

Paul's Joyful Letter to the *Philippians*

CHAPTER 1: THE SINGLE MIND

Fellowship of the Gospel (1:1-11)

It is believed Paul wrote this letter while in a Roman prison ^{Philippians 1:13,4:22}, probably in c. A.D. 60-62.

Introduction and Greetings (1:1-2)

1:1-2 Paul and Timothy, servants ¹ of Christ Jesus, To all the saints ² in Christ Jesus at Philippi, together with the overseers and deacons: Grace ³ and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord ⁴ Jesus Christ. [¹*doulos*: bond servant; ²*hagios*: set apart or sanctified; ³*charis*: favor done without expectation of return; ⁴*kurios*: wielding authority for good] Paul used the first-century pattern of identifying the sender and recipients in the introduction of the letter. Timothy was a coworker with Paul for the Gospel ^{Philippians 2:22}. Timothy and his believing Mother and Greek Father were from Lystra ^{Acts 16:1}. A "saint" is not a special believer, but it refers to all genuine believers ^{Romans 1:7, Ephesians 1:1, Revelation 17:6}. Overseers (bishops, elders) serve in prayer & ministry ^{1 Timothy 3:1-7}; deacons serve to free them to teach & preach ^{1 Timothy 3:8-13}. Verse 2 is Paul's standard greeting, reminding his readers about their relationship with God.

Most scholars do not believe Timothy was a coauthor, but Paul may have dictated the letter to him.

Timothy was Paul's spiritual "helper" ^{Acts 19:21-22}, "brother" ^{Colossians 1:1} and "dear son" ^{2 Timothy 1:2}.

I have you in my mind (1:3-6)

1:3-4 I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray ⁵ with joy... [⁵*deēsis*: prayer for particular benefits] Paul praised and prayed for the congregation in Philippi ^{Romans 1:8}, in spite of his being flogged and imprisoned earlier while in Philippi on his 2nd Missionary Trip ^{Acts 16:16-40}. Paul used 5 Greek words to express "Joy" at least 15 times ^{Philippians 1.4,18,25,26; 2:2,16,17,18,28,29; 3:1,3; 4:1,4,10}.

1:5 ...because of your partnership ⁶ in the gospel from the first day until now, [⁶*koinōnia*: fellowship with] All members of the Body of Christ ^{Ephesians 1:22-23} should want to be partners in the Gospel ^{2 Corinthians 8:1-4}, by gaining Biblical knowledge ^{Acts 2:42} and then serving: spiritually ^{Philippians 2:22} & financially ^{Philippians 4:14-19}.

1:6 being confident ⁷ of this, that he who began a good ⁸ work in you will (carry it on to completion) ⁹ until the day of Christ Jesus. [⁷*peithō*: be persuaded; ⁸*agathōs*: profitable, useful; ⁹*epiteleō*: intentionally finish/perfect] The Christian "work" Paul refers to has three elements: God's provision of salvation (justification), His efforts to change attitudes & actions (sanctification), and His perfection of life in heaven (glorification). And, the desire of every saint should always be for this process to be constantly active ^{Psalms 138:8, 139:23-24}.

I have you in my heart (1:7-8)

1:7 It is right for me to feel this way about all of you, since I have you in my heart; for whether I am in chains or defending and confirming¹⁰ the gospel, all of you share in God's grace with me. [¹⁰*bebaiōsis*: validation] Paul specified his Christian love for the people by saying they are “in [his] heart”² Corinthians 7:2-4, with the heart being the Biblical word used to describe the center of thought and emotions^{Proverbs 4:23}. The words “defending and confirming” are judicial terms and along with the reference to chains^{Acts 21:33} indicate Paul’s willingness to present the Gospel even in a prison^{Ephesians 6:19-20}. The receiving of God’s grace (just as the receiving of His joy) is a gift for all of the disciples of Jesus Christ^{Romans 5:17, Ephesians 2:8-9}.

1:8 God can testify¹¹ how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus. [¹¹*martus*: one who remembers] Longing is a characteristic of Godly love. This type of love can only be gained through the sanctifying work of the Spirit² Thessalonians 2:13, 1 Peter 1:1-2 and is the ultimate evidence of salvation^{John 13:34-35, 1 John 4:21}. The Greek word [*splagchnōn*] translated “affection” literally refers to the internal organs: the part of the body that reacts to intense emotion. It became the strongest Greek word to express compassionate love.

I have you in my prayers (1:9-11)

1:9 And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge¹² and (depth of insight)¹³, [¹²*epignōsis*: intentional knowledge (lit); ¹³*aisthēsis*: discernment, experience] Paul hoped the Philippian church members would continue to mature through a deep love for one another¹ Thessalonians 3:12, 1 Peter 1:22. True wisdom (“knowledge and depth of insight”) must come from the power of the Holy Spirit^{Ephesians 1:17}.

1:10 so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure¹⁴ and blameless¹⁵ until the day of Christ, [¹⁴*eilikrinēs*: free from blemish to such a degree as to bear examination in the full splendor of the sun; ¹⁵*aproskopos*: an absence of stumbling] The Christian is called to endorse and perform what is ethically and morally superior (“best”)^{Philippians 4:8}, in order to remain “blameless”¹ Corinthians 1:7-9 until Jesus’ day^{v.6}.

1:11 filled with the fruit of righteousness¹⁶ that comes through Jesus Christ – to the glory and praise of God. [¹⁶*dikaioṣunē*: conformance with the claims of a higher authority] The genuine believer should embrace every aspect of the “fruit”^{Galatians 5:22-23} offered by Jesus and His Spirit^{v.19}. The “fruit of the righteous” comes from “a tree of life”^{Proverbs 11:30}, which will produce a “harvest of righteousness” for Christian peacemakers^{James 3:18}. The difference between spiritual fruit and religious activity is that only fruit brings praise and glory to God and should be a prime motivator in everything saints do^{Ephesians 1:3-6, 12-14, 3:20-21}.

Chapter 1 will be completed in the next lesson. The following is an outline of the remainder of the chapter:

Furtherance of the Gospel (1:12-26)

Paul’s Chains (Christ was known) (1:12-14)

Paul’s Critics (Christ was preached) (1:15-19)

Paul’s Crisis (Christ was exalted) (1:20-26)

Faith of the Gospel (1:27-30)

Consistency (1:27a), Cooperation (1:27b), Confidence (1:28-30)

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