

Guest Preacher Rev. RJ Campbell

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Date: 03 April 2022

Preacher: Rev. RJ Campbell

[0 : 00] Seeking the Lord's help and blessing, let us turn back to the portion of Scripture that we read together in the New Testament, the letter of Paul to the Philippians and chapter 1, and let us read from verse 3.

I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you, all making my prayer with joy, because of your partnership in the Gospel from the first day until now. And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ. It is right for me to feel this way about you all, because I hold you in my heart, for you are all partakers with me of grace, both in my imprisonment and in the defence and confirmation of the Gospel.

For God is my witness, how I yearn for you all, with the affection of Christ Jesus. This morning we dealt with the beginning of the relationship that came to exist between Paul and the church at Philippi, by which we can come to some understanding of why Paul has a particular sense of attachment and affection to the church here at Philippi.

We saw this morning how through the guidance of the Word and the Holy Spirit, the Gospel was brought to Philippi and to Europe.

[1 : 41] But we also saw how the mighty power of the Holy Spirit made the Gospel effective at Philippi. When Paul, Silas and Luke arrived at Philippi, there were no Christians.

It was only as Paul and his companions began to preach that a small group of believers gathered around them. Luke describes her as three conversions that took place in this city, and we looked at that in the morning, the conversions of Lydia and the slave girl and the Roman jailer.

There were many other conversions, but why did Luke select to tell us about just those three conversions? Well, these three stood worlds apart, and yet all three were changed and saved by the same Gospel, by the grace of God in Jesus Christ, and they were welcomed into the same church.

At Philippi, as we saw this morning, we see both the universal appeal of the Gospel, that it could reach such a wide diversity of people, and we also saw its unifying effect on all that those who were brought into the family of God, that it could reach such a wide diversity of people, and that it could bind those people together into God's family.

This theme of being united as one in Christ is one of the themes that we find throughout this letter that he wrote to the church at Philippi.

[3 : 33] Many more must have been touched by the Gospel, for before Paul and Silas left Philippi, there we read that they went out of prison and entered into the house of Lydia, and when they had seen the brethren, they comforted them and departed.

Paul has a particular sense of attachment and affection to the church at Philippi. Throughout the letter, Paul uses language that shows us deep affection for the church at Philippi.

In verse 7, he says, I hold you in my heart. In verse 8, he says, I yearn for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus. And in chapter 4, there he begins that chapter by saying, Therefore, my brothers, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown.

But the church at Philippi loved Paul as well, and they never lost interest in him or in his work as he moved on to other cities.

After he left Philippi, he moved on to Thessalonica. And there, when they heard that he was in need, they sent a gift to him, which he acknowledges in chapter 4.

[4 : 51] He says, For even in Thessalonica he sent once and again unto my necessity. Again in the second letter to the Corinthians, he makes mention of the church at Philippi, how they loved him and how they met with his needs.

For that which was lacking to me, he says, the brethren which came from Macedonia supplied. And although many years had now passed since Paul had first visited Philippi and had founded the church there, the love of the people of the church of Philippi for Paul was still strong. And the church had not forgotten his service among them. Eventually Paul is arrested and he is sent to Rome.

And this letter to the Philippians were written by Paul from a Roman prison. It is a very deep and intimate letter and is regarded as the most intimate letter among all the letters that was written by the apostle Paul.

How can this man, once a proud Pharisee, now write from a Roman prison to a Gentile church using such intimate and using such personal and using such tender words.

[6 : 19] A letter to a group at Philippi, hundreds of miles away, so that he felt free to bear his heart to them in this deep and intimate way.

Well, the result of that can only be by the grace of God. When we read about Paul as he records for us later on, later on in this letter, who he was and what he was before the Lord met with him on the road to Damascus.

And here we find him writing a letter to the church at Philippi, to a Gentile church. Well, it can only be the result of the grace of God.

