

Paul's Prayer (Philippians 1:3-11)

Introduction

Two weeks ago we started a new series on the book of Philippians. We covered the first two verses, where Paul introduced himself and Timothy as the authors, who he was addressing the letter to, and his greeting of grace and peace. We saw that Paul gave a salutation and signed off on all his letters with large letters to authenticate them. It was probably Timothy, his son in the faith, who wrote the letter for Paul.

We took a quick look at what it means to be a saint or holy one. Paul wrote this to the saints at Philippi. I told you last week that we are referred to as saints fifty-three times in the New Testament. I was wrong. The actual number is sixty-one. The most common term was disciple, which is used 269 times in the New Testament. The way God addresses us tells us quite a bit about who we are and what we are to do. We are disciples or mathetes, which means learners, and we are saints or holy ones.

We looked at the start of the church at Philippi in Acts 16. Paul was led to Philippi through a vision. He immediately took a ship to Philippi to preach the gospel. He went to the riverside, thinking there would be a prayer meeting there. He found some women gathered there, and he preached the gospel to them. God opened up Lydia's heart to the gospel, and she and her household were baptized.

Next, we saw that Paul and Silas were put in prison for casting out a demon from a slave girl who was fortune telling for her master. Once she was delivered, they had no way of making money. They had Paul arrested, beaten, and put in prison. While in prison, there was a God-quake which opened up all the prison doors and opened all the locks on the prisoner chains. There was more than just an earthquake that hit that prison. The jailer was about to kill himself and Paul yells out to him not to take his life, that they are all there. The jailer asks how to get saved, and Paul shares the gospel with him. He and his household are all saved and baptized. This was the start of the church at Philippi. The gospel was being preached, and there was great joy. Joy is mentioned sixteen times in Philippians. Some theologians have titled this the epistle of joy. It is definitely one of the themes of the book. This all took place around 49-50 AD.

Paul writes this letter around 61-62 AD, about ten to twelve years later. By this time, the church had been set in order. They had overseers and deacons in the church. We saw that overseers, elders, pastors, and bishops all refer to the same office. There was a plurality of overseers, which is the New Testament pattern. Paul also addressed this to the deacons in the church. Deacons are not pastors; they are a different office in the church. Deacons are servants in the church that take care of many of the practical needs so that the pastors are free to devote themselves to prayer and to the study of the word. The qualifications for deacons and overseers are very similar. Both offices require people to be above reproach. Both offices require the person to be a good manager. The primary difference was that overseers must be apt to teach the word of God.

We also saw that the pastors and deacons are part of the body. Paul wrote to the saints at Philippi, including the overseers and deacons. They are not above the body or separate from the body; they are part of the body. Every member and every part of the body is necessary. There is value in every member and part. There is no hint of elitism. If anything, leaders are to be known for serving. That is how Paul identified himself and Paul, bond-servants of Christ Jesus. The overseers and deacons are servants of Christ.

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Finally, we looked at the greeting that Paul gave to the Philippians. He greeted them with grace and peace. We saw that grace could be God's unmerited favor, as in how we are saved by grace. Grace can also mean a measure of God's strength, ability, and provision to carry out God's will in our lives. God gives us grace, and He wants us to give grace to one another. Paul also extended a greeting of peace. We saw that God is a God of peace. He is the Lord of Peace. He is the Prince of Peace. He is Jehovah Shalom. He is the King of Salem. He is not only the God of Peace, He is the giver of peace. He promises peace to those who trust Him. The fruit of the Spirit is peace. Even though God gives peace, we have a responsibility. We are to set our mind on things above. Paul is going to share with us some things in chapter four that we must do to have peace in our lives.

Our text today is about how Paul prayed for the Philippians. First we will look at his attitude in prayer. Paul prayed with thanksgiving, joy, and confidence. Second, we will look at his petitions.

How did Paul pray for the Philippians?

1. Paul's Attitude: (thanksgiving, joy and confidence)
2. Paul's Petitions

(Phil 1:3-11) "I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, {4} always offering prayer with joy in my every prayer for you all, {5} in view of your participation in the gospel from the first day until now. {6} For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus. {7} For it is only right for me to feel this way about you all, because I have you in my heart, since both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, you all are partakers of grace with me. {8} For God is my witness, how I long for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus. {9} And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment, {10} so that you may approve the things that are excellent, in order to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ; {11} having been filled with the fruit of righteousness which comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God."

