

Living as Citizens of Heaven – Part 1

Joyful Partnership in the Gospel – Phil. 1:1-11

Crosspoint – Dave Spooner – June 2nd, 2024

Intro:

- We are starting our new summer series through the book of Philippians as we grow in our understanding and application of what it means to live as citizens of heaven. As we walk through this letter, you may recognize many verses that are beloved and often quoted. I trust the seed of the Word of God will continue to grow in you as we together enjoy the benefits of God's work in and among us.
- In the first message of our last series on the book of Habakkuk, as an experiment, I showed an overview video from the Bible Project of the book. I have received nothing but positive feedback as to how the video and notes helped in understanding that book and applying its truth to our lives.
- At the start of this new series, we will again be viewing the overview video from the Bible Project on the book of Philippians, and I trust it will be helpful to you as well.
- This morning, we are going to cover the opening section of this letter to understand the truth of it and apply this truth to our lives.

Receive grace from God and peace with God

Phil 1:1-2 NIV

Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, To all God's holy people in Christ Jesus at Philippi, together with the overseers and deacons: 2 Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

- Paul starts most of his letters in this way. First, he identifies who he is and who is with him. He understood his role first and foremost as a servant of Jesus Christ. He calls the church "God's holy people," a people who have been proclaimed and made holy in and through and because of Christ Jesus. We live together in a specific place with shared leadership.
- We have received grace from God; this is the only way we are declared and made holy. Because of what God has done for us, and in us, we are recipients and benefactors of His grace, and because of Jesus Christ, we are at peace with God.
- Knowing these things puts our hearts at peace and gives us a new identity from which we are to live. Knowing that we are God's holy people who have peace with God is now the core of our being. This is the identity that we are to take pride in: we have received grace from God, and He has made us His holy people. We have peace with Him because of His grace through Jesus Christ, and we belong to Him and each other.
- These truths are your identity, and the church is your community, your family. These things give us encouragement, direction, hope, and confidence in knowing who we are and where we belong.

Be confident of God's work in and through you

Phil 1:3-6 NIV

I thank my God every time I remember you. 4 In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy 5 because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, 6

being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

- We now, as a healthy family does, remember each other, thank God for each other, and pray for each other in joy. I want to encourage you to do this. In so doing, your love and joy will grow.
- Know that we have a common goal and task. We are partners in the gospel. We are working together so that others will enjoy the goodness of God and be enfolded into the family. Our bond is one of eternal connection and value.
- Our confidence is not in each other or in ourselves, but in the one who is eternally faithful to His word, working, and plan. He who began a good work in you, He will be the one who will continue to carry it on until the day Christ returns. Jesus is both the author and finisher, the founder and perfecter of our faith (Heb. 12:2). This gives us great confidence that if God has given us the seed of faith, He will work to ensure we finish in our faith and bear fruit of our faith because of His faithfulness to us and through us.
- He is also the one who is working in us to partner in the gospel. The gospel will hold us together, and we will work together so the gospel will be proclaimed to all nations. We still have a combined work to do, so all the sheep will be gathered in.

Enjoy the shared love of gospel community

Phil 1:7-8 NIV

It is right for me to feel this way about all of you, since I have you in my heart and, whether I am in chains or defending and confirming the gospel, all of you share in God's grace with me. 8 God can testify how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus.

- Being connected to someone externally through something or something shared is far different than carrying someone internally in your heart. God wants us to place each other in our hearts that we will have this kind of community and affection for one another.
- How does this happen? First, it is a work of the Spirit of God giving us this kind of other-centered love. Second, we grow this way through connections, which means time with each other. And this means we must make space and have intentionality. Third, the center of relationships is the shared grace of God with each other, and we share together in the gospel victories and hardships. Paul uses the body as an illustration of what this community and connectivity are to be like (see I Cor. 12:12-26). Take and make time to enjoy the shared love of gospel community.

Grow your love with knowledge and insight

Phil 1:9-11 NIV

And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, 10 so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, 11 filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ—to the glory and praise of God.

- If you want your love for others to grow, then grow in your knowledge and depth of insight of them. Ask people questions to get to know things about them, about their past, their present, their thoughts, their likes, their interests, their hurts, their loves, etc. Then grow in that insight, not just knowing what “is,” but what it all means, how these things shape and make that

person. Then we will know what is best for that person. We will be able to “discern what is best.”

- The ability to discern what is best only comes from love that has grown in knowledge and depth of insight. When we have that insight, we will know what to do and what is best, and our love will be pure and blameless until the day that Christ comes back. Our lives will be filled with the “fruit of righteousness” – these are all the things that are done because we love each other – and we can love each other through Jesus Christ. Then our love for each other is to the glory and praise of God because He is the one who gives us this love and grows this love so that His goodness can be seen and experienced through and in our lives.

Conclusion

- I trust and have prayed that something from this message has helped you and has spoken to you. Don't let these things slip from your heart and mind. Remind yourself (intentionally repeat in your mind) what is true from this passage and is helpful to you, and then daily put these things into practice . . . as we are growing and living together as citizens of heaven.
- Closing prayer.

Benediction

May God increase our joy by giving us the same mind, the same love, and the same purpose. May God help us to count others more significant than ourselves and grant us grace to not only look to our own interests, but also to the interests of others. (From Phil 2:2-5.)

Questions for small groups

- What did you learn from this passage of Scripture?
- What has helped you from this passage?
- How does sharing your story and learning from the stories of others help us to love each other more and more?
- What are you planning on putting into practice from this passage?

