

## Introduction

As a shepherd of the flock, one of my chief jobs is to lead you to pastures where you can feed and grow. In the natural, the shepherds would go to the mountains and higher lands in the summer, and they would go to the lower lands in the cold of winter. Shepherds were always looking for a good food source and a good water supply. The flocks would spend a season in an area and then move on to another area.

I take time each year to seek the Lord about future grazing areas. I pray about the condition of the flock, and the needs of the flock. I seek the Lord about the different message series that need to be taught. This year we started the year focusing on seeking first the kingdom of God. Then, we followed that up with a series on the Lord's prayer. This morning we have moved to a new pasture. We will be studying the book of Philippians for the next few months. When we finish, we plan on finishing the year by studying the book of Colossians. The Lord has put both of these books on my heart for over a year. I think that now is the time to do it.

Why Philippians? There are a number of reasons for going through the letters of Paul. There are many foundational principles for our individual lives and for churches contained in Paul's letters. Churches, particularly church plants, need good strong foundations laid in them. But churches are made up of people, and people need strong foundations. No matter where someone is in their journey with Christ, these books will teach us and remind us of truths that we need.

Another reason for going through the epistles of Paul is for specific content. Two years ago, we spent considerable time in 1 Corinthians 3, where Paul speaks of planting the Corinthian church. We were looking at planting principles. Next, we went through the book of Ephesians. We looked at the blessings we have IN Christ. We looked at unity and how God had broken down the dividing walls between the Jews and Gentiles, and between men and women. We looked at how each joint must supply and do its part for the body to grow. This requires equipping. God has called me to be an equipper. He has called us to be an equipping church. We also saw God's order in the home and workplace. Ephesians was a wonderful study and place to graze for that season.

Last year we went through 1 Timothy. We needed to get back to sound doctrine. We needed to get back on track as a church. God tells us in Timothy how to conduct ourselves in the church, which is the pillar and support of truth. Our study of Timothy was much needed and was very fruitful.

Philippians is considered Paul's most personal letter. Scholars tell us that it was Paul's favorite church. I remember, after our first child was born, telling Karen that I could never love another child as much as this one. Then, came our second. We named her Amy, which means loved one. We wanted her to know that she was loved. God gave us the same love for the 2<sup>nd</sup> one, third one, and for each one thereafter. We have three at home, and we love each of them so much. We spend lots of time praying over our children, because we love them. I think churches are like children. Paul planted lots of churches, and I think he had a love for all of them. But, there is something special about Philippi. They loved and supported Paul's ministry; and he had a love for them.

I can say this about our church; it is my favorite. I have pastored for twenty-seven years in Baptist, Bible, independent, Vineyard, Antioch, Kingdomquest, and non-denominational churches. There were good people in all of them, but there is something special at EMV. I think this is how Paul felt.

## 01 Introduction to Philippians (Phil 1:1-2)

The book of Philippians deals with Christian conduct. We are citizens of heaven and are to live or conduct ourselves as citizens. Paul speaks about the gospel. I believe that our church is supposed to be a gospel preaching church. Each of us are called to preach the gospel. The book of Philippians is about joy. There are eighteen verses on joy or rejoicing in this book. Paul speaks about peace, and how to have it. He speaks of peace with God and peace with one another, i.e. unity, which is another theme in Philippians. I am excited about what God has in store for us the next few months as we study the book of Philippians together.

This morning, we will use the first two verses as a launch pad. In verse one, Paul identifies himself and his audience, and then gives his greeting. We will look at all three of these things this morning.

### **Introduction to Philippians (Philippians 1:1-2)**

- I. The Author of the Letter
- II. The Recipients of the Letter
- III. The Greeting

Let's read the text together.

Philippians 1:1-2 Paul and Timothy, bond-servants of Christ Jesus, To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, including the overseers and deacons: {2} Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

#### **I. The Author of the Letter**

The letter begins by saying, "Paul and Timothy, bond-servants of Christ Jesus. There is no question that Paul is the author of the letter. Most theologians are agreed upon this fact. Timothy was Paul's son in the faith. Paul was mentoring Timothy, and Timothy was serving Paul. Paul signed most of his letters. He had a particular way of signing his letters. Paul usually had one of his helpers write the letter, but he would sign the letters in his own hand writing. In Galatians 6:11, Paul wrote that he was writing large letters with his own hand. In 2 Thessalonians 3:17-18, Paul wrote the greeting with his own hand, and said that this was a distinguishing mark in every letter. Therefore, we believe that Paul dictated the letter to Timothy, and then signed it.