I. Paul Attitude in Prayer

A. Paul Prayed With Thanksgiving

Paul writes that he thanks God in all his remembrance of the saints. For a long time I used to start my prayers for Karen with this verse. I still thank the Lord every day for Karen. It is only right for me to feel this way since she is in my heart. She has been a great companion and partner.

This is how Paul begins his prayer for the Philippians. What are Paul's remembrances of them? We covered the start of the Philippian church last week. It started with Lydia's household. Lydia's heart was opened to receive the gospel, and she and her household were baptized. Then, the slave girl who had been fortune-telling for her master was delivered from a demon. The owner of the slave girl had Paul and Silas beaten and thrown into prison. Finally, we had the jailer and his household get saved and baptized. Paul is remembering the openness they had to the gospel. He is remembering the hospitality. Lydia had prevailed upon Paul and his team to stay at her house. He is remembering the great joy that these believers had. And Paul gives thanks to God for these memories.

(Phil 1:3) I thank my God in all my remembrance of you,

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Paul is also remembering the things that have happened since then. **The Philippians had supported Paul's apostolic work.** In verse five, he tells us that one of the things that he is thankful about is their participation in the gospel from the first day until now. It is apparent from this verse that the saints at Philippi did not send Paul away empty-handed in Acts 16. They gave to him and immediately began supporting his ministry.

(Phil 1:3-11) "I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, {4} always offering prayer with joy in my every prayer for you all, {5} in view of your participation in the gospel from the first day until now.

We find more of this detailed in chapter four. Paul reminds the Philippians that at the first preaching of the gospel, after he left Macedonia no church shared with him in the matter of giving and receiving but them. He reminds them that while he was in Thessalonica, they sent more than one gift to meet his needs. They were supporting his apostolic ministry and the spreading of the gospel throughout Asia and Europe.

(Phil 4:15-16) You yourselves also know, Philippians, that at the first preaching of the gospel, after I left Macedonia, no church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving but you alone; {16} for even in Thessalonica you sent a gift more than once for my needs.

As a church, we have some things in common with Philippi. We are supporting the preaching of the gospel. We support the preaching of the gospel here in the East Mountains, and in the furthestmost places of the earth. We are supporting the gospel being preached in Norway. We support Ryan and Hanne Roberts. We support John Dean and his ministry. He travels all over the world preaching the gospel, and strengthening churches. We support the Faith, Hope, Love Kids Ranch in the Philippines. We support the gospel being preached in Thailand through Living Word Ministries. They have planted 108 churches, and we have a part in that. We support the CareNet ministry in Moriarty. The gospel is being preached and help is also being given to pregnant women. We support Promised Land Ministries that Danielle Clarke runs. The poor are being taken care of, and the gospel message is being proclaimed.

Paul is also thankful for their participation from the first day until now. He is acknowledging the gift that the Philippians had just sent. In chapter four, he tells them that he received everything in full and he has an abundance. He says that he is amply supplied, having received from Epaphroditus what they had sent. The Philippians were concerned about Paul's well being while he was in prison, and they sent him a bountiful gift. He tells them that it was a fragrant aroma and an acceptable sacrifice, well-pleasing to God. **The Philippians made sure that Paul was amply supplied.**

(Phil 4:18) But I have received everything in full and have an abundance; I am amply supplied, having received from Epaphroditus what you have sent, a fragrant aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well-pleasing to God.

The Philippians did more than support Paul's ministry. **The Philippians cared about Paul.** Paul. There was mutual affection. In verse seven, Paul says "it is only right for me to feel this way about you, because I have you in my heart, since both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, you are all partakers of grace with me. For God is my witness, how I long for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus."

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(Phil 1:7-8) For it is only right for me to feel this way about you all, because I have you in my heart, since both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, you all are partakers of grace with me. {8} For God is my witness, how I long for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus.

The Philippians had an affection for Paul, and he had an affection for them. **There was great love between Paul and the Philippians.** Not only is there an affection, Paul says that he longs for them. Paul is missing their fellowship.

One of the things that I want us to maintain is a loving and caring relationship with the ministries that we support. There must be a love. We are not a welfare agency, handing out money to the needy. We are a church that wants to partner and participate in the gospel. We have a relationship with FHL Kid's Ranch. Larry and Ruth have that kind of relationship.

Ray has had a relationship with Charlie Milbrodt and Living Word Ministries for many years. He has gone on several missions trips with them.

