

Philippians Chapter 1

With Introduction & Information on the Life of Paul

I. Introduction

A. The Book of Philippians – 4 Chapters, 104 Verses

1. Written by Paul in 62 AD
 - a. From: Paul, in a Roman prison
 - b. To: Believers in Philippi, East Macedonia
2. Written as a “thank you” letter for a monetary gift sent to Paul
3. Themes – Encouraging Christians to:
 - a. Proclaim the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ
 - b. Pursue Christlikeness (His name appears at least 40 times)
 - c. Live with joy (joy, rejoice, or happiness mentioned 19 times)

Look at what Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 11:23-27

4. Reasoning behind the chapter divisions in Philippians
 - a. Chapter 1 – Philosophy of Christian Living
 - b. Chapter 2 – Pattern for Christian Living
 - c. Chapter 3 – Prize for Christian Living
 - d. Chapter 4 – Power for Christian Living
5. Structure of Paul’s letter is similar in many ways to one of our letters
6. Key verses reflecting Paul’s joy
 - a. Philippians 1:21
 - b. Philippians 3:7
 - c. Philippians 4:4
 - d. Philippians 4:6-7
 - e. Philippians 4:11-13

B. The Life of The Apostle Paul

1. Early life
 - a. Born in 1 AD in Tarsus, Cilicia, Roman Empire (Acts 21:39)
 - b. Dual citizenship - - Jewish and Roman (Acts 16:37-38, 22:25-28)
 - c. Why this Jewish family was in Tarsus
 - d. How they gained Roman citizenship
 - e. His name
 - (1) First two names of his threefold Latin name unknown
 - (2) Jewish name was Saul
 - (3) Luke used Saul in writing Acts until Acts 13:9
 - (4) Paul means “little” or “small”
 - (5) Perhaps Paul used “Paul” in Scripture because it humbled him (John 3:30)
 - f. Education
 - (1) Tarsus synagogue until age 13
 - (2) Jewish teacher Gamaliel in Jerusalem for 5-6 years

(Acts 5:33-39, 22:3)

- (3) Educated and well-respected Jew and Pharisee
2. Persecutor of Christ's followers ("The Way") (Acts 7:58, 8:1-3)
3. Conversion and preparation for ministry (Acts 9)
 - a. Encounter with the Lord on The Road to Damascus (age 30) (9:1-5)
 - b. Sent into Damascus by the Lord (9:6-9)
 - c. Ananias given instructions and informed of Paul's life mission (9:10-16)
 - d. Sight restoration, spiritual filling, and baptism (9:17-19a)
 - e. Immediately began to proclaim Jesus in Damascus (9:19b-25)
 - f. The Lord prepares him for missions (Galatians 1:16-17)
 - g. Acceptance by the Apostles (9:26-30)
 - h. Instruction from Peter (Galatians 1:18)
4. Hidden years
 - a. Return to Tarsus (age 34)
 - b. Conflict with family
 - c. Sought by Barnabas; returned to Antioch of Syria (Acts 11:24-26)
5. Paul the missionary (Acts 13-20)
 - a. Missionary zeal
 - (1) First Missionary Journey (46-48 AD) (13-14)
{Note: They met 30-year-old Timothy and his family in Lystra on this trip and they put their faith in Christ}
 - (2) Second Missionary Journey (49-52 AD) (15:40-18:22)
 - (3) Third Missionary Journey (53-57 AD) (18:23-21:8)
 - (4) Likely there were other missionary journeys
 - b. Death at the hands of Nero in 67 AD at the age of 66
 - c. He modeled the Christian life
(Galatians 2:20, Acts 20:17-24)

II. Paul's Greeting (1:1-2)

A. From: Paul and Timothy (1:1a)

1. Common method of beginning letters in the 1st century
2. Paul inspired by the Spirit to write it; likely dictated it to his beloved son in the faith, Timothy
3. Bondservant (Greek: doulos)
 - a. Denotes a willing slave who was happily and loyally linked to his master
 - b. Servitude was not a desired status in the Gentile world
 - c. Paul often referred to himself as a slave or bondservant
 - d. In Philemon Paul referred to himself as "a prisoner of Christ Jesus"

B. To: "All the saints in Christ Jesus in Philippi including the overseers and deacons" (1:1b)

1. Saints - - believers; dual positions / locations of saints

- a. In Christ – describes the believer’s union with Jesus Christ in His death and resurrection
- b. In Philippi or whatever their physical location is
- 2. Overseers (bishops) and deacons included
 - a. Overseers – pastoral care; led by example
 - b. Deacons – servants, concerned with material affairs, widows, etc.

