

PHILIPPIANS 1: 1 – 11

**Verses 3 - 6;** *thank ... all ... joy ... partnership in the gospel ... he ... confident ... completion.* Joy is a fruit of the Spirit, a singular cluster – **Galatians 5: 22**, not an emotional ladder or a mood; **4: 12** and **2 Cor. 4: 7 - 10**. Joy and rejoicing appear fourteen times in Philippians. Paul describes a settled mind characterised by peace – John 14: 27, *Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.* He confidently viewed life with definite faith in Christ. The sovereign Lord reigned above all events and always had/has control. **Verse 6;** our salvation would be uncertain if our basis depended on our choice. The will of God is the basis of salvation: **Ephesians 1: 4 – 8**. Despite Media interests re what is the secret of happy or long life; Paul's response **v21**. 'The fact that we shall continue in grace is as certain as the fact that God, who cannot lie, will go on working in us'.<sup>1</sup>

Acts 16: 6 – 15; first church Paul founded in Europe at Philippi; **v1 & 2.** *Saints;* don't progress in sainthood; have double address; *...at Philippi ...in Christ Jesus.* Single source of blessing, one foundation; *grace and peace to you from God our Father and the LJC.* Paul knew this as he was faced with indefinite and unjust imprisonment and possible execution. Circumstances do not cancel his joy in the Lord which no one can take away.

When we pray for others we don't begin by telling God what is wrong with them (He knows), nor commence with our own requests, but thanks. **V3 – 5.** **V6** *confident ...* cf. **Gal. 3: 3.** Gift of faith is brought to action by the Word provided and is active in obedience.— Continuous; God never ceases His work. **V6** *until the day of Christ Jesus;* -- **the perseverance of the saints rests on the perseverance of God within the saints.** **Acts 16: 14** *the Lord opened Lydia's heart.* **Ephesians 1: 4.**

Paul is thankful for three truths: **v5;** their *partnership in the gospel:* **v6;** his confidence in their development which is not their ability but God working in them, plus **v 8** linked with *God's grace* in **v 7.** ---

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<sup>1</sup> Alec Motyer, *The Message of Philippians*, BST, IVF, 1984, 44

Paul then makes four prayer requests **v9**; abounding love for each other, demonstrated in *knowledge and depth of insight or discernment*; which means knowledge of God and ability to listen to and discern needs of others. **V10** a pure life and not cause others to stumble. **V11** *filled with the fruit of righteousness*; -- notice that *righteousness comes through Jesus Christ - to the glory and praise of God*. So practical Christian living which is all God's work in us through His Holy Spirit, not by self-development or personal effort through motivation courses; **2: 14 - 18**. Why do some professing Christians appear half-comatose?

Karl Barth: 'Joy is really the simplest form of gratitude ... To be joyful means to look for opportunities for gratitude'.<sup>2</sup>

Paul is chained in a Roman prison waiting for the Emperor's verdict of life or death but he rejoices that Christ is proclaimed. *What has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel*. Too often we want our circumstances to change for our own benefit or imagine we can minister in some better way; not Paul; **v18 – 26**, life means Christ.

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<sup>2</sup> Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, 111, four, T&T Clark, 1978, 376