

## **#1 Philippians Chap 1:1**

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**Verse 1:** 'Paul and Timothy, bondservants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, with the bishops and deacons: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.'

In the Greek, Paul wrote, Paulos and Timotheos, doulos of Jesus Christ... Paulos means little or small: God chose the foremost intellectual of his time, the one to whom He gave the commission to write the majority of the New Testament and most of our Church doctrine... and called him Little... wherever he went God was working in him to produce patience and humility. Timothy has a much better name: Timotheos means, 'God-honoring.' Even that pairing was meant to keep Paul humble: Little guy, along with God-honoring guy... Poor Paul... he probably wondered why God didn't choose to, rather, name him 'Polemistis agrios: Fierce Warrior... But no... Little and God-honoring, doulos: servant, where we get our word, doula, a servant who cares for the children. Paul and Timothy are servants caring for God's children. Paul is writing to all the Saints: the word is hagios: it means, 'most holy thing.' All the saints in Philippi, along with you and me: God considers us His 'Most Holy Things.'

He chose us before the foundation of the World, and He gave us to His Son as a gift of love: ***His most holy things.*** Imagine the kind of gift, God the Father would dream up to give to His Beloved Son: not gold or rubies, not planets or star systems... us! We are the most holy things that God the Father could dream up to give to His Son and He planned that gift, every one of us... before He began Creation. None of us are accidents; none of our histories or heritages are by accident; He planned out our very existence, from beginning to end so that we would become His most holy, most prized possessions, in all of time and eternity, and that we would then become the holy, righteous, glorified, perfect Bride for His Son. Then, the Son chose to love us so much that He was willing to go to the Cross, to pay the full price of redemption for every one of us who would trust in Him; then, the Father raised the Lord Jesus Christ from the dead and seated Him in Glory as the proof positive to us that His plan for us really is to do the very same: to raise us up to share in Christ's Glory, forever!

Paul was always faithful to train up younger men for the ministry. Every legitimate pastor, evangelist, elder, deacon, etc. should be about the business of discipling and mentoring younger men for the ministry.

And every legitimate pastor, teacher, elder, deacon... their number one mission should be: servants of the most High God, caring and nurturing God's children: those within the body of Christ. Their first priority should never be about what is out there... the mission field... their first priority must be, caring for the Body of Christ and equipping them to go out into the mission fields which are even now white unto harvest... just waiting for everyday evangelists to come and knock on their door... just like Paul did 2000 years ago.

Paul was the model whom every pastor, teacher, evangelist should emulate.

Paul wishes them grace and peace. Only a born again child of God can really know grace: that undeserved love and favor, to have been chosen by God, before creation, to have been freely forgiven of all sin and trespass, past present and future... and thereby, only the child of God can rest in true peace, that peace that only comes from the Prince of Peace. The World cannot know either true grace or real peace.

**Verse 3:** 'I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, <sup>4</sup> always in every prayer of mine making request for you all with joy,'

Paul is very pleased with the Church at Philippi. Every time he thinks of them, it's with joy; every prayer for them is with joy; he has nothing negative or worrisome to say to them; they are a model Church. This Church and Paul's letter, are so different than what we saw with the Galatians who were very worrisome to Paul.

Every time Paul prayed, and he is the one who said, pray without ceasing, every time, he would also pray for the Philippians and the Galatians and the Colossians and the Thessalonians and on and on... I know I don't pray like I should...

What a joy, what a relief to Paul these Philippians must have been.

**Verse 5:** 'for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now,'

Fellowship in the Gospel is a group of believers first and foremost; they are living and learning together; they

are sharing all their worldly goods together, seeing that none are in want; they are being equipped, together, to go out into the World, walking in a manner worthy of the calling with which they've been called. This is absolutely **NOT** about putting on a Sunday extravaganza tailored to supposedly attracting the lost with a rock concert, a light show, professional type musicians and singers, about working hard to look just like the World, foolishly thinking that is the Church's mission. The Church as a group of believers does not go out into the World; it comes into itself to meet together, to grow in the Word, to exhort and encourage each other toward walking in a manner worthy of the Lord, supporting each and then going out into the World to reach the lost. Some of us are old enough to remember what 'real' Churches used to do? Sunday nights for one, along with Wednesday nights... prayer together, worshipping together, standing up and telling those who fellowship with you in the Gospel, all that God has done in your life, how He saved you, delivered you out of the kingdom of darkness in the glorious light of His Son... Testimony time... 'And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death.' Rev 12:11 We sit around having no idea what is going on in the lives of our brothers and sisters in Christ... not even knowing for sure who is saved and who is not; we have no idea who is in need and who has abundance. Here in some Sunday School classes, we are better at it than out in big church, but still not what Paul is talking about in our ***fellowship together in the Gospel.***