We have a relationship with John Dean. He prays for our church. We pray for him. John is interested in the well being of our body. He is interested in the growth of our body. When he comes, he is interested in how he can strengthen us.

We have a relationship with Susan and Paul Brown. I mention Susan first, because she has been the one that has come and ministered to us the past couple of years. Both of them are coming in June. When Susan is here, she is here to serve us and to strengthen us. She pours herself into us. Karen and her have had a close relationship for fifteen years.

B. Paul Prayed With Joy

In verse four Paul says that he always offers prayer with joy. He was full of thanksgiving and joy. **Paul's joy was not based on external circumstances. Paul was in prison in Rome, where he endured great hardships.** Paul went to Philippi around 49 AD on his second missionary journey. After his third missionary journey, he is arrested and is taken to Rome, where he will spend two years in prison.

(Phil 1:4) "always offering prayer with joy in my every prayer for you all"

Normally, a prison was not a good place to be. The conditions were horrific. However, in Paul's case, he was under house arrest. In Acts 26 Paul makes his defense before King Agrippa. Paul would have been set free by Agrippa, but he had appealed to Caesar, so Agrippa sends him to Rome. In Acts 27, we have the account of the shipwreck. There were 176 people on board the ship, and Paul is a light and an encouragement to everyone during the crisis. The soldiers wanted to kill all the prisoners so that they would not escape. The centurion wanted to make sure that Paul got to Rome and so he spares all the prisoners. They all swim ashore to the island of Malta. Paul gathers firewood so that they can warm themselves, and a viper bites Paul. The natives first think he is a murderer and this is judgment. Then, Paul shakes off the snake into the fire and nothing happens to him. Now they think he is a god. There were many people sick on the island and they bring them to Paul and they were being healed. They gain great favor with the local residents. The soldiers are all observing this.

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After three months at Malta, they catch an Alexandrian ship to Rome. When they had entered Rome, Luke tells us that Paul was allowed to stay by himself with the soldier who was guarding him. In Philippians 1:13, the NASB says "so that my imprisonment..." The KJV uses the word bonds, and the NIV says chains. The Greek word is *desmos* (Strong's G1199), which means a band, bond, chain, or imprisonment. Paul was chained to the guard that was assigned to him. Paul was not sent to the normal prison. He was given some special considerations. While he waited for trial, he remained under house arrest with a guard chained to him.

(Acts 28:16) When we entered Rome, Paul was allowed to stay by himself, with the soldier who was guarding him.

(Phil 1:13) so that my imprisonment in the cause of Christ has become well known throughout the whole praetorian guard and to everyone else,

At the end of Acts 28, Luke tells us that Paul stayed two full years in his own rented quarters and was welcoming all who came to him. Paul was eventually set free and remained in Rome. This verse may be addressing his time as a free man, or while under house arrest.

(Acts 28:30-31) And he stayed two full years in his own rented quarters and was welcoming all who came to him, {31} preaching the kingdom of God and teaching concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with all openness, unhindered.

Even though Paul's imprisonment was better than many, he still endured great hardship in prison. Listen to what he says in 2 Timothy 2:8-10. He was suffering hardship for the gospel imprisoned as a criminal. He said, "For this reason I endure all things..." Paul was suffering hardship as a prisoner.

(2 Tim 2:8-10) Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, descendant of David, according to my gospel, for which I suffer hardship even to imprisonment as a criminal; but the word of God is not imprisoned. For this reason I endure all things for the sake of those who are chosen, so that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus and with it eternal glory.

Yet, despite of all this, Paul is full of joy and thanksgiving. What is this joy that Paul is experiencing. The Miriam Webster Dictionary defines joy as: 1a: the emotion evoked by well-being, success, or good fortune or by the prospect of possessing what one desires : delight; 1b: the expression or exhibition of such emotion : gaiety; 2: a state of happiness or felicity : bliss; 3: a source or cause of delight. I do not think that Paul's imprisonment was a state of success or good fortune or the prospect of possessing what one desires. I do not think his joy fits this definition.

Rick Warren, author of *Purpose Driven Life*, is a well known pastor and author. His wife, Kay, has come out with a book called *Choose Joy, Because Happiness Is Not Enough*. In it, she says that "Joy is the settled assurance that God is in control of all the details of my life, the quiet confidence that ultimately everything is going to be alright, and the determined choice to praise God in every situation." Her title is very informative. She makes a distinction between happiness and joy.