(Gal 6:11) See with what large letters I am writing to you with my own hand.

(2 Thess 3:17-18) I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand, and this is a distinguishing mark in every letter; this is the way I write. {18} The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

In most of Paul's letters, he identifies himself as an apostle. In this letter, he simply identifies himself and Timothy as bond-servants of Christ Jesus. Paul and Timothy were both apostles, and he could have easily have said they were apostles. Because this letter is more personal, Paul may have chosen not to identify himself as an apostle. When Karen speaks with me, or one of my children speaks to me, they identify me as Dad. They do not call me Pastor or Teacher. They know who I am, and I do not have to identify myself to them as a Pastor. However, when we meet on Sunday morning, it is more common to identify myself as one of the pastors of East Mountain Vineyard Church.

**Paul and Timothy are bond-servants of Christ Jesus.** The Greek word is doulos, or slave. The root word is deo, which means to bind. A bond-servant was someone who had bound himself to the owner. In the Old Testament, when a person served his master and had paid off his debt, and was going to be set free, he could decide to stay with his master as a bond-servant. The master may have been good to him, and provided a wife for him. If the man left, he would not get to keep his wife; she belonged to the master. Therefore, the slave would many times elect to stay and work as a bond-servant. The servant would put his ear to a post, and the master would put a ring in his ear.

Back in the mid-nineties, I had a visitation in the middle of the night. I got up and sat in my easy-boy chair in my bedroom and had a conversation with the Lord. He told me to put my ear to the post. I knew exactly what He was telling me to do. He was asking me to be His bond-servant. I cannot think of a better master to serve. He has taken good care of His bond-servant.

**God wants leaders to serve, not lord over people.** In Matthew 20:25-28, Jesus tells His disciples not to lord over people as the rulers of the Gentiles do, but to serve them. He said that whoever wishes to be great shall be as a servant, and whoever wishes to become great shall be a slave. Then, He tells them that the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and to give His life as a ransom for many. Leadership in the church need to be humble servants. Great leaders in the business world should also be servants. They need to take care of the people that work for them.

(Matt 20:25-28) But Jesus called them to Himself and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. {26} "It is not this way among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant, {27} and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave; {28} just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."

Paul identifies himself and Timothy as servants. In the book of 1 Corinthians, the people in the church were divided. Some were identifying with Paul and others were identifying with Apollos. Paul tells them they are both just servants.

(1 Cor 3:4-9) For when one says, "I am of Paul," and another, "I am of Apollos," are you not mere men? {5} What then is Apollos? And what is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, even as the Lord gave opportunity to each one. {6} I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth. {7} So then neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but God who causes the growth. {8} Now he who plants and he who waters are one; but each will receive his own reward according to his own labor. {9} For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, God's building.

In chapter four, he tells them to regard them in this manner, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. The word he used for servants in this verse is huperetes, which means underoarsmen. This was the lowest slave that there was. These were usually men who were sentenced to death, or could choose to work as an underoarsmen on a ship. Paul is identifying himself as the lowest level of slave. Paul was not there for position. He was not there for reputation. Paul was a servant of the Lord, and was there to do His work and His bidding.

(1 Cor 4:1) Let a man regard us in this manner, as servants (huperetes) of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.

**Timothy joins Paul's team at Lystra.** I want us to go to Acts 16. Paul is on his second missionary trip. Luke tells us that Paul came to Derbe and Lystra. It was there that Paul finds Timothy. He was a disciple, and the son of a Jewish woman, who was a believer. Timothy's father was a Greek, and we infer from this passage that his father was not a believer. The people in Lystra and Iconium spoke well of Timothy. Paul immediately takes to Timothy, and wanted him to accompany him on his apostolic travels. Because Paul ministered to both Jews and Gentiles, it was important for Timothy to be circumcised. So, Paul circumcises Timothy, and they begin traveling together.

(Acts 16:1-3) Paul came also to Derbe and to Lystra. And a disciple was there, named Timothy, the son of a Jewish woman who was a believer, but his father was a Greek, {2} and he was well spoken of by the brethren who were in Lystra and Iconium. {3} Paul wanted this man to go with him; and he took him and circumcised him because of the Jews who were in those parts, for they all knew that his father was a Greek.

Luke tells us that Paul and Timothy resume the apostolic work that Paul was doing. He was traveling and delivering the decrees that had been decided by the apostles and elders in Jerusalem. The result was that churches were being strengthened in the faith, and were increasing in number daily.