C. Grace and peace to you (1:2a)

- 1. Common greeting in each of Paul’s 13 books
- 2. Grace and peace are always written in that sequence in Paul’s writings
 - - if you have grace, then you have peace
- 3. Grace
 - a. Greek word is “charis”
 - b. A word from the Greek world used as a greeting
 - c. Still used today
 - d. Hebrews 4:16
- 4. Peace
 - a. Always follows grace
 - b. From the Hebrew religious world; “shalom”
 - c. Refers to the peace of God that comes through prayer and thanksgiving
- 5. Both grace and peace were commonplace words in Paul’s day

D. From God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ (1:2b)

- 1. Paul was, indeed, a trinitarian
- 2. Believers indwelt by the Spirit, so no need or reason to send grace and peace from the Holy Spirit in the greeting

III. Paul’s Tender Feelings (1:3-11) {beginning of the body of the letter}

A. He has them in his mind (1:3-6)

- 1. Verse 3 – Has fond memories of the believers in Philippi
- 2. Verse 4 – His memories prompted joyful prayers
 - a. Joy is the most infallible sign of the presence of God
 - b. How did Paul remain joyful?
 - (1) Jesus was the Source of his joy
 - (2) Look at his philosophy – Philippians 4:11-12
- 3. Verse 5 – Participation or partnership in the Gospel
 - a. KJV uses “fellowship” - - from Greek koinonia
 - b. Same as in Acts 2:42
 - c. Believers are partners with Christ and all believers (Romans 12:10)
 - d. Look at Philippians 2:1-2
 - (1) Fellowship of the Spirit
 - (2) Being of the same mind (single mind)
 - (3) Maintaining the same love
 - (4) United in spirit
 - (5) Intent on one purpose
 - e. We must have spiritual fellowship that is real and satisfying

- (1) Result: No complaining about circumstances
- (2) Difficult circumstances result in strengthening the fellowship
- 4. Verse 6 – The good work begun in you will be accomplished
 - a. Who has done the work in you?
 - (1) God (not anyone else) has begun a work in us
 - (2) He continues to do the work (sanctification)
 - b. When will He be finished?
 - (1) When we are in His presence
 - (2) Consider yourself as being “under construction”
 - (3) Greek word for “perfect”: epiteleo = to perform or to accomplish

VERSES 3-11 CONVEY THREE ASPECTS OF CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP:

- 1. HAVING OTHERS IN OUR MINDS. WE’RE CONCERNED ABOUT THEM**
- 2. HAVING OTHERS IN OUR HEARTS. GOD HAS JOINED OUR HEARTS.**
- 3. HAVING OTHERS IN OUR PRAYERS THAT LOVE MAY ABOUND IN BOTH KNOWLEDGE AND DISCERNMENT**

B. He has them in his heart (1:7-8)

1. Verse 7 – Christian love exemplified
 - a. 1 John 3:14 - - How we KNOW we’re His
 - b. His circumstances were seen as opportunities
2. Verse 8 – He longed for them
 - a. God had brought them together in fellowship
 - b. Romans 5:5 - - God pours His love into the hearts of believers
 - c. 1 Peter 4:8 - - Evidence of Christian love: Willingness to forgive

C. He has them in his prayers (1:9-11)

See the document entitled, “Deeper Dive – Philippians 1 (verses 9-11).pptx for a Reed-Kellogg Sentence Diagram for these verses, as well as a number of notes / observations.

1. Verse 9 – Paul found joy in praying for the believers in Philippi
 - a. That their love may abound continually
 - (1) In real knowledge and discernment
 - (2) Discerning love is a mark of spiritual maturity
 - b. Discernment - - being able to distinguish the things that are of more spiritual value
2. Verse 10 – Love enlightened with knowledge and discernment enables believers to be able to approve the things that are more excellent
 - a. Approve = Greek: dokimazo = discern
 - b. Excellent = Greek: diaphero = surpass; be better
 - c. Greek: eilikrines = judged by sunlight; tested as genuine / pure.
Sincere = Latin: sincerus = without wax (story behind this)

In Latin, **sincerus** means clean, pure, whole, sound, or genuine.

