

AN EXAMPLE OF THANKFULNESS

PHILIPPIANS 1

Text:

Introduction:

In this letter we find, perhaps more than in any other, an attitude of thankfulness and praise amidst suffering and persecution. We, being free, ought to read this and be both blessed and convicted: blessed, because we are reminded of God's faithfulness through every circumstance; convicted, because we are reminded that we really have no reason to be ungrateful or to complain.

We'll consider several reasons Paul was grateful from his prison.

Notice Paul was Grateful for:

1. THE SAINTS (VS. 1-11)

Philippians 1:1-11

¹ Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons: ² Grace *be* unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and *from* the Lord Jesus Christ. ³ I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, ⁴ Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy, ⁵ For your fellowship in the gospel from

the first day until now; ⁶ Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform *it* until the day of Jesus Christ: ⁷ Even as it is meet for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart; inasmuch as both in my bonds, and in the defence and confirmation of the gospel, ye all are partakers of my grace. ⁸ For God is my record, how greatly I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ. ⁹ And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and *in* all judgment; ¹⁰ That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ; ¹¹ Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.

He says, “every time I think of you and your participation in the gospel, I thank God.” Paul is grateful for the believers who are free while he himself sits in a prison.

A. First, he’s grateful that Jesus won’t give up on His believers; what He started, He will finish.

Philippians 1:6

⁶ Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform *it* until the day of Jesus Christ:

B. Second, Paul is joyous because, though in prison, fellow believers are in his heart. He isn’t really alone; he is part of the body of Christ, and no Roman, no government, no state, no communist, no anything could take that away or change it.

Philippians 1:7

⁷ Even as it is meet for me to think this of you all, because I have

you in my heart; inasmuch as both in my bonds, and in the defence and confirmation of the gospel, ye all are partakers of my grace.

C. We too should be thankful for fellow believers and our church.

2. THE SUFFERING (VS. 12-20)

Philippians 1:12-20

¹² But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things *which happened* unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel; ¹³ So that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace, and in all other *places*; ¹⁴ And many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear. ¹⁵ Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some also of good will: ¹⁶ The one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds: ¹⁷ But the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defence of the gospel. ¹⁸ What then? notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretence, or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice. ¹⁹ For I know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, ²⁰ According to my earnest expectation and *my* hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but *that* with all boldness, as always, *so* now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether *it be* by life, or by death.

Paul is grateful about the things that have happened to him.

A. The furtherance of the Gospel (vs. 12)

B. The government officials are hearing about Christ. (vs. 13)

C. Other Christians have become bold to speak. (vs. 14)

D. Even the enemy is preaching Christ (vs. 15-16)

Paul is grateful for his chains because he sees the advancement of the gospel because of them.

We too should be grateful that we are not in prison and that our suffering has a purpose.

3. THE SURETY (VS. 21)

Philippians 1:21

²¹For to me to live *is* Christ, and to die *is* gain.

To live, is to live for Christ; to die is to be with Christ. Life for the Christian is great, but death is even better! Our whole Christian lives are spent in the blessing and richness of His mercy and provision, but in death we are with Him!

2 Corinthians 5:1-8

¹For we know that if our earthly house of *this* tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. ²For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: ³If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. ⁴For we that are in *this* tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that

we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life. ⁵ Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing *is* God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit. ⁶ Therefore *we are* always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: ⁷ (For we walk by faith, not by sight:) ⁸ We are confident, *I say*, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.

We too should be thankful that death is better than life.

4. THE SERVICE (VS. 22-26)

Philippians 1:22-26

²² But if I live in the flesh, this *is* the fruit of my labour: yet what I shall choose I wot not. ²³ For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better: ²⁴ Nevertheless to abide in the flesh *is* more needful for you. ²⁵ And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide and continue with you all for your furtherance and joy of faith; ²⁶ That your rejoicing may be more abundant in Jesus Christ for me by my coming to you again.

Paul is in a “strait” whether to stay and work for the Lord or go to Heaven to be with the Lord.

He decides that staying a laboring is more needful.

We too should be grateful for the opportunities of service.

Finally after listing all these reasons of gratitude Paul gives the Philippians a command.

5. FOLLOW MY EXAMPLE (VS. 27-30)

Philippians 1:27-30

²⁷ Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel; ²⁸ And in nothing terrified by your adversaries: which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God. ²⁹ For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake; ³⁰ Having the same conflict which ye saw in me, and now hear *to be* in me.

- A. They were to stand fast in one spirit, and with one mind, striving together (vs. 27)
- B. All of the standing and striving together is to be done for the gospel sake.
- C. Don't be terrified by the adversaries.
- D. Accept suffering as a part of faith.