

Paul's letter to the Philippians



Paul's affection for the Philippians

Philippians 1:1-11



Steve Lewis

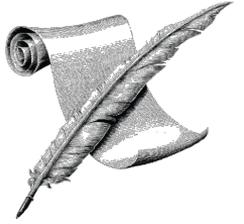
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1:1 ~ signature



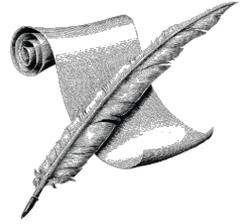
- **“Paul and Timothy, bond-servants”** (*doulos*) ~ a servant who voluntarily devotes himself to his master’s will without regard for his own interests.
- The Hebrew custom ~ a household slave could willingly committed himself to his master for life (Exodus 21:5-6). Paul and Timothy had both committed themselves to serving their Master forever.
- Paul wanted the Philippians to remember him primarily as a devoted servant of Christ, rather than claiming a title as Christ’s designated apostle or as a high-ranking leader within the Christian movement.

1:1 ~ address



- **“saints”** (*hagios*) or “holy ones” ~ refers to someone who has been separated and consecrated to God.
- **“overseers”** (*episkopos*) ~ literally, “watch over,” describes a leader’s role in guarding against things that threaten the local church. Two synonyms: **“shepherd”** pictures the leader’s “pastoral” role in feeding God’s flock. **“elder”** describes the quality of maturity and wisdom in decision-making on behalf of the local church. All three of these terms refer to a single office within the local church.
- **“deacons”** (*diakonos*) ~ those who serve in a designated role within the local church. Qualifications for deacon ⇔ overseer (1 Tim 3:1-7 with 8-13).

1:2 ~ salutation



- **“grace”** (*charis*) ~ the unmerited favor of God; His goodness toward those who cannot earn and do not deserve His favor.
- **“peace”** (*eirēnē*) ~ the deep inner sense of tranquility and well-being given to those who have been reconciled to God through what Christ accomplished on the cross.
- The order of the words is important. People cannot experience this type of peace unless they first receive God’s grace.
- **“from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ”** ~ the source of grace and peace provided by God Himself through His indwelling Holy Spirit.

1:3-4 ~ ascription of appreciation



- “**remembrance**” (*mneia*) ~ When Paul thinks of these beloved saints, his overriding sentiment is extreme “**joy**” (*chara*).
- He expressed his extreme joy with an excessive use of the word “**all**” (*pas*).

“I thank my God for you in **all** my remembrance of you
at **all** times in **all** my prayer for **all** of you.”

- During his confinement in Rome, we can imagine Paul reviewing his memories of the Philippians. Every memory prompted him to pray for them with thanks to God.

1:5 ~ their partnership in the gospel

- **“participation”** (*koinōnia*) ~ literally, “sharing in common.” It can be translated as participation, partnership, or fellowship, and it includes the ideas of continual association and comradeship.
- Paul recalled their times of co-laboring together for the sake of the gospel.
- **“from the first day until now”** ~ their bond of fellowship was immediate and lasting. Paul is calling attention to the Philippians’ *constancy*, which is a rare quality even today.
- Their ongoing partnership with Paul was a sign of God’s grace at work in their lives.

1:6 ~ He who began the work will complete it

- Paul expressed “**confidence**” (*peithō*) in God for their spiritual growth. From beginning to end, salvation is the work of God who is faithful.
- “**perfect**” (*epiteleō*) ~ to bring to the ultimate goal. Even though believers still struggle against the flesh during their earthly lives (Rom 6:19), God continues to conform us to the image of Jesus Christ (Rom 8:29).
- “**until**” points to the time when the desired condition is finally reached. The believers’ glorification will ultimately occur in “**the day of Christ Jesus**” when He will deliver them from their current imperfect state and will perfect them in holiness (see 1 Cor 15, 1 Thess 4:13-18, 1 John 3:2).
- We can trust that God will continue the work of sanctification in believers until that day of completion.

1:7-8 ~ Paul's affection for the Philippians

- Paul returned to explaining his joyful gratitude for the Philippians.
- **“feel”** (*phroneō*) ~ “to direct the mind” or “to take thought.” Paul’s mental picture of the Philippians caused him to express deep feelings of affection for them.
- This is the first time Paul has mentioned his current **“imprisonment”** in Rome and his upcoming hearing before Caesar. At that time he will **“defend”** and **“confirm”** the gospel for which he has been imprisoned.
- **“partakers with me”** (*sugkoinōnos*) ~ “sharers together” of God’s **“grace”** (*charis*). All of their accomplishments were due to the good work and unmerited favor of God.
- Paul called God as the witness who can confirm the truth of Paul’s feelings of affection for the Philippians.

1:9 ~ abound in love, with knowledge and discernment

- **“pray”** (*proseuchomai*) ~ the normal word for offering prayers to God.
- Paul asked that their love may **“abound more and more”** (*perisseuō*) ~ to overflow or grow beyond its natural limits. **“Christian love...is not an impulse from the feelings, it does not always run with the natural inclinations, nor does it spend itself only upon those for whom some affinity is discovered. Love seeks the welfare of all (Rom 15:2), and works no ill to any (13:8-10); love seeks opportunity to do good to ‘all men, and especially toward them that are of the household of faith’ (Gal 6:10).”**
- **“love”** (*agapē*) ~ involves a considered, intentional, unselfish choice to act for the good of others. Christian love should always be exercised with **“knowledge”** (*epignōsis*) and **“discernment”** (*aisthēsis*).

1:10 ~ blameless until the day of Christ

- **“so that”** introduces the result of exercising Christian love with knowledge and discernment.
- **“approve”** (*dokimazō*) ~ to examine or confirm by a process of testing. It describes a carefully examined and well-considered conclusion. Something should only be declared to be true, right, or excellent after it has been carefully examined.
- **“excellent”** (*diapherō*) ~ literally, “to be carried through.” By implication, to surpass, be better, or be of more value than something else.
- **“in order to”** (*hina*) ~ the ultimate purpose is for believers to be **“sincere”** (*eilikrinēs*) and **“blameless”** (*aproskopos*). Believers will be made completely sincere and blameless in the **“day of Christ.”** Until that time they must cooperate with the indwelling Holy Spirit to live in a way that pleases God.

1:11 ~ filled with the fruit of righteousness

- Living as Paul just described (1:9-10) will yield **“fruit”** that will be evident in a righteous life. In that future “day of Christ” believers will be completely filled or perfected in righteousness and holiness. That transformation will occur only as a result of all that **“Jesus Christ”** has accomplished in us. The perfect tense identifies an action done in the past which has continuing or ongoing effects. The passive voice means that this **“filling”** is a work done for us by Jesus Christ through His indwelling Spirit.
- **“to the glory and praise of God”** ~ It is God who deserves and will receive all the credit and honor for what He accomplishes in the lives of believers.