Core Meanings

- **Clean and Pure:** Free from dirt, mixture, or adulteration (such as unmixed wine).
- **Whole and Uninjured:** Complete, sound, and undamaged.
- **Genuine and Honest:** Real, true, and free from deceit.

Word Origin (Etymology)

- **Scholarly Root:** Most experts and the Oxford English Dictionary trace *sincerus* to a root meaning "**one growth**" (from *sem-*, meaning "one," and *-crescere*, meaning "to grow"), implying something unmixed or pure.
- **Common Folk Etymology:** A popular belief claims it comes from *sine cera* ("without wax"), referring to Roman sculptors who supposedly did not hide flaws in marble statues with wax. However, modern linguists consider this a folk etymology rather than the true historical origin.

- d. Be sincere; don't be a phony
- e. Without offense / blameless - - able to avoid the things that are questionable or even wrong
- f. Ask these questions when exercising spiritual discernment
 - (1) Will it make others stumble?
 - (2) Will it make me ashamed if Jesus should return?
3. Verse 11 – Paul prayed that for mature Christian service
 - a. Filled with the Spirit
 - b. Fruitful (John 15:4)

IV. Paul's Circumstances {The Fortune of Misfortune} (1:12-26)

See the document entitled, "[Deeper Dive – Philippians 1 \(verses 12-14\).pptx](#) for a Reed-Kellogg Sentence Diagram for these verses, as well as a number of notes / observations.

A. Paul's house arrest

1. Background information for those who were not here for the first lesson.

Paul wrote the Book of Philippians while under house arrest in Rome. The reasons and circumstances that led to him being in this situation are described in Acts 21-28. It's an interesting story that began with Paul's arrest in Jerusalem in 57 AD, right after his 3rd Missionary Journey ([Acts 21:27-36](#)).

After having to defend himself 6 times over the next 3 years, he appealed to Caesar and was sent to Rome and put under house arrest. This meant that he was living in a house or dormitory near the emperor's palace and the main prison and was likely chained much of the time to a Roman soldier. He had been charged with a crime and was awaiting trial before the emperor or his representative. **Acts 28:30-31** says, "He stayed two full years in his own rented quarters and was welcoming all who came to him, preaching the kingdom of God and teaching concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with all openness, unhindered."

He was released in 62 AD because the Jews who had accused him of being "a real pest and a fellow who stirs up dissention" (**Acts 24:5**) did not press their case before the emperor.

But during this 2-year period in Rome, Paul wrote the 4 books we call the Prison Epistles. (Ephesians, Colossians, Philippians, and Philemon).

Paul wrote his letter to the Philippians to thank the church for a monetary contribution they had sent by one of their members, Epaphroditus.

2. How did the church, being 600 miles from Rome, with the extremely limited communications of the 1st century, find out that Paul was in prison?

The answer to this question is, "We don't know."

However, the Romans had an elaborate highway system consisting of about 250,000 miles of carefully engineered, well-built roads throughout the Roman Empire. These roads were initially constructed to facilitate the movement of troops. Horse-powered carts could travel 25-30 miles a day, so one could travel from Rome to Philippi in about 20 days. It's likely that someone delivered a message from Paul to the church at Philippi at some point, but we don't know. Regardless, the Lord made a way for them to find out, and they were all too eager to help the one who had introduced them to the Lord.

3. Why did he need financial support?

The Roman prison system didn't give prisoners meals or provide them with a clean safe place. In ancient Rome, friends, family, and humanitarians had to care for prisoners, or they would go hungry and dwell in increasingly harmful quarters.

As a Roman citizen, Paul was probably better off than someone in a lower social status. For example, a slave could simply be thrown into a dungeon.

So, the money the church sent was to pay for food and basic necessities.

B. Paul's circumstances or "chains" (1:12-14)

1. Verse 12 – His circumstances have turned out well for his mission
 - a. Progress = furtherance = pioneer advance
 - b. His chains have released him, not bound him

Verse 12 is a key verse in this chapter - - Paul's big "thing" was knowing that the Gospel was being preached. We see in Verses 18-20 that he rejoices, knowing how this was going to turn out.