**Verse 6:** 'being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete *it* until the day of Jesus Christ;'

We often quote this verse to ourselves and to each other, that God is faithful to continue His work in your life and in my life. He chose us and drew us to Himself and saved us and He will continue to mold us into the image and likeness of the Lord Jesus Christ... but that is not Paul's primary meaning here... firstly, he means that God is the One Who brought our parents and grandparents together as a special grouping of His body here in Milwaukie. As a group, as a local expression of the Body of Jesus Christ, God is the One Who created us, Who brought us together and formed us in this locale and He is faithful to continue to complete His work in us as a group, as a Church, as a fellowship of believers until He comes for us in the Rapture.

We are to trust Him to protect and grow us. We need not worry about any attack from the enemy... 'Oh no... we've lost our Pastor; Oh no, the government won't let us meet; Oh no... we're not meeting our budget projection; Oh no... we're not filling all the seats; oh no... whatever!! God is the One Who began a good work in Milwaukie First Baptist Church and He is faithful to complete that work until the moment the Lord Jesus Christ comes down into the clouds with a shout, with the trumpet of God, when the dead in Christ will rise first and then, finally, we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them, in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air and so shall we ever be with the Lord... be comforted with these words.

We look at each other, and even at ourselves, with discouragement thinking, won't I ever grow, won't I ever learn maturity? God sees us, now, in the wise, mature, Christ-like perfection He has planned for us all along. He is never discouraged by us... He is the master artist, the peerless sculpture; He sees us as the finished product He has always intended us to be.

**Verse 7:** 'Just as it is right for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart, inasmuch as both in my chains and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, you all are partakers with me of grace.'

Paul had learned to see his spiritual children as God sees them in their completed form. He saw them, not as his servants, not as those over whom he was lord and master; he saw himself as simply one with them in Christ. Anyone in Church leadership who fails to see those who've been entrusted to his care in this same way, has no business being in any station of leadership to begin with.

**Verse 8:** 'For God is my witness, how greatly I long for you all with the affection of Jesus Christ.'

See the difference of Paul's attitude with the Philippians and with the Galatians. Here, he couldn't wait to get back to being with them, to sharing life with them in the joy of fellowshiping in the Gospel together but with the Galatians, he couldn't wait to get back to Galatia in order to battle against the heresy of the Judaizers. There is such a difference when we look forward to the joy of being with someone whose heart is in tune with our own as opposed to the dread of having to be with someone with whom you share little or nothing in the

way of the things which are most important in life. We often get calls on the radio from a spouse, usually the wife who is married to an unbeliever... what a thing! Perhaps some of you have experienced the same yourself or have watched with despair as your child married an unbeliever. Personally, I can't think of anything worse than not being married to someone whose number one goal is to glorify God and walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which she has been called. I see friends, family, people on television or in movies who face some hardship or other... how hopeless to not be able to pray together for God's direction or deliverance; that, in itself, is the greater tragedy.

I'd rather a tree invade our home like it did the Bilbys' and to be able to pray together than to be without any trials at all but not having someone to pray with.

**Verse 9:** 'And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment,' Paul repeats to us again and again: our love for each other, other believers, is the most important characteristic of God that we possess. We love Him because He first loved us and then we have ever-increasing love for each other. And what is the most important aspect of love that God is working within us? Patience! That is the work that He began in us and which He will be faithful to complete in us... forming us more and more, day by day, minute by minute... into the image and likeness of the Lord Jesus Christ... patience first!!

Trials, trials and more trials... telling us to consider is all joy when He always pounds us with more and more trials... knowing that every trial, the testing of our faith produces patience and then, we are to allow patience to have its perfect work in us so that we will grow ever more perfect and complete, lacking nothing.

Not only does He work patience in us which works love in us, but then, as that love within us grows, He will also bless us with more and more knowledge and discernment through His Word.

**Verse 10:** 'that you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ,'

In order to approve what is excellent, we must be testing at least two things that differ and the only way we will know how to make the right choice, to approve that which is excellent, is through study of God's Word; that is the plumb line by which we test everything: God's Word.

Peter writes, 'But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness,<sup>7</sup> to godliness brotherly kindness, **and to brotherly kindness love.**<sup>8</sup> For if these things are yours and abound, *you* will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. 2Pet 1:5

Love is the end result of God's work within us and our own work of learning to know and approve what's right. Then, at the end of this letter to the Philippians, Paul gives us the secret of how to approve the things that are excellent: 'Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things *are* noble, whatever things are just, whatever things *are* pure, whatever things *are* lovely, whatever things *are* of good report, if *there is* any virtue and if *there is* anything praiseworthy—**meditate on these things.**<sup>9</sup> The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you. Phpp 4:8

**That you may be sincere:** Here is an interesting word Paul is using. The Greek word he used is: *eilikrines*, which means, 'found pure when unfolded and examined by the sun's light. When Jerome produced the Latin Vulgate, the word he used was: *sin ceres* which, literally means, 'without wax.'