John MacArthur also makes a distinction between happiness and joy. He says, "happiness is an attitude of satisfaction or delight based upon some present circumstance. Happiness is related to happenings. Happiness is related to happenstance. Happiness is related to hap which is a word that

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basically conveys the idea of chance. Happiness is that which you really can't plan and program, it may happen, it may not happen and it seems so elusive. But it is related to the delight or the satisfaction that is tied to an occasional happening, a chance circumstance." He adds that joy is something that is not related to chance or circumstances. He says it is "a deep down confidence that all is well, no matter what the circumstance, no matter what the difficulty, no matter what the problem. And that's very different from happiness."

What do the Scriptures say about joy? First, there are fifteen different Hebrew words translated as joy. There are eight different Greek words used for joy. All twenty-three of these words give us a slightly different and fuller understanding of joy. They indicate a bubbling up of inward delight and gladness that is sometimes evidenced by leaping, dancing, singing, and shouting. The words joy or rejoice are used 431 times in the Bible. The verb "to rejoice" appears 56 times in the New Testament. The noun "joy" appears 66 times in the New Testament. **Joy is part of the kingdom of God.** In fact, Paul writes that "the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit."

(Rom 14:17) "For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit,"

Jesus shared a parable in Matthew 13 about the joy of the kingdom. He said that "the kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field." When someone finds and enters into the kingdom of God, there is great joy. Joy is part of the kingdom of God.

(Matt 13:44) "The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field."

In a study that I did on joy a number of years ago, I discovered twenty-nine different types of joy in the kingdom of God. **There is a joy in God's word.** Jeremiah talks the joy he had when he ate God's word. They became for him a delight.

(Jer 15:16) "When your words came, I ate them; they were my joy and my heart's delight, for I bear your name, O LORD God Almighty."

There is a joy in unity. Paul writes in Philippians 2, "make my joy complete by being like-minded, have the same love, being one in spirit and purpose."

(Phil 2:2) "then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose."

These are just a few of the many joys that we have in the kingdom. I do want to speak of one particular joy that we have. In both the Old and New Testament, we find **there is joy in the presence of the Lord**. It is the joy of the Holy Spirit that we have in His presence. In Psalms 21:6, David writes that God had made the king (himself) glad with the joy of His presence.

(Ps 21:6) "Surely you have granted him eternal blessings and made him glad with the joy of your presence."

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Luke records that Jesus was full of joy through the Holy Spirit. In Acts 2:28, Luke quotes from Peter's sermon at Pentecost. Peter is speaking of the resurrection of Christ that David prophesied about in Psalms 16. He says that "you will fill me with joy in your presence." There is joy in the presence of the Lord.

(Luke 10:21) "At that time Jesus, full of joy through the Holy Spirit,"

(Acts 2:28) "You have made known to me the paths of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence."

(Psalm 16:11) You will make known to me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; In Your right hand there are pleasures forever.

In 1 Thessalonians, Paul writes twice about this joy. In chapter one, he writes of the joy given by the Holy Spirit. In chapter three, he writes about the joy in the presence of our God. They are one and the same.

(1 Thess 1:6) "You became imitators of us and of the Lord; in spite of severe suffering, you welcomed the message with the joy given by the Holy Spirit."

(1 Thess 3:9) "How can we thank God enough for you in return for all the joy we have in the presence of our God because of you?"

Joy is a fruit of the Spirit. Galatians says "the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy..." The Holy Spirit gives us joy that is not related to external circumstances. It is an inward bubbling up of gladness and joy that cannot be contained. It is something that is supposed to be part of our kingdom life and experience. It is this joy that Paul had in prison and that he expresses in his prayers for the Philippians.

(Gal 5:22) "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,"

There is a joy that comes about from repentance. In Psalm 51, after David has repented of his adultery, he asks God to make him hear joy and gladness. He says, "let the bones which You have broken rejoice." He wants God to give him a clean heart and a steadfast spirit. Sin chokes out joy, but repentance ushers joy back into our lives. He asks God not to cast him away from His presence, and not to take away the Holy Spirit from him. David understood the connection between our joy and the Holy Spirit. Finally, he asks God to restore to him the joy of his salvation.

(Ps 51:8-12) Make me to hear joy and gladness, Let the bones which You have broken rejoice. {9} Hide Your face from my sins And blot out all my iniquities. {10} Create in me a clean heart, O God, And renew a steadfast spirit within me. {11} Do not cast me away from Your presence And do not take Your Holy Spirit from me. {12} Restore to me the joy of Your salvation And sustain me with a willing spirit.