(Acts 16:4-5) Now while they were passing through the cities, they were delivering the decrees which had been decided upon by the apostles and elders who were in Jerusalem, for them to observe. {5} So the churches were being strengthened in the faith, and were increasing in number daily.

## II. The Recipients of the Letter

**The letter is addressed to the saints at Philippi. Saints are holy ones.** The Greek word of saint is *hagios*, which literally means a holy one. The root word is *hagnos*, which means clean, innocent, modest, perfect, chaste, or pure. The proper way to address one another is as a holy one or saint. Notice that he does not address this to the sinners who are in Philippi. God looks at us as saints. Those who have received Christ, have been forgiven. Their sins have been washed by the blood of Christ and we are now holy ones.

(Phil 1:1) Paul and Timothy, bond-servants of Christ Jesus, To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, including the overseers and deacons.

G40. *hagios*, hag'-ee-os; from *hagos* (an awful thing) [comp. G53, H2282]; sacred (phys. pure, mor. blameless or religious, cer. consecrated):--(most) holy (one, thing), saint. [G53. *hagnos*; from the same as G40; prop. clean, innocent, modest, perfect:--chaste, clean, pure.]

**Saints are forgiven.** The Scriptures teach us that though our sins are as scarlet, He has made them white as snow. He has removed our sins from us as far as the east is from the west.

(Is 1:18) "Come now, and let us reason together," Says the LORD, "Though your sins are as scarlet, They will be as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, They will be like wool.

(Ps 103:12) As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us.

**Saints have been made righteous by Christ, who was made sin on our behalf.** Paul writes that He who knew no sin was made sin on our behalf that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. When we are in Christ, we are the righteousness of God. We are saints, not sinners. When the Bible speaks of sinners, it speaks of those who have not received Christ. We are saints. We have been forgiven, and we are new creations.

(2 Cor 5:21) He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

**Saints sin, but are not to be recognized according to the flesh.** We still sin, but we have a righteous nature. We are to confess and repent of our sins. He has already forgiven us of our sins. His payment for our sins was a one-time sacrifice. All of our sins, past, present, and future, are forgiven. We must confess and acknowledge our sins to Him. He already knows about them. And, He has already paid for them. He now calls us saints, or holy ones.

(1 John 1:8-10) If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. {9} If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. {10} If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us.

In some of my conversations with people that are very reformed, they say that Christians sin. Since we sin, we are sinners. While they are correct that we sin, that does not mean that we should call one another sinners. Paul tells us that we are no longer to recognize one another by the flesh. We have a fleshly nature and we have a new spiritual nature. We are a new creature with new things and new ways of life. The old is passing away. The sinful nature is being put to death, and we are to walk in the spirit. We are not to call or recognize each other according to the old fleshly nature, but as the new creation. As a new creation, we are saints, who have been washed and cleansed by the blood of Christ. The Scriptures tell us not to recognize one another any longer in the flesh. In addition to telling us not to do it, the example in Scripture is to call one another saints.

(2 Cor 5:16-17) Therefore from now on we recognize no one according to the flesh; even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him in this way no longer. {17} Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.

Paul writes this to the saints in Philippi. The word Philippi means lover of horses. Philo means to love and hippo means horse. It was not named because of this. It was actually named after Philip II, who was the King of Macedon. It was founded by Philip in 356 BC to take control of gold mines and to establish a garrison at a strategic passage. There is a mountain range that separates the east from the west, and the pass goes right through Philippi. Furthermore, it is located at the top of the Aegean Sea, about 8 miles inland. Anyone traveling from Europe to Asia had to pass through Philippi. Philippi was a Roman city and had benefits from that status. It also had lovely architecture. But the city developed a world-wide reputation for something else. Paul's letter to the Philippians brought more recognition to Philippi than anything else. The Basilica of Paul, a prominent church building, was built in honor of Paul. The picture at the bottom left of the slides shows the ruins of the Basilica of Paul. The city was abandoned in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, but there is another city called Filippi located near the ruins of Philippi.

**The church in Philippi was established by Paul around 49-50 AD.** This letter to the Philippians was written approximately ten to twelve years later, in 60-62 AD. We pick up the account of the start of the church in Acts 16, where Paul had just circumcised Timothy.