They made a certain fine, delicate porcelain back then. Sometimes, small cracks will have been formed as it was fired in the kiln. An honest potter would simply throw the cracked piece out. A dishonest dealer would rub a white, pearly wax into the cracks which then made the cracks disappear. A wise buyer, one who knew how to approve the things that are excellent, would hold the cup up into the sunlight and if there were waxed over cracks, they would show forth as tiny dark lines in the cup. ***sin ceres*** literally means: **without wax**, a cup or saucer that was without cracks, whole, complete, nothing untoward, but hidden.

That is what Paul is saying, as our love for each other abounds still more and more in knowledge and all discernment, we will become increasingly whole and complete in Him: without cracks and without wax.

Remember what James wrote, 'let patience have its perfect result that you may be perfect and complete,

(sincere, without wax)... lacking in nothing.' As we love, remember: love is patient... as we love more and more, we will become more and more *sin ceres*, without wax, perfect, whole and complete, sincere.

If we don't love each other, every one of us *'each others'*... we are cracked but in order to look good to others on Sunday, at Church, we rub wax into our cracks because we are *in-sin-ceres*, insincere... not without wax, with wax, full of cracks which are glossed over and filled in with wax.

As our love abounds more and more, our cracks become filled in and we become more and more sincere.

**Verse 11:** 'being filled with the fruits of righteousness which *are* by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.'

As we love, we will be filled with the fruits of righteousness. What are they? It's what Paul told the Galatians: 'But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, <sup>23</sup> gentleness and self-control.' Gal 5:22 The fruits of righteousness.

All of God's Word fits together as an intricately woven tapestry and the key to all of it is: Love. 'Now the purpose of the commandment is **love** from a pure heart, *from* a good conscience, and *from sincere* faith,' 1Tim1:5

And the purpose of all God's work within us... is it so that we are healthy and wealthy with a mighty world-wide ministry? No... His purpose, as He works in us, changing us to be more like His Son... is the praise and glory of God! That is our purpose in life... the praise and glory of God. If that is not our number one purpose, we are cracked with wax.

What is the main vehicle by which God works to produce in us the 'Fruit(s) of Righteousness?' Does He plant a seed of Righteousness within us and then water it with His Word until that seed grows up into a tree of Righteousness within our hearts? Would that it were that easy. He tells us His real recipe for our Fruit of Righteousness in Proverbs 3 and Hebrews 12: 'My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD, nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him; for whom the LORD loves He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives... but He *disciplines us* for *our* good, so that we may share His holiness. <sup>11</sup> For the moment, all discipline seems not to be pleasant, but painful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterward it **yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness.**'

God uses trials, tribulations, correction and discipline to produce in us, patience and the peaceful Fruit of Righteousness.

**Verse 12:** 'But I want you to know, brethren, that the things *which happened* to me have actually turned out for the furtherance of the gospel,'

Paul is referring to his own trials and tribulations; even he was not immune to God's working within him to produce even more patience and fruit. Paul was in prison, in Rome, when he wrote this letter as well as Ephesians, Colossians and Philemon. Satan meant his imprisonment for evil, to shut him up, to restrain his pastoral and evangelistic work but, just like Joseph said, God meant it for good: 'As for you, you meant evil against me, *but* God meant it for good in order to bring about this present result' Gen 50:20

How many have come to faith in Christ and how many Christians have grown in their faith as a result of those four letters? Paul reiterated the same in his letter to the Romans: 'And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to *His* purpose.' Rom 8:28 Paul knew that God was behind, and in, all of his trials; he knew God was using them to mature him in Christ.

**Verse 13:** 'so that it has become evident to the whole palace guard, and to all the rest, that my chains are in Christ;'

Everyone around him, even the palace guard, recognized that Paul was in the center of God's will. If Paul had refused to submit to God's trial, if he had been angry or resentful, no one would have listened to him and then become born again. Just like he and Silas had done, earlier, in the Philippian Jail, his love for God, and for the lost, allowed him to be fruitful in evangelism. People are attracted to those who are at peace, with joy and love while they are repulsed by those who are angry, resentful, envious, etc. Our attitude is our first line of 'attack' in sharing the Gospel. Our attitude is the first thing which then determines whether or not others want to listen to what we have to say. For those who say, God allows trials but doesn't cause them: Paul said his chains are IN Christ. There is nothing IN Christ which He did not plan and put there.