

INTRODUCTION

- What is your perception of what it is like to be in the ministry of the Gospel? What do you...

EXPOSITION

I. HIS ADDRESS

A. My Brethren

- This is significant in that Paul, a Jew who only considered "brethren" those who were Jews
- One of the most common terms to speak of Christians in the NT, and especially used by Paul
- Ephesians 3:15 This is a title of family recognition
- Both of the following words modify brethren, what kind they are
 1. **Beloved**
 - This word has as its root the common Greek word for love; here it is used as an adjective to describe what kind of brethren they were to him
 - 8x in Gospels, only referring to the Lord Jesus Christ; this becomes one of the most common terms to refer to Christians
 - 2Thess2:13 – Loved by God; 1Jn4:11 - These two are connected; 1Thess2:8 – Loved by Paul
 - In his role as a shepherd of the flock, his relationship was not a disconnected love for truth. He was not satisfied to merely deliver truth as some kind of commodity, but that love also worked in him a love for all those who were the children of God through the Gospel
 2. **Longed-For**
 - Unlike these previous terms, this is the only time this word is used in the NT (as an adjective)
 - "pertaining to yearning affection for someone" (Louw-Nida) "very dear, yearned over" (Friberg)
 - It also has a verbal and noun form in NT. In each case it indicates an intense yearning for something
 - A baby for milk – 1Pet2:2; a desire to be clothed with immortality 2Cor5:2
 - A desire to see someone face to face – 1Thes3:6 2Tim1:4
 - It indicates something special about his relationship with them. He doesn't just love them theoretically, but there is a desire to be with them, to fellowship with them, to commune with them.
- Paul considers them brethren, in the family of God, and because God has loved them he loves them, and earnestly desires to be with them. He was a shepherd who loved his sheep, with all the difficulties, struggles, and problems that they might have.

B. My Joy

- Joy = an intense and exultant happiness, particularly a source of pleasure and satisfaction. Something that brings gladness and happiness. His relationship with them was satisfying and pleasurable.
- Certainly Paul, like the Psalmist, had God as His exceeding joy (Psa43:4). But the church at Philippi was to him a part of what God used to give to him a life experience of pleasure. He would also say with the Psalmist, "as to the saints who are on the earth, they are the excellent ones in whom is all my delight (Psa16:3).
- The work of the ministry, though difficult, was not drudgery. It was a labor that brought about incredible satisfaction.

C. My Crown

- Crown = an ornamental head piece worn to indicate achievement, honor, victory, or distinction. It especially indicated one's glory. This kind of crown (Gk. stephanos) was often used in festivals or celebrations to give honor to someone. These crowns were especially used as a reward as a recognition for hard work (as in the games).
- Paul says that they are his crown. What they are to him is the demonstration of God's good pleasure to honor him with success for his diligent labors in the ministry of the Gospel. It was not buildings, organizations, popularity, or wealth that Paul looked at to see that God had been pleased to use him, but the believers themselves. They are his reward, his blessing

Application: I have recently been taking special time to reflect on what God has done among us as a church. I have been reflecting on such things as:

- (1.) My calling and work in the ministry -
 - (2.) The diversity of the individuals in this body – the diversity of callings, education, spiritual health, spiritual backgrounds
 - (3.) The incredible pleasure it is to be with this particular group of people – you have taught me, loved me, and been patient with me as God continues to work in me as a Christian man and as a pastor. You have, in a day when there are masses of people who will not endure sound doctrine, you sit hungry every week and gratefully devour the Word of God.
- I sat the other morning thinking about these things with tears thanked the Lord, and thought there was likely no happier man on the earth. With all of our struggles, I can honestly say that YOU are my beloved and longed-for brethren, my

joy and my crown. I cannot imagine doing anything else in life that would bring such satisfaction and joy than what you bring to me.

- In [Heb13:17](#) the Christians are called to so live so as to bring about joy, and not grief, to those who speak the Word of God to you. This you are doing.
- For the men: I would want to entice you to pursue such a pleasurable calling.

II. HIS EXHORTATION

A. Therefore...So Stand Fast

- The word "therefore" connects us to the previous verses. In those verses we are reminded that our citizenship is in another world. It is from heaven that we are eagerly waiting for the return of our Lord Jesus Christ. At His return He will transform our lowly body, now corrupted by weakness and sin, and give us a glorified body like His resurrection body. At that time He will subdue all things to Himself.
- It was because the Christians at Philippi believed this, and their lives were transformed by it, that Paul can say these things about them.
- The word "so" means in this way, like this...with this ongoing disposition and hope. It is in this way that they are to "stand fast." This phrase indicates Paul's plea to them to stay in that place. Keeping standing firmly there, don't be moved from it, don't swerve from it, don't let anything knock you off of it.
- Illustration: the game "king of the hill"

B. In the Lord

- In this phrase we are reminded that the way to stay steadfast and immovable is in vital connection with the Lord Jesus. This is not something accomplished in the Christians own strength. The temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil are too strong. There has to be an ongoing relationship with God. Just knowing what is right, knowing good doctrine is not enough (as evidenced by many who fall from the faith who know right things).

How does one stand fast in the Lord?

- 1.) **Trusting** in the Lord – [Psa4:5](#)
- 2.) **Hoping** in the Lord – [Psa31:24](#)
- 3.) **Being glad** in the Lord – [Psa32:11](#)
- 4.) **Rejoicing** in the Lord – [Psa33:1](#)
- 5.) **Boasting** in the Lord – [Psa34:2](#)
- 6.) **Delighting** in the Lord – [Psa37:4](#)
- 7.) **Resting** in the Lord – [Psa37:7](#)

Application: As this is Paul's plea to them, so it is my plea to you. In doing so, not only is my joy increased, but yours will be as well. [2Cor1:24](#) It is for your joy that we labor.