2. Verse 13 – His imprisonment had become well known
 - a. To the Praetorian Guard (Ephesians 6:20)
 - b. To everyone else, including Caesar's court
 - c. Consider our "chains" today - - What are your "chains?"
 - d. Be single-minded in viewing your circumstances
3. Verse 14 – His imprisonment had prompted boldness
 - a. Much talk around Rome because of Paul
 - b. Opportunities abounded to spread the Gospel

C. Paul's critics or detractors (1:15-19)

See the document entitled, "Deeper Dive – Philippians 1 (verses 18-20).pptx for a Reed-Kellogg Sentence Diagram for these verses, as well as a number of notes / observations.

1. Verses 15 -17– the Gospel is being preached in two ways
 - a. Some out of envy and strife; selfish ambition
 - (1) Some used Paul's imprisonment as an opportunity to advance their own prestige
 - (2) Envy = Greek: phthonos = jealousy
 - (3) Strife = Greek: eris = to stir up
 - (4) Objective: To discredit Paul
 - (5) Both are damaging to the church

Note: These people were stirring up trouble in the young church. They existed seemingly to slam others and they were slamming Paul. Here are some examples of what **might** have been happening:

Perhaps, there was a group of people saying, "Paul the Apostle must have sin in his life and that's why he's in jail. God wouldn't allow him to be in prison unless there was something wrong with him."

Perhaps, they were saying, "Well, Paul has not tapped into the victorious Spirit-filled life, like we have."

Look at an example John the Apostle gives us in 3 John 9 of a church member named Diotrephes. He loved to have preeminence - - he was a control freak. He

also refused to welcome the apostles into the church, maliciously spread gossip about men of God, withheld hospitality from other believers, required others to follow his poor example, and excommunicated anyone who crossed him.

- b. Some out of good will
 - (1) Out of love - -satisfaction and contentment
 - (2) They had genuine affection for Paul
 - (3) They had confidence in his virtue
 - (4) Primarily - - They preached Christ sincerely and with love
- 2. Verse 18 – Bottom line: Christ is being preached
 - a. Regardless of motives, people being saved
 - b. Paul's joy was not tied to his circumstances
 - c. Paul's critics were another opportunity for the furtherance of the Gospel
 - d. He harbored no bitterness toward his critics
 - e. He rejoiced that the Gospel was being preached - - even in a pretense of godliness

Rejoice means to be cheerful; calmly happy or well-off.

Paul, in Rome under house arrest, rejoices because the Philippian believers have been “all in” in the presentation of the Gospel.

Richard Rogers: Let's talk about the Gospel - - the Good News! The Good News begins with bad news. We were dead in our sins and He came to us to have a relationship with us. We were worthy of death, but Jesus became sin on our behalf and died for us. Resurrected after 3 days, He became our Savior and sits at the Father's right hand interceding for us AND HE IS OURS THROUGH FAITH IN CHRIST!

- 3. Verse 19 – Paul knew that he would be freed from his temporary distress and he rejoiced
 - a. He was quite confident – “for I KNOW”
 - b. Deliverance = Salvation (KJV) = Greek: sozo
 - c. What he meant by “my deliverance”
 - (1) Not spiritual salvation - - he had that
 - (2) Not being freed from jail – see Verse 20
 - (3) His well-being (Romans 8:28; James 1:12)
 - d. What were the means of Paul's confidence
 - (1) The prayers of the saints
 - (2) The provision of the Holy Spirit
 - (a) The Holy Spirit (Romans 8:9, Galatians 4:6)
 - (b) Paul had supreme confidence in the Spirit (Zechariah 4:6, John 14:16, Romans 8:26, Ephesians 3:20)