And the circumstances that provoked him to send this letter are clearly indicated for us in the letter itself. The church at Philippi had selected one of its leaders by the name of Evaproditus to go all the way from Philippi to Rome in order to bring to the imprisoned apostle things that were necessary for his physical well-being.

And having received these benefits from the church, he sends him back to the church with this letter. He sent Evaproditus back to the church with this letter.

[7 : 47] And Paul begins this letter in a customary way at that time by starting with this name and the name of the one who is with him and identifies those to whom he's writing.

And he offers a prayer for them. Then he writes, I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all, making my prayer with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now.

In this passage under our consideration tonight, I think that the key verse is probably verse 6, and I am sure of this, that you began a good work and you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.

But however, we're going to look around the context to that verse. In Paul, we have a real man with real temporal needs, in a real prison, with a real chain.

Although he is given what we might call some house liberty so that he may have visitors, he has a Roman guard always by his side, day and night.

[9 : 04] And that Roman guard is attached to him by a chain. God has different purposes in permitting suffering to come upon us.

For Paul, on this occasion, suffering was permitted by God so that the gospel might be spread to others. I want you to know, brother, she says, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel so that it has become known throughout the whole imperial guard and to all the rest that my imprisonment is for Christ.

Here is Paul and he is chained to a Roman soldier of the imperial guard who are special soldiers whose duty was to guard the emperor.

Paul was able to witness to every guard to whom he was chained over days and years and in this way he reached with the gospel to most of the imperial guard.

The example of Paul had its effect upon other Christians for he writes, and most of the brothers having become confident in the Lord by my imprisonment are much more bold to speak the word without fear.

[10 : 33] Paul is now in a Roman prison and he is not sure what the outcome of the Roman tribunia will be. whether he will be delivered, whether he will be released and granted a reprieve, but he knows that it could also mean possible execution.

Whatever the outcome, he wants Christ to be glorified as he stands trial and beyond, even if it were to result in death, as it is my eager expectation and hope that I will not be at all ashamed, but that with full courage now, as always, Christ will be honoured in my body, whether by life or by death.

Since the time that Saul of Tarsus was apprehended by Jesus Christ on the road to Damascus, Christ has become the singular pursuit of his life, for whom he has gladly suffered the loss of all things, that he may gain Christ.

I know Christ both by his resurrection and power and by a participation in his sufferings. In his Roman prison, Paul's concern for the church at Philippi was steadfast and his desire for them was one of great spirituality.

But he knew that the church at Philippi was threatened not merely from the outside, but also by an internal tension that had taken place.

[12 : 33] We find that later on as he goes on in writing this letter. He knew that there was outside hostility, that they were in a hostile environment.

They were in what Paul calls in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, a nation as we saw this morning that was given over to paganism and to emperor worship.

But he was also aware that this fellowship was one that was threatened not only from the outside, but within. Then chapter four, there he brings before us that some dispute had arisen.

There were some internal tensions among them which was reported to him by Epheratus. There was an external pressure because of the pagan environment, but there was also internal tensions, and it made this situation of the church at Philippi rather delicate.

But here he comes in this portion that we have taken tonight, and he speaks of the partnership. And we're going to look for a few moments at what Paul means by this.

[13 : 52] he speaks of the partnership which began when he brought the gospel to them, and they came together to participate in the benefits of the gospel.

It did not end when he left Philippi, but has continued from the first day until now, he says. Your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now.

And Paul declares his joy for this partnership in the gospel with the body of believers at the church at Philippi. Well, what does Paul mean by partnership in the gospel?

Partnership means sharing things in common. It means a togetherness. It means a oneness. As we see that Paul, within the first eight verses of this letter, he uses the word all quite often.

When we look at the makeup of the church at Philippi, we know that it included a businesswoman, a slave girl, a Roman jailer, and others. What we can see immediately is that on a social level, they had nothing in common.

[15 : 05] But once Paul speaks of partnership or fellowship in the gospel, diverse as they were, and coming from all different backgrounds, nevertheless, they all had something that was common.