(Acts 16:6-13) They passed through the Phrygian and Galatian region, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia; {7} and after they came to Mysia, they were trying to go into Bithynia, and the Spirit of Jesus did not permit them; {8} and passing by Mysia, they came down to Troas. {9} A vision appeared to Paul in the night: a man of Macedonia was standing and appealing to him, and saying, "Come over to Macedonia and help us." {10} When he had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go into Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them. {11} So putting out to sea from Troas, we ran a straight course to Samothrace, and on the day following to Neapolis; {12} and from there to Philippi, which is a leading city of the district of Macedonia, a Roman colony; and we were staying in this city for some days. {13} And on the Sabbath day we went outside the gate to a riverside, where we were supposing that there would be a place of prayer; and we sat down and began speaking to the women who had assembled.

**Paul was led to Philippi through a vision.** In it, a man in Macedonia was standing and appealing to him to come help them. Therefore, Paul, Silas, Luke, and Timothy went immediately to Macedonia, concluding that God had called them to preach the gospel there. Luke tells us that Philippi was a leading city in the district of Macedonia, and it was a Roman colony.

After being there for some days, they went to the riverside on the Sabbath. When there were not enough Jews in a city to establish a synagogue, the Jews would meet by a riverside to pray. It takes ten Jewish men to have a synagogue. Apparently, there were not ten Jewish men in Philippi. There was a Jewish tradition to meet by the river when there was not a synagogue in the city. This tradition was birthed from Psalm 137, where the Jews were in captivity by the rivers of Babylon. It was there that their captors demanded the Jews to sing songs. It was by the rivers that they remembered and longed for Jerusalem.

(Ps 137:1-6) By the rivers of Babylon, There we sat down and wept, When we remembered Zion. {2} Upon the willows in the midst of it We hung our harps. {3} For there our captors demanded of us songs, And our tormentors mirth, saying, "Sing us one of the songs of Zion." {4} How can we sing the LORD'S song In a foreign land? {5} If I forget you, O Jerusalem, May my right hand forget her skill. {6} May my tongue cling to the roof of my mouth If I do not remember you, If I do not exalt Jerusalem Above my chief joy.

When Paul went to a city, it was his custom to go first to the Jews. In Romans 1:16, Paul tells us that he was not ashamed of the gospel. It is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. **Paul was called to the Gentiles, but ministered to the Jews first, and then to the Gentiles.**

(Rom 1:16) For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. Paul goes to the riverside, looking for any Jews that may have been in Philippi.

## 01 Introduction to Philippians (Phil 1:1-2)

We find in Acts 17 that Paul's custom was to go to the Jews for three Sabbaths. Afterwards, he would turn his attention to the Gentiles.

(Acts 17:1-2) Now when they had traveled through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a synagogue of the Jews. {2} And according to Paul's custom, he went to them, and for three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the Scriptures,

Paul felt called to the Gentiles. Paul writes in Galatians 2 that he had been entrusted with the gospel to the uncircumcised. The leaders at Jerusalem had given Barnabas and Paul the right hand of fellowship, so that they could go to the Gentiles.

(Gal 2:7-9) But on the contrary, seeing that I had been entrusted with the gospel to the uncircumcised, just as Peter had been to the circumcised {8} (for He who effectually worked for Peter in his apostleship to the circumcised effectually worked for me also to the Gentiles), {9} and recognizing the grace that had been given to me, James and Cephas and John, who were reputed to be pillars, gave to me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, so that we might go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised.

**Paul went to the riverside to find any Jews that might be in the city.** We pick up Acts 16 again in verse 14. When he got to the riverside, he finds some women gathered. Why is it that more women gather for prayer? Why is it that the majority of people in churches are women?

(Acts 16:14-15) A woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple fabrics, a worshiper of God, was listening; and the Lord opened her heart to respond to the things spoken by Paul. {15} And when she and her household had been baptized, she urged us, saying, "If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house and stay." And she prevailed upon us.

Luke focuses on one of the women who was there. Lydia means a female from Lydia. Lydia was a country in Asia Minor that was taken over by the Persians in 546 BC, and then by the Romans. It was common to call foreigners by the place where they were from. Lydia was a seller of purple fabrics, and was a worshiper of God. When we think of a worshiper, we think of someone who loves praise and worship. The Greek word is sebo, and means devout. Lydia was a devout Jew and serious about her faith. God opened Lydia's heart to respond to the gospel. It says that she and her household were baptized. She was obviously a woman of influence. She was probably a widowed woman, and a very well to do widow. She prevailed upon Paul and company to stay with her at her house. Her house must have been a fairly good-sized home. Later, when Paul and Silas are released from prison, they return to Lydia's house, which is where the brethren were. It appears that the new church is meeting at her house.