D. Paul's Crisis (1:20-26)

1. Verse 20 – Because of his crisis, Christ was exalted
 - a. Earnest expectation = Greek: apokaradokia kara = keen anticipation of the future, as when someone stretches his neck to see what lies ahead
 - b. Exalted = magnified (KJV) = Greek: megalyno = enlarge, magnify, show great
 - c. Paul's mindset: Whether life or death, may Christ be magnified
2. Verse 21 – To live is Christ, to die is gain
 - a. Summarizes the first chapter of Philippians
 - b. This was the reason Paul was not disturbed by criticism
 - c. Death would relieve him of earthly burdens and let him focus totally on glorifying God
3. Verses 22-24 – Paul was OK any way it turned out for him
 - a. Hard pressed = in a strait betwixt two (KJV) = Greek: synecho ek = pictures a traveler on a narrow path, a rock wall on either side allowing him to go only straight ahead
 - b. The flesh – physical life (in this instance)
 - c. Fruitful labor – Paul's only reason to remain in this life: To bring souls to Christ AND to build up believers to do the same
 - d. Chuck Swindoll summarized Paul's dilemma as follows
 - (1) Being with the Lord
 - (a) Pros
 - Being immediately in the presence of Christ (Philippians 1:23)
 - Safety from stonings, beatings, imprisonments, threats, and sleepless nights (2 Corinthians 11:23-27)
 - Instant relief from his "thorn in the flesh" (2 Corinthians 12:7)
 - The fullness of joy and the eternal pleasure from the presence of God (Psalm 16:11)
 - (b) Cons
 - Being absent from the Philippians believers
 - Inability to provide an earthly witness to Christ
 - A gap left among the apostles
 - (2) Remaining with the Philippians
 - (a) Pros
 - Additional opportunities to preach / share the Gospel
 - Continuation of a fruitful ministry among believers
 - Ability to provide security and hope to persecuted believers
 - Ability to provide training for the next generation of servant-leaders
 - (b) Cons
 - Absence from the physical presence of Christ
 - Absence from heavenly glory
 - Continued suffering in the world

4. Verses 25-26 – Paul believed that he would live to support more progress for the cause of Christ
 - a. Progress pictures trailblazing so that an army can advance
 - b. Paul desired to do more trailblazing with the Philippians
 - c. Increasing their faith would result in increased joy
 - d. Verse 26 word order in the Greek is: “that your confidence of joy may be more abundant in Jesus Christ for me”

Philippians 1:27-2:18 consists of 4 exhortations

V. Paul’s Exhortations (1:27-2:18)

See the document entitled, **“Deeper Dive – Philippians 1 (verses 27-28).pptx** for a Reed-Kellogg Sentence Diagram for these verses, as well as a number of notes / observations.

A. Introduction to the exhortations

1. Brief review of 1:1-26
2. Exhortation defined
3. Desired results

(This is Paul’s 1st exhortation)

B. Stand firm amid persecution (man your battle stations) (1:27-30)

1. The Philippians were facing opposition - - just as we are
 - a. Roman Empire under Nero – characterized by discipline, pride, strength, and brutality.
 - b. The Philippian believers were feeling pressure to be “Roman.”
 - c. Sometimes they were prone to think more Roman than Christian
2. Be consistent in your conduct (1:27a)
 - a. KJV says, “Only let your conversation be as it becometh the Gospel of Christ.”
 - b. “Conversation” in Greek is *politeuomai*; allow one’s citizenship to dictate their life.
 - c. For us: Don’t be more American than Christian.
3. Four assurances Christians can count on:
 - a. We are not alone (1:27b)
 - b. We are promised the victory (1:28)
 - (1) 1 Corinthians 15:57
 - (2) Romans 8:37
 - c. We are called to suffer (1:29)
 - (1) Sometimes we are called to suffer.
 - (2) John 16:33.
 - d. We are in good company (1:30)
 - (1) Paul says, “Hey, look at all I’ve been through. Get ready.”

(2) Suffering happens; it's not a sign God has turned away.

Applications

1. Sometimes God encumbers us with chains to accomplish something in us or through us that would not otherwise be accomplished. Consider your situation. Are you burdened with something and you can't figure out why? Pray about it and see if God is at work in your life, desiring to accomplish something.
2. To please God with our single-minded determination is to focus solely on pleasing Him and doing as He commands. When we are sold out for Jesus, we are willing to put our personal agenda aside and focus on doing what God wants. It means we no longer live to please ourselves or live by the whims and fancies of this world.
3. When the unsaved watch the single-minded believer go through a crisis, it's an opportunity for Christ to be magnified.
4. As long as we are alive on this earth, we have a ministry. God will give rewards in heaven at the bema seat (or the judgment seat of Christ), based on our faithfulness in service to Him. He will give rewards in heaven to fulfill the law of "sowing and reaping (Galatians 6:7-9) and make good on His promise that our labor in the Lord is not in vain. Rewards in heaven glorify God and provide us with joy, peace, and wonder as we consider God's work in us and through us.
5. Remember this:
 - a. Justification is the free gift of God. We receive it by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and it saves us from the penalty of sin.
 - b. Sanctification is the ongoing process whereby God progressively re-creates us in the image of His Son. We are free from the power of sin through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.
 - c. Glorification is the state of salvation we reach upon leaving our earthly bodies here on earth. At that time we will be free from the presence of sin and will have a heavenly body like Jesus Christ.