

"Paul's Letter to the Philippians — 'The Spirit of Jesus Christ'"

Our Text:

Phil. 1:8-19

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.

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

- ***What a blessed passage of scripture this is. The apostle, in spite of his circumstances, is rejoicing in the work of the Lord! If only we would do the same. But we can and he explains here the source of his joy and confidence in Christ. For verse 19 explains it all: there has been provided a special empowering that enables him to endure all things for the sake of our Lord Jesus.***
- ***This is a very central theme of Paul's letters and there are so many places where he highlights this dynamic, as I would like to call it, this dynamic empowering that was his [and I believe is ours as well as we shall see today] and that made all the difference. My goal today is to show that from Paul's letters and to open them sufficiently to you that you may indeed catch a glimpse of what God has blessed each one of us with. These blessing are part of the provision of God for us***

under his grace and its fullness. May we know them and enjoy them always. Amen.

Review:

- ***This Confirming Truth is our Introduction to the Letter***

Phil. 1:6 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:

- ***Paul wrote of a beginning here. That referred to their salvation when Paul visited in Philippi and many were saved through his prison experience there and afterwards. For each of those who were saved, a continuing salvation experience was maintained by Almighty God. This was personal, individual, and ongoing. Here he writes that that work will NEVER END and promises that this will always be “a good work”. Indeed, such words must have made a great difference to these saints as they do to us as well to whom they equally pertain.***
- ***This is a firm promise of our Lord. Have you received it? Does it change our daily lives to know and to be assured of the end point of this phase of our lives?***

- ***The Letter’s Justification was Paul’s “Heart” for the Saints in Philippi***

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.

- ***Why was Paul so sure of this? Many today are not and one might well wonder why Paul was so convinced. He gives the answer here:***
 - ***“because I have you in my heart”:***
 - ***“in my bonds, and in the defence and confirmation of the gospel, ye all are partakers of my grace”:***
- ***So the foundational truth is expressed here: “ye all are partakers of my grace”. So again we see that ultimately grace is the key. It always is. That is the way God is working under this dispensation. Will we respond by receiving the fullness of that grace or will we hold back or even turn aside after other things of this world that look so attractive? God knows. Indeed he does.***

I. The Apostle's Unique and Concern Was In the Very Heart of Jesus Christ:

[READ] Phil. 1:8 For God is my record, how greatly I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ.

- ***We have already seen how eleven times this word translated “bowels” here is used in the original Greek New Testament and how it is only once used literally [Acts 1:18]. All other uses are figurative and are used to convey some most critical spiritual teaching.***

Here are those verses for your study later:

- ***Luke 1:78*** Through the **tender mercy** of our God; whereby the dayspring from on high hath visited us
 - ***Acts 1:18*** Now this man purchased a field with the reward of iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out.
 - ***2 Cor. 6:12*** Ye are not straitened in us, but ye are straitened in your own bowels.
 - ***2 Cor. 7:15*** And his **inward affection** is more abundant toward you, whilst he remembereth the obedience of you all, how with fear and trembling ye received him.
 - ***Phil. 1:8*** For God is my record, how greatly I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ.
 - ***Phil. 2:1*** If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, **if any bowels and mercies**,
 - ***Col. 3:12*** Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, **bowels of mercies**, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering
 - ***Phile. 1:7*** For we have great joy and consolation in thy love, because the bowels of the saints are refreshed by thee, brother.
 - ***Phile. 1:12*** Whom I have sent again: thou therefore receive him, that is, mine own bowels
 - ***Phile. 1:20*** Yea, brother, let me have joy of thee in the Lord: refresh my bowels in the Lord.
- ***So we see that this special word, often translated “bowels” in the KJV, simply means in our contemporary English “inner affections” or “tender mercies”. We all have experienced this. But Paul is using this word here to even refer to the “heart” of our Lord Jesus Christ toward his own dear children!***

- *So the great question to be answered today in our studies is this: In what way can Paul's own feelings and experience for these believers be called by him "Christ's own"? Or, to put it the other way to perhaps make this even clearer, how can Christ's inner feelings of love and compassion for us sinners be our own?*
- *There are many wonderful verses in the Bible but this is one of those that should cause us all pause as we consider the depth of spiritual experience that the apostle was reflecting here to the believers in Philippi. I say "reflecting" here because it was the light of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ that Paul "reflected" to the Philippians.*
- *The verse found here in the introduction to Paul's letter might seem to be of somewhat lesser depth of meaning that I am indicating here — but that would be, I am convinced, a great mistake in judgment. As we shall see today this statement by the apostle gets to the very heart of much of what God is doing today under grace: working into the heart of the believer such blessings that mere human words can never express and only the words of the very Spirit of God can ever be adequate.*

It is those words I would like us to consider in our study today.