(Acts 16:40) They went out of the prison and entered the house of Lydia, and when they saw the brethren, they encouraged them and departed.

Here is a quick summary of the rest of Acts 16. **Paul and Silas are thrown into prison for delivering a slave girl from a demonic spirit.** The slave girl was making a profit for her owner by fortune telling, by a demonic spirit. This upsets the owners, who drag them to the chief magistrates and accuse them of proclaiming unlawful customs. They are then beaten and thrown into prison.

## 01 Introduction to Philippians (Phil 1:1-2)

At midnight, Paul and Silas are singing hymns and an earthquake opens up all the prison doors. It was not just an earthquake, it was a God-quake. Everybody's chains were unfastened. A normal earthquake is not going to unlock chains. This was a God-quake.

(Acts 16:25-26) But about midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns of praise to God, and the prisoners were listening to them; {26} and suddenly there came a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison house were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone's chains were unfastened.

In those days, the prison warden was responsible for the security of all the prisoners. If one escaped, he would be put to death. When the earthquake hit, and all the doors were opened, the guard was ready to take his own life, rather than come into the hands of his commanders. When Paul sees this, he yells out to the warden and tells him that they are all still there and not to take his life. The warden called for lights, rushed in, and fell down before Paul and Silas. Then, after bringing them out of their cells, he asked them, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"

(Acts 16:27-30) When the jailer awoke and saw the prison doors opened, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself, supposing that the prisoners had escaped. {28} But Paul cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Do not harm yourself, for we are all here!" {29} And he called for lights and rushed in, and trembling with fear he fell down before Paul and Silas, {30} and after he brought them out, he said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"

Paul has a divine appointment with the jailer and his household. Paul tells him to believe in the Lord Jesus, and he would be saved, he and his household. The jailer took them that hour and washed their wounds. **The jailer and his household responded to the gospel and were baptized.** Luke records that they served Paul and Silas some food, and rejoiced greatly. New births bring great joy to a church. Do you want a church with lots of joy? Bring people to Christ. There will be much joy.

(Acts 16:31-34) They said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household." {32} And they spoke the word of the Lord to him together with all who were in his house. {33} And he took them that very hour of the night and washed their wounds, and immediately he was baptized, he and all his household. {34} And he brought them into his house and set food before them, and rejoiced greatly, having believed in God with his whole household.

The church in Philippi also started with households coming to Christ. First, we had the conversion of Lydia and her household. Now, we have the conversion of the jailer and his household. With two households having come to Christ, a church was planted.

At EMV, we also started with a few households. Jeff and Vickie Schiller heard we were planting a church and joined us. Lee and Betty Griego heard about us and joined. We had several individuals and households who began meeting together. We are praying for households to come to Christ and to attend. We do not want to be a church of old people. We want to be a church of children, youth, moms and dads, grandmothers and grandfathers, and aunts and uncles. We want to be a church of households. We want to be influencers in our families. We want to be examples to our families. We want to see households reached.



## 01 Introduction to Philippians (Phil 1:1-2)

Paul also addresses this to the overseers and deacons in Philippi. Much has happened in the ten years between when he planted the church and when he writes this letter to them. We know that he visited them on at least two other occasions. He spent time with them on his third missionary journey. In these ten years, the church has grown, and now has a plurality of elders and deacons. Paul addresses his letter to the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, including the overseers and deacons. We could spend the next six weeks on this phrase alone. In fact, we spent ten weeks last year talking about leadership. This morning we will just quickly cover a few points about overseers and deacons. This is not written specifically to leadership; it is written to everyone, but it includes the leadership.

A number of years ago I was giving some counsel to a pastor in Georgia. There were some moral issues going on inside the church, and he was part of the problem. He was having an affair with one of the women pastors at the church. In one of our counseling sessions, he said that he was not a member of the church, he was the pastor of the church. There is a problem in that theology. The church is made up of all the saints, which includes the pastors and deacons. Pastors or overseers are not a special class above the congregation. Overseers and deacons are servants in the church, and are members of the church. They are functioning parts in the body. They must be attached to the body. They have to be connected to the members of the body. In some churches, the pastors are aloof. Many pastors have unlisted telephone numbers. I believe that shepherds have to be with the sheep. They must have the smell of sheep on them. They have to spend time with the flock to know the flock. Paul makes it very clear that overseers and deacons are part of the body.

