives do not display the reality of the Gospel we preach we rob it of its power. May we rejoice over one another as we fellowship in both the promulgation and the propagation of the Gospel.