- *Indeed, the Apostle's Unique and Heartfelt Concern Was In the Heart of Jesus Christ*

II. The Lives of the Saints are in the Very Spirit of Jesus Christ:

[RE-READ] Phil. 1:8 For God is my record, how greatly I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ.

- *Verse 8 here and other verses in Paul's letters will be a great benefit for us to recall as we study Philippians. I will list them here but today we will only have time to consider carefully a few which we will now read. As we read these great statements of faith, I will announce them with a question which these verses answer so well.*

[READ] Phil. 1:19 For I know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ **[THE EMPOWERING OF GOD, NOT PAUL]**

[READ] Rom. 8:9-11

9 But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not **the Spirit of Christ**, he is none of his.

10 And if Christ [be] in you, the body [is] dead because of sin; but the Spirit [is] life because of righteousness.

11 But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies **by his Spirit that dwelleth in you. [THE EXPLANATION - THE VERY CHRIST INDWELLS!]**

[READ] 1 Cor. 15:45 And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam [was made] a quickening spirit. [CHRIST'S NEW PROVISION FOR OUR LIFE]

1 Cor. 6:17 But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit.

- **Now we might begin to comprehend the full magnitude of what the apostle is writing here in Philippians.**

[READ] Phil. 2:1 If [there be] therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies . . . [THE MANY DIMENSIONS OF CHRIST'S WORK IN US]

- **Finally, and with sadness we must restrict ourselves to these most precious verses:**

[READ] Col. 3:1-4

1 If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.

2 Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.

3 For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.

4 When Christ, [who is] our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory. **[SUCH A GREAT SUMMARY OF OUR TEACHING TODAY . . .]**

- **The Apostle's Unique Concern Was In the Very Heart of Jesus Christ**
- **The Lives of the Saints are in the Very Spirit of Jesus Christ**

Conclusions:

- **This letter, taken in its context, must have had a dramatic effect in the early assemblies. For what a powerful and blessed passage of scripture this is. The apostle, in spite of his circumstances, is rejoicing in the work of the Lord! If only we would do the same. But we can and he explains here the**

source of his joy and confidence in Christ. For verse 19 explains it all: there has been provided a special empowering that enables him to endure all things for the sake of our Lord Jesus.

- **My goal today has been to show from Paul's letters this dynamic of living under grace and to open the scriptures he has written sufficiently that you may indeed catch a glimpse of what God has blessed each one of us with. These blessings are truly an essential aspect of what God is doing constantly for us all through the working of his grace in each of us. May we know them and enjoy him throughout our lives in their fullness. And so may the Lord God and his son Jesus Christ be thereby glorified always. Amen.**

- **We conclude with these scriptures that say it so well:**

Phil. 3:10 That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;

2 Cor. 4:11 For we which live are alway delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh.

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- **For independent study, other relevant verses would include:**

Rom. 5:5 And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.

Col. 3:12 Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering . . .

1 Cor. 12:9-15

9 To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit;

10 To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another [divers] kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues:

11 But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.

12 For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also [is] Christ.

13 For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether [we be] Jews or Gentiles, whether [we be] bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

2 Cor. 2:12-17

12 Furthermore, when I came to Troas to [preach] Christ's gospel, and a door was opened unto me of the Lord,

13 I had no rest in my spirit, because I found not Titus my brother: but taking my leave of them, I went from thence into Macedonia.

14 Now thanks [be] unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place.

15 For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish:

16 To the one [we are] the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life. And who [is] sufficient for these things?

17 For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ.

2 Cor 3:11-18

11 For if that which is done away [was] glorious, much more that which remaineth [is] glorious.

12 ¶ Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech:

13 And not as Moses, [which] put a vail over his face, that the children of Israel could not stedfastly look to the end of that which is abolished:

14 But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same vail untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which [vail] is done away in Christ.

15 But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the vail is upon their heart.

16 Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the vail shall be taken away.

17 Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord [is], there [is] liberty.

18 But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, [even] as by the Spirit of the Lord.

Gal. 4:4-6

4 But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law,

5 To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.

6 And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.

Gal. 6:18 Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ [be] with your spirit.
Amen.

Eph 1:17 That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him:

Eph. 2:22 *In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.*

Eph. 3:16-17

16 That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man;

17 That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love

Eph. 4:1-3

1 I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called,

2 With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love;

3 Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

Eph. 5:15-16

15 See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise,

16 Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.

Phil. 1:27 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

Phil. 2:1 If [there be] therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies . . .

Phil. 3:3 For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.