In Luke 15:7, Jesus said that there will more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance. Again, we see that there is great joy that

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comes about in repentance.

(Lu 15:7) "I tell you that in the same way, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.

The Christian life is supposed to be full of joy and peace. If you are lacking joy or peace, let me encourage you to examine yourself. Ask the Lord if there is sin in your life that you need to repent of. If the Holy Spirit reveals something to you, repent. Then, ask God to restore to you the joy of your salvation. Joy and peace are good barometers in our lives. Whenever I do not have peace or joy, I get before the Lord to examine myself and to listen to what He might share with me.

The writer of Hebrews writes about the joy that Jesus had on the cross. **Jesus endured the cross because of the joy set before Him.** He endured the cross, despising the shame, because of the joy set before Him. He endured hostility by sinners against Himself. Jesus did it because He loved us. Jesus did it to redeem us. Jesus did it to restore our relationship with God. Jesus saw the future fruit and counted it joy. Paul had this same kind of joy. He said that he endured all things for the sake of those who are chosen, so that they may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus and with it eternal glory. Paul knew the results were worth the temporary suffering, and he endured with joy.

(Heb 12:2-3) fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. {3} For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

You and I are not to be joyful only when things are going well. God wants us to be full of joy at all times. In chapter four, Paul exhorts the Philippians to rejoice in the Lord always. Always means at all times and in every circumstance. He does not use the word never or sometimes; he uses the word always. **We are to rejoice in the Lord always, or at all times.** Paul was not just preaching this message; he was living this message. He was full of joy, even in the midst of suffering in prison.

(Phil 4:4) Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice!

James tells us that we should consider it all joy when we encounter various trials. **We are to rejoice in our trials.** Again, this is not externally driven joy. This is an inward joy in the midst of trials and difficulties. Why? Because of the results that come out of enduring these trial. James says "let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing." James knew that these trials are used by God in our life to mature and perfect us. These trials in our life build our faith and give us endurance. These trials in our life make us more like Jesus. That is why we are to consider it all joy when we experience various trials.

(James 1:2-4) Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, {3} knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. {4} And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

Paul was in one of these various trials and he was rejoicing. He was enduring. He was doing it not just for his sake, but for the sake of all the believers. Paul was like Jesus, looking for the eternal fruit that would come out of his suffering for the gospel.

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In 1 Thessalonians 5, Paul exhorts the church to rejoice always, to pray without ceasing, and in everything give thanks, for that is God's will for us in Christ Jesus. We see the same two elements that are in Paul's prayer for the Philippians: joy and thanksgiving.

(1 Thess 5:16-18) Rejoice always; {17} pray without ceasing; {18} in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

It is my prayer that we will become known as a church with much joy. People are attracted to joy. Joy is not only attractive; it is contagious. Philippians is called by many scholars the "Epistle of Joy". May His word impact us in that way. May the Spirit cause us to be filled with joy inexpressible. Let's learn to rejoice always, and to share our joy with others.

C. Paul Prayed With Confidence

In the midst of Paul's thanksgivings and joy, he writes verse six about his confidence. He says, "for I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus." The NIV says he will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus. What a powerful verse. What a wonderful promise. What an excellent memory verse to meditate on. **Paul was confident that God would perfect or complete the work in them that He had begun.**

(Phil 1:6) For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.

What was that work? It was the work of salvation. God is the one that began that work in us. God sent His Son to redeem us. It was God that initiated it. It is God that predestined us to adoption as sons. It is God that called us and chose us. It was God that removed the veil from our eyes. It is God that draws all men unto Himself. It is God that does not want any to perish. God began the good work in each of us. Paul tells us that he is confident that God is going to perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.

We saw a few weeks ago the word for perfect, mature, finish, and goal was teleo. It means to reach a point in the distance. The Greek word here, epiteleo, is from the same root word. The goals or plans that God has for us individually and corporately are going to be accomplished. God is going to accomplish that work that He began in us.

When we feel like we need wisdom in a situation, we can pray with confidence. God promises to mature and perfect us in that area of our lives. When we need patience in our lives, God promises to mature and perfect us in that area. He who began the work of conforming of to His image will be faithful to complete it in Christ Jesus. That is a wonderful promise that we can be confident about.

I look at this from a corporate standpoint. God had begun this great work in Philippi. He promises to perfect it. In the same way, God called us to plant this church. It was a work that He began. God says that he will perfect and mature it. What a wonderful promise for our church.