I was researching what some of the theologians said about Philippians this week. One of the theologians was baffled by this verse. His theology was challenged because Paul used the word overseers. His belief about leadership is that there is one overseer in a church, and the elders serve the overseer. This teaching was introduced at the end of the first century by Ignatius, who developed a leadership tier. Most Bible scholars believe the teaching to be erroneous. However, many churches in America still follow this doctrine. They call the main overseer the pastor, and they call the other people the elders. This is not what the Scriptures teach. As a refresher, let me talk about overseers for a minute.

There are three words that are used interchangeably in Scripture for the elders of the church. **Pastor, Elder, and Overseer all refer to the same office.** Let's start by looking at 1 Peter 5. In this passage, Peter addresses the elders. The word for elder is presbuteros, which means elder. He tells the elders to shepherd or pastor the flock. The Greek word is poimen, which means shepherd or pastor. Then, he tells them to exercise oversight. The word for oversight is episkopos, which means to oversee. Some translators translate this as bishop. A bishop is simply an overseer, pastor, or elder. Many churches have bishops that are over a number of churches. This is not a Biblical concept of church leadership. The three words are pastor, overseer, and elder. They are used interchangeably.

(1 Pet 5:1-3) Therefore, I exhort the elders among you, as your fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed, {2} shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness; {3} nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock.

## 01 Introduction to Philippians (Phil 1:1-2)

In Acts 20, Paul meets with the Ephesian elders at Miletus. He defends his ministry to them. Then, he exhorts them to “be on guard for themselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God...” These elders were overseers. The Holy Spirit had made them overseers. These were the elders at the church at Ephesus. They were not only elders, but they were overseers. They did not have one overseer that the rest of the elders served under. They were all elders and they were all overseers. The words are used interchangeably. Paul encourages the elders or overseers to shepherd (poimano) the church of God. The elders are to pastor the flock. That is what elders or overseers do; they feed and protect the flock.

(Acts 20:17) From Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called to him the elders of the church.

(Acts 20:28-29) "Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. {29} "I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock;

When Paul gives the qualifications for a pastor, he uses the words interchangeably. In 1 Timothy 3:1, he talks about the office of overseer. In Titus 1:5-8, he gives the qualifications of an elder. The qualifications are the same. Paul tells Titus to appoint elders in every city. Two verses later, he says, “for the overseer must be above reproach as God’s steward.” Again, the overseer and elder are used interchangeably. They refer to the same office.

(1 Tim 3:1) It is a trustworthy statement: if any man aspires to the office of overseer, it is a fine work he desires to do.

(Titus 1:5-7) For this reason I left you in Crete, that you would set in order what remains and appoint elders in every city as I directed you, {6} namely, if any man is above reproach, the husband of one wife, having children who believe, not accused of dissipation or rebellion. {7} For the overseer must be above reproach as God's steward, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not addicted to wine, not pugnacious, not fond of sordid gain,

When Paul addresses the overseers, he is speaking of the elders or pastors of the church. There was a plurality of elders or pastors. God is a God of order. There will always be a final decision maker. There will always be a leader of leaders. A man is to be one with his wife. They are to cleave and become one. However, the man is the head of the home. He has the final authority, even though they are one. In the same way, the elders are the overseers of the affairs of the church. They are to act as one. But, there will be times when the leader of leaders needs to step up and make a final decision.

Paul also addresses the deacons. The word deacon is a transliteration for diakonos, which means servant or waiter. All of us are called to be servants. Leaders need to be servants. Jesus was called a diakonos. Paul calls himself a diakonos. But, there is an office of diakonos, which is different. **A deacon is a servant of the church.** Someone who is called to the office of deacon must meet the qualifications given in 1 Timothy 3:8-13. Their qualifications are similar to the office of overseer, except that they do not have to be apt to teach. They do not have to have a word ministry. Some deacons can teach and do teach, but it is not a pre-requisite. Like the overseers, they must be men and women of character, and they must be good managers. They help free up the overseers to do spend more time in the word and prayer.

## 01 Introduction to Philippians (Phil 1:1-2)

Our first examples of deacons is in Acts 6. The Greek widows were being overlooked. The leaders in the church at Jerusalem said that it was not good for them to neglect the word of God in order to serve tables. They knew that the priority of a pastor was to feed the flock. It takes time to prepare messages. It is important to meet the practical needs of the flock, but there were other faithful people who could be put in charge of those tasks.

(Acts 6:1-2) Now at this time while the disciples were increasing in number, a complaint arose on the part of the Hellenistic Jews against the native Hebrews, because their widows were being overlooked in the daily serving of food. {2} So the twelve summoned the congregation of the disciples and said, "It is not desirable for us to neglect the word of God in order to serve tables.