They had a shared participation in the benefits of the gospel. They were all saints, which means the ones who are set apart.

The ones who are set apart by the grace of God in Jesus Christ. They all had that in common. The businesswoman, the slave girl, the Roman jailer, and all the others, they had this in common, that they were all set apart by the grace of God in Jesus Christ.

There are those who would confine Paul's usage of this phrase, partnership in the gospel, to mean merely they're participating in the spread of the gospel or in the provision of gifts for him.

And although that is included, I would like to give this phrase a wider significance. I believe that Paul was grateful for all their gifts that they sent to him.

[16 : 25] But I think that when he speaks of their partnership in the gospel, he was not merely referring exclusively to their gifts. The reference are to those things that now by grace that they have in common.

Not merely the gifts that they sent to him, but also the things that by grace they have now in common. They shared in the same experience of forgiveness and peace, all made possible through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ as proclaimed in the gospel.

They were all recipients of the grace of God through Jesus Christ. He saw them all as sinners saved, by grace. The business woman, the slave girl, the Roman jailer, they were all sinners saved by grace.

That they had in common. They were all saved by grace. The grace of God had this transforming power to create a community or a fellowship of believers of Christ.

And those who share in the benefits of the gospel participate in a partnership of fellowship that is so deep that it may also be viewed as a family relationship.

[17 : 52] They were all brought into the family of God. There were a people who were justified, a people who were adopted into the family of God.

Whether it was a businesswoman, a slave girl or a Roman jailer or all of them, all the others who were converted at Philippi, they had this in common. They were all justified, they were all adopted, they were all brought into a family relationship.

Hence, Paul refers to believers in Philippi, often in this letter, as brethren or brothers. They not only had a shared participation in the benefits of the gospel, they were also sharing in the gift of the Holy Spirit, because they all had received the Holy Spirit.

However, fellowship or partnership in the gospel not only meant that they had participated in the benefits of the gospel of salvation, that they all had the gift of the Holy Spirit dwelling in them, but it also meant their participation in the advancement of the gospel.

This is highlighted by Paul in verse 19, for he says, For I know that through your prayers and the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, this will turn out for my deliverance.

[19 : 21] They were praying for him, but they were also helping in the advancement of the gospel by practical ways, by sending gifts to him. when Paul was filled with joy for their partnership in the gospel, it was not simply a mutual participation in the benefits of the gospel of the Spirit, but also in their partnership in the advancement of the gospel.

But their partnership in the gospel goes much deeper than that. It also includes the fellowship of his sufferings, that is their suffering for their faith in Christ in the face of opposition.

Paul says to them, for it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ, that you should not only believe in him, but also suffer for his sake.

Engaged in the same conflict that you saw I had, and now hear that I still have. when Paul wrote this letter, as we have noted, he was in a Roman prison.

He was chained to one of the imperial guards, and it was known throughout the whole imperial guard and to all the rest, that his imprisonment was for his faith in Christ.

[20 : 46] Paul makes this request in prayer with joy for the church at Philippi, because of their fellowship, or their partnership in the gospel. Not only for their partnership of the benefits of the gospel by faith in Christ and their possession of the Holy Spirit and their seal for the advancement of the gospel, but also for their suffering, for their faith in Christ.

Another element in this partnership in the gospel was the witness of the church at Philippi. In chapter 2, verse 15 to 16, we read there, that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation among whom you shine as lights in the world, holding fast to the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I may be proud that I did not run in vain or labour in vain.

Paul was able to witness to every guard to whom he was chained over days and years, and in this way he reached with the gospel to most of the imperial guard.

And this example of Paul had an effect upon the other Christians. And most of the brothers, having become confident in the Lord by my imprisonment, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.

you see, it is important to appreciate the breadth of the Philippians' involvement in this partnership in the gospel.

[22 : 27] This filled Paul with joyful thankfulness whenever he thought of them. From the time of their reception of the gospel, from the time that they came to accept the gospel, until now, they have continued to believe the gospel, and to support the spreading of the gospel, and they have continued to meet with their needs.