II. Paul's petitions

Paul had several petitions for the church at Philippi. He did not pray for material things. The things that he did not pray for speak to us as much as the things that he did pray for. Paul prayed for spiritual things, not worldly things. He prayed for their love to abound even more in real knowledge and discernment. He prayed that they would be sincere and blameless. He prayed that they would be filled with the fruit of righteousness.

(Phil 1:9-11) "And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment, {10} so that you may approve the things that are excellent, in order to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ; {11} having been filled with the fruit of righteousness which comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God."

He did not pray for a new facility. He did not pray for their building program. There is nothing wrong with lifting up our needs to the Lord. We are encouraged to ask the Lord for our daily bread. But, Paul was not praying for those kinds of things. **Paul prayed for their spiritual condition.** He wanted them to be full of love, knowledge, discernment, and to have sincere, blameless lives. That is my prayer for our church.

A. Paul prayed for more love.

Paul prays for more love. He prayed for their love to abound still more and more. They already had love. But, Paul wants their love to abound even more. One of the very attractive things about EMV is that we are a church that loves God and who loves one another. There is love in this house. Our vision is to be a church that loves God and loves one another.

(Phil 1:9) "And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment"

Do you know that I have preached thirteen messages on love in this church. God wants us to be a church that is full of love. God wants us to be a church that is abounding still more in love. Love has a surpassing value. It is greater than all the gifts. We are to earnestly desire the gifts, but love surpasses the gifts. Love is the earmark of the church. It is what we are to be known for. Jesus said, "by this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

(John 13:35) "By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

We looked at the characteristics of love. We learned that love is something that can be measured. We saw that the woman who was forgiven much loved much. We saw that there was no greater love than to lay your life down for a friend, which is what Jesus did for us.

Love is something that we can possess. Those who know God possess love, for God is love. Love is something that can grow and increase. It is not something static.

We learned all about the characteristics of love because we want to know and grow in our love. We wanted a clear picture of our target so that we would find the mark. We saw that the goal of

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everything that we do should be love. The goal of our instruction is love. That is what Paul told Timothy. We saw how important it is to have a pure heart, a clean conscience, and a sincere faith. Without these things, it is impossible to have a fervent love for one another.

Peter wrote that since they had in obedience to the truth purified their souls for a sincere love of the brethren, they were now to fervently love one another. It is as if we cannot truly abound in our love and have fervent love without purifying our souls according to truth. Love is not a feeling. We love according to truth. We need knowledge and discernment if we are going to abound in love.

(1 Pet 1:22) Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart,

In the same way that Paul wanted the Philippians to abound and grow in their love, God wants the East Mountain Vineyard to grow and abound in love. We have been called to be a relational church. We are to passionately love God, fervently love one another, and to reach out in love to those who do not need Christ. I pray for our church to grow and abound in love also. I also pray that we will grow in discernment and knowledge.

B. Paul Prayed for Discernment

Paul prays that they would abound in love still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment. It is this discernment that was going to help them approve the things that are excellent.

(Phil 1:9-10a) "And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment, {10} so that you may approve the things that are excellent...

The Greek word for approve is dokimazo, which means to test or approve. It is the same word that is used in Romans 12:2, where Paul tells us to prove what the will of God is. He gives us a good understanding of how to apply this in our lives.

Strong's G1384: dokimazô, to test, by implication to approve

(Romans 12:1-2) Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. {2} And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

Here is the first step to prove the will of God. **We must present our lives to God.** We must present and submit our whole life to him. There are lots of Christians who have a hard time submitting their lives to God and to His appointed authorities. People have a hard time submitting to governmental authorities. They have a hard time submitting to church leaders also. For us to prove what the will of is, we must first present our bodies to Christ as living and holy sacrifices.

Next, Paul tells us **we must not be conformed to the world**, or squeezed into the mold of the world. The music, the television shows, the movies, the books, and the media as a whole are being used to squeeze us into the mold of the world. We have to be sober and alert. We have to be careful about how much we allow into our minds. We are not to allow ourselves to be conformed to the world.

Third, we must renew our minds. To renew our minds, we must fill our minds with the word of God. We must memorize the word of God. We must meditate on the word of God. We must study the word of God. We have to saturate our minds with the word of God. If we are going to experience real transformation, we must renew our minds.