So, the apostles told the congregation to select from among them seven men of good reputation, full of the Spirit and wisdom, who they could put in charge of the task. Then, they said, "but we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word." I love that. There are some who are called to meet practical needs. There are others who are called to serve the body by ministering the word. The deacons serve a great need.

(Acts 6:3-4) "Therefore, brethren, select from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may put in charge of this task. {4} "But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word."

When the Lord gave me a prophetic word to plant a vineyard in the East Mountains, we did just what Paul did, we headed directly towards our Philippi or Macedonia. Our first visit was not to Lydia, but to James Wylie. We asked James if he would come and help us plant the church. James changed out electrical plugs. James ran wires. James put in spotlights for the worship team. James began learning the sound board. James did all kinds of 20-minute jobs, which were really more like two to four hour jobs. He did all kinds of things to free me up to devote my time to prayer and to the ministry of the word. James has been a great deacon in this church. Every church needs faithful people like James, or the pastors would have to neglect the word to wait tables.

Our church is only two years old. We have not officially set in elders and deacons. We have been in a season of laying foundations and learning to work together. We have been building the leadership team. I believe that when we set in elders and deacons, it will find approval with the body, because they are already doing the work of elders and deacons. We are a young church who believes in the plurality of leaders, and are in process.

### III. The Greeting

**Paul gives a greeting of grace and peace.** He says, "grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." In the Hebrew culture, people did not say, "Hi, how are you." They greeted one another with a blessing of peace. Typically, they would say, "Shalom," which means peace. Having grown up in the Middle East, our normal greeting to people was "Salaam," which means peace. The full greeting is salaam malaikum, which means peace be upon you. It is customary to greet and bless people with peace. The peace that Paul blesses them with is a peace that surpasses all comprehension. It is a supernatural peace. It is not the absence of trouble, conflict, hardship, or difficulty, which are all external matters. God's peace is an internal manifestation. He gives us peace in the midst of troubles.

## 01 Introduction to Philippians (Phil 1:1-2)

(Phil 1:2) Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Consider the following things about our peace from God. **God is a God of peace**. His name is Jehovah Shalom, or Lord of Peace. In Judges 6, Gideon built an altar and named it Jehovah Shalom. The Hebrew word for Lord is Jehovah, which means the self-existent, eternal God. He is the God of all peace. Paul refers to God as the Lord of peace and also the God of peace. That is who God is, Jehovah Shalom.

(Judges 6:24a) Then Gideon built an altar there to the LORD and named it The LORD is Peace.

(2 Thess 3:16) "Now may the Lord of peace Himself continually grant you peace in every circumstance. The Lord be with you all!"

(Rom 15:33) "Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen."

In Isaiah, He is referred to as the Prince of Peace.

(Is 9:6) "For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace."

His name is the King of Salem, which means King of peace.

(Hebrews 7:1-2) "For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, who met Abraham as he was returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him, {2} to whom also Abraham apportioned a tenth part of all the spoils, was first of all, by the translation of his name, king of righteousness, and then also king of Salem, which is king of peace."

One of the fruits of the Holy Spirit is peace. God not only is peace and bears the fruit of peace in our lives, He promises peace. He tells us that those who set their minds on things above will enjoy peace. He says that those who trust in Him will be kept in perfect peace.

(Is 26:3) ""The steadfast of mind Thou wilt keep in perfect peace, Because he trusts in Thee."

(Gal 5:22-23) "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, {23} gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law."

As with many things in the kingdom, **God gives peace, but we have responsibilities**. We have a part to play. To bear the fruit of the Spirit, we must set our minds on the things of the Spirit. In Philippians 4, Paul gives some things for us to do to experience that peace, which we will look at when we get to chapter four.

(Phil 4:7) And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, shall guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

Paul not only greets them with peace, but also grace. There are two definitions of grace that I want to quickly mention. **Grace can mean the unmerited favor of God.**

## 01 Introduction to Philippians (Phil 1:1-2)

It is by this unmerited favor or grace that we are saved. Our salvation is not as a result of works that no man should boast. This is an unmerited, undeserved favor that we are given by God. We cannot earn this grace. This grace should create in us a gratefulness and should be reflected in our worship and praise to Him. We find this grace in Ephesians 2.

(Eph 2:8-9) "For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; {9} not as a result of works, that no one should boast."