They have continued to suffer for their faith in Christ, and they have continued to witness of their faith in Christ in very difficult circumstances.

All that is included in partnership with the gospel. The benefits of the gospel in Christ. Their possession of the Holy Spirit.

Their seal for the advancement of the gospel. Their suffering for their faith, and their witness in very difficult circumstances. All that is included here when Paul speaks with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now.

But as we noted, the witness of the gospel is always something that is under threat, not only from without, but also from within. This is why we must always guard our fellowship in the gospel.

[23 : 56] Paul was aware that this unity or fellowship, this partnership in the gospel was under threat and could cause divisions. We sometimes divide ourselves from other Christians because of very trivial reasons.

It may be that they come from a different ethnic background or from a different culture or we speak a different language. We believe that we are right and that they are wrong.

But the truth is that we are all equally sinners and are all equally recipients of the grace of God and that should overcome all divisions that we impose.

We must remember that this is something that we all have in common. The slave girl, the business woman, the Roman jailer, they had all this in common.

They were all sinners. They had that in common. And the other thing that they had in common and he had brought under this view of the partnership in the gospel is that they were all recipients of the grace of God.

[25 : 10] Having that in mind, Paul now comes to express his confidence and I am sure of this, that he who has begun a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.

He who has begun a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ. That verse is really a continuation of what we have in verse five where he speaks of a partnership in the gospel.

It's a continuation from there. But here Paul raises the survival of this partnership in the gospel above human endeavors and activities and to, he raises it up to the true founder of all the partnership in the gospel.

And he is assured that God who began this partnership will bring it to completion in their glorification in the day of Jesus Christ.

Paul's confidence was based upon the one who had begun this work in them. I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.

[26 : 43] All those who had this partnership in the gospel, all those who had this partnership with him in the gospel, he was assured that they all would be brought to this work of completion, which is glorification at the day of Jesus Christ.

Paul's confidence was based upon the one who began this work in them. The one who began the work of bringing them into the partnership of the gospel, into the fellowship of the gospel.

Paul was therefore confident that he would continue to perform this work in them until the day of Jesus Christ.

This good work was begun and continued by God until the day of Jesus Christ. Well, what good work is this? Well, there is no doubt that it speaks of the good work of salvation, that it speaks of the work of grace in the soul of an individual, and how can we have confidence that where God has begun that work, we can have this confidence that he will continue and that he will bring that work that he has begun, that he will bring it to completion, that he will bring it to perfection.

God never begins a work and gives it up our way. He will complete what he has begun. This good work that God began in the believers at Philippi was the beginning of a partnership in the gospel.

[28 : 32] It was the beginning of a fellowship in the gospel. It was the formation of a community of believers who had certain things in common, those things that we have already mentioned.

Where salvation has begun, it will be completed in the day of Jesus Christ. Tonight you may be very conscious of your own imperfections.

Nevertheless, where salvation has begun, it will be brought to completion. It will be brought to perfection. In spite of all our imperfection, in spite of the sin that has so easily beset us, in spite of our thoughts, even our very imagination that makes us slaves to sin, despite all the division that mars our partnership in the gospel, it shall all be brought to perfection.

It shall all be brought to completion. He will bring it to perfection, or completion, in the day of Jesus Christ.

Now, what day is this? What day is he speaking of? Well, he is speaking here to the second coming of Christ. The future of the partnership in the gospel is secure as the good work of God until the day of Jesus Christ.

[30 : 08] What is the apex of this work? This work that he has begun in us, what is the apex of that work?

Well, the apex of that work. We read of, for example, in the book of Jude. Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great

joy.

In other words, we can simply put it like this. It is our glorification. Our glorification. Paul's anticipation of the second coming of Christ gave him confidence and strengthened him in his present suffering as he was chained to a Roman soldier.

Yet, he had this confidence, he had this strength, because his mind was thinking of