Finally, once we have done these things, **we must prove the will of God in our lives.** When our minds have been renewed, we will be able to determine what is good, acceptable, and perfect, and make a choice to do what is right. That is how we prove the will of God in our lives. This is what Paul is praying for the Philippians. It is the same message that he preached to the Romans. It is the same message he preached to the Ephesians. This is God's message to the church today. It is probably needed more today than at any other time in history. Saints at EMV, God wants us to renew our minds and approve the things that are excellent.

C. Paul Prayed for Sincerity and Blamelessness

Next, Paul prayed for them to be sincere and blameless. The word for sincere is eilikrines, which means judged by sunlight, unalloyed, or pure. When we think of sincerity, we think of someone who is not putting on a face or show, but is genuine. **Sincerity in this verse means purity.**

(Phil 1:10) "so that you may approve the things that are excellent, in order to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ"

Strong's G1506: eilikrinês; judged by sunlight, unalloyed, pure; root is of uncertain origin, perhaps from cheô heilê (the sun's ray) and G2919.

A few months ago we looked at how Paul's goal was love from a sincere faith. We saw that the word sincere in that verse was anupokritos, which means without hypocrisy. The world is looking for Christians who are genuine and without hypocrisy. They have already seen too much hypocrisy. They want to see sincerity and genuineness. They want to see people who are walking the talk and living uprightly or pure. But the sincerity mentioned in this verse is more about purity than authenticity.

Paul also prays for them to be sincere and blameless or holy and blameless until the day of Christ. **Blameless (aproskopos) means not stumbling or causing to stumble.** If we are living holy lives, we will not be stumbling and we will not be causing others to stumble.

Back in the early 90's when we were still living in Orlando, Florida, I was walking around our neighborhood and praying in the Spirit. I do not know what I was praying, but I was praying. Many times when I pray in the Spirit, I break out in praise and worship. As I was praying that afternoon, the Lord gave me a song out of 2 Peter 1. The name of the song is "If These Qualities."

In 2 Peter 1, we are told that if we have these certain qualities we will be fruitful and useful. Furthermore, if we have these qualities, we will not stumble. What are these qualities? The first quality is moral excellence. When we are sincere and blameless in our walk, we will not be stumbling and we will not cause others to stumble.

(2 Pet 1:5-10) Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in your moral excellence, knowledge, {6} and in your knowledge, self-control,

Paul's Prayer (Philippians 1:3-11)

and in your self-control, perseverance, and in your perseverance, godliness, {7} and in your godliness, brotherly kindness, and in your brotherly kindness, love. {8} For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. {9} For he who lacks these qualities is blind or short-sighted, having forgotten his purification from his former sins. {10} Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble;

Paul prays that they will be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ. Paul uses this phrase three times in this letter. In verse six, we saw that Paul was confident that God who began this good work would perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus. In verse ten, he prays that they would be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ. In Philippians 2:16, he exhorts the Philippians to be blameless and innocent so that in the day of Christ he will have reason to glory.

(Phil 1:6) For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.

(Phil 1:10) so that you may approve the things that are excellent, in order to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ;

(Phil 2:16) holding fast the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I will have reason to glory because I did not run in vain nor toil in vain.

What is this day of Christ? **The day of Christ refers to Christ's return.** I do not believe that this is the day of judgment. I believe the day of judgment will be at the very end, and is mentioned in Revelation 20. Satan is going to be bound for 1000 years and then released. Then, John talks about the judgment at the great white throne. The books are opened, and the book of life is opened. The things that are written about the dead are written in the books. Death and Hades, which is the place of the dead, are thrown into the lake of fire. Anyone whose name is not found in the book of life is also thrown into the lake of fire. This is the day of judgment, and I do not believe that this is the same time that Jesus returns.

(Rev 20:11-15) Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them. {12} And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds. {13} And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds. {14} Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. {15} And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

Some things in Scripture are very clear. Other things are not quite as clear, and I do not believe that they are things that should divide us. There are some doctrines that are essential. The virgin birth is an essential doctrine. The deity of Christ is an essential doctrine. The trinity is an essential doctrine. The inspiration and inerrancy of Scripture is essential to me. Whether some is pre-tribulation, mid tribulation, or post tribulation is not an essential doctrine to me.

Paul's Prayer (Philippians 1:3-11)

In the three verses in Philippians that mention the day of Christ, we can glean several things.