There is another type of grace that we have. The Lord told Paul in the midst of his afflictions that His grace was sufficient for him. This grace is not just the unmerited favor, but it is the desire and ability to carry out God's will. **Grace can also mean the measure of God's provision in strength, ability, power, gifts, and resources to carry out His will.**

(2 Cor 12:9) "And He has said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness." Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may dwell in me."

In Romans 12, Paul speaks about this grace a couple of times. He speaks into their lives by the grace that was given to him. Paul was doing an apostolic work and was given the grace to do this work. Paul did not have any more favor with God than you or I. Paul had a desire and ability to do a certain work that God had called him to. He alludes to this grace again at the close of his letter. He wrote them very boldly on some points and he could do that because of the grace that was given to him by God.

(Romans 12:3) "For through the grace given to me I say to every man among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith."

(Romans 15:15) "But I have written very boldly to you on some points, so as to remind you again, because of the grace that was given me from God,"

In Romans 12:6, Paul says that each of them had gifts that differed according to the grace given to them. Like Paul, each of us have been given certain gifts, abilities, and resources to carry out God's call for our lives. Therefore, each of them was to exercise them accordingly.

(Romans 12:6) "And since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let each exercise them accordingly: if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith;"

**We need to give our grace and peace to one another.** When we greet one another, we should learn to extend grace and peace. Our words should encourage and motivate one another to have more desire and ability to accomplish God's will. Our words should not bring trouble and unrest but peace. Our words should bring about a calmness and rest. Our words should bring about a trust in God and His word. Our speech needs to be seasoned with grace. This grace opens people up; it opens doors of communication. This grace endears us to people. It makes people want to be around us. It is this grace and peace that will make a difference in the East Mountains.

## 01 Introduction to Philippians (Phil 1:1-2)

Introduction (Phil 1:1-2)

I. The Author of the Letter (Phil 1:1, Gal 6:11, 2 Thess 3:17-18)

- Paul and Timothy are \_\_\_\_\_ of Christ Jesus. (Phil 1:1, 1 Cor 3:4-9, 4:1)
- God wants leaders to \_\_\_\_\_, not lord over people. (Matt 20:25-28)
- Timothy joins Paul's \_\_\_\_\_ at Lystra. (Acts 16:1-5)

II. The Recipients of the Letter (Phil 1:1)

- The letter is addressed to the \_\_\_\_\_ at Philippi. (Phil 1:1)
- Saints are \_\_\_\_\_. (Strong's G40)
- Saints are \_\_\_\_\_. (Is 1:18, Ps 103:12)
- Saints have been made righteous by \_\_\_\_\_, who was made sin on our behalf. (2 Cor 5:21)
- Saints sin, but are not to be recognized according to the \_\_\_\_\_. (1 John 1:8-10, 2 Cor 5:16-17)
- The church in Philippi was established by \_\_\_\_\_ around 49-50 AD. (Acts 16:6-13, 40)
- Paul was led to Philippi through a \_\_\_\_\_. (Acts 16:9-12)
- Paul was called to the Gentiles, but ministered to \_\_\_\_\_ first, and then to Gentiles. (Rom 1:16, Acts 17:1-2, Gal 2:7-9)
- Paul went to the \_\_\_\_\_ to find any Jews that might be in the city. (Acts 16:13, Ps 137:1-6)
- Lydia and her \_\_\_\_\_ responded to the gospel. (Acts 16:14-15, Matt 18:20)
- Paul and Silas were thrown into prison for delivering a \_\_\_\_\_ from a demonic spirit. (Acts 16:16-21)
- The jailer and his \_\_\_\_\_ responded to the gospel and were baptized. (Acts 16:25-34)
- Pastor, Elder, and Overseer all refer to the \_\_\_\_\_. (1 Pet 5:1-3, Acts 20:17, 28-29, 1 Tim 3:1, Tit 1:5-7)
- A deacon is a \_\_\_\_\_ of the church. (Acts 6:1-4, 1 Tim 3:8-13)

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### III. The Greeting (Phil 1:2)

- Paul gives a greeting of \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
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- God \_\_\_\_\_ peace to us, but we have \_\_\_\_\_. (Is 26:3, Gal 5:22-23, Phil 4:6-8)
- Grace can mean the unmerited \_\_\_\_\_ of God. (Eph 2:8-9)
- Grace can also mean the \_\_\_\_\_ of God's provision in strength, ability, power, gifts, and resources to carry out His will. (2 Cor 12:9, Rom 12:3, 15:15, 12:6)
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