1. **The day of Christ was a future event that had not occurred yet.** The early church believed he could come at any time. Jesus gave some signs of things that would happen before He returns. Many of those things have happened. It is for certain that we are in the last days. How long it will be before He returns is not clear to any of us. (1:6, 1:10, 2:16)
2. **The day of Christ was going to be a day of reckoning or giving account.** If someone had done good things, they would have reason to glory. If the Philippians stayed sincere and blameless, Paul's work was not going to be in vain, and he would glory in that day. (2:16)
3. **We are encouraged to be found sincere, blameless, and innocent at the day of Christ.** The Scriptures are also written to us. Therefore, we are exhorted to be sincere, blameless and innocent until the Lord returns. (1:10, 2:16)
4. **The perfecting and maturing of the saints would take place until the day of Christ.** You and I are concerned about our growth and maturity. We grow and mature through the trials we go through. We grow and mature by the teaching and equipping ministry of the five-fold gifts. These gifts include the apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor and teacher. At EMV we bring in five-fold ministers so that you are exposed to these various giftings. Paul and Susan Brown are prophets. John Dean is prophetic and apostolic. These are just some of the ways that we are perfected and matured.

D. Paul Prayed for glory and praise to God

Paul also prays that their lives would result in glory and praise of God. He tells them that they have already been filled with the fruit of righteousness which comes through Christ. We discussed that two weeks ago. We are saints. We are the righteousness of God in Christ. He who knew no sin was made sin on our behalf that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. This has already been done for us. When we come into a relationship with Christ, we are a new creation. The old things passed away, and new things have come. We become the righteousness of God.

(Phil 1:11) "having been filled with the fruit of righteousness which comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God."

The end result of us abounding in love, growing in discernment, living a sincere and blameless life is that God will be glorified and honored by our lives. This was Paul's prayer for the Philippians. It is also my prayer for us at East Mountain Vineyard. Let's pray.

Introduction (Phil 1:3-11)

I. Paul Attitude in Prayer

A. Paul Prayed With _____. (Phil 1:3-8)

- The Philippians had _____ Paul's apostolic work. (Phil 1:3-5, 15-16)
- The Philippians made sure Paul was _____ . (Phil 4:18)
- The Philippians _____ about Paul.
- There was great _____ between Paul and the Philippians. (Phil 1:8)

B. Paul Prayed With _____. (Phil 1:4)

- Paul's joy was not based on _____ circumstances; Paul was in _____, where he endured great hardships. (2 Tim 4:13, 2:8-10)
- Joy is part of the _____ of God. (Rom 14:17, Matt 13:44)
- There is joy in _____ . (Jer 15:16)
- There is joy in _____ . (Phil 2:2)
- There is joy in the _____ of the Lord. (Ps 21:6, Luke 10:21, Acts 2:28, Ps 16:11, 1 Thess 1:6, 3:9)
- Joy is a _____ of the Spirit. (Gal 5:22)
- There is joy that comes from _____ . (Ps 51:8-12, Luke 15:7)
- Jesus endured the cross because of the _____ set before Him. (Heb 12:2-3)
- We are to rejoice in the Lord always or at _____ . (Phil 4:4, 1 Thess 5:16-18)
- We are to rejoice in our _____ . (James 1:2-4)

C. Paul Prayed With _____. (Phil 1:6)

- Paul was confident that God would _____ or complete the work He had begun in Philippi.

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II. Paul's petitions (Phil 1:9-11)

- Paul prayed for their _____ condition.

A. Paul prayed for more _____. (Phil 1:9, John 13:35, 1 Pet 1:22)

B. Paul prayed for _____. (Phil 1:9-10a, Rom 12:1-2)

- We must _____ our lives to God.
- We must not be _____ to the world.
- We must _____ our minds.
- We must _____ the will of God in our lives.

C. Paul Prayed for _____ and _____ (Phil 1:10)

- Sincerity in this verse means _____.
 - Blameless (aproskopos) means not _____. (2 Pet 1:5-10)
 - The day of Christ refers to Christ's _____. (Phil 1:6, 1:10, 2:16, Rev 20:11-15)
1. The day of Christ was a _____ event that had not occurred yet. (Phil 1:6, 1:10, 2:16)
 2. The day of Christ was going to be a day of reckoning or giving _____. (Phil 2:16)
 3. We are encouraged to be found _____, _____, and _____. (Phil 1:10, 2:16)
 4. The _____ and _____ of the saints would take place until the day of Christ.

D. Paul prayed for glory and praise to God (Phil 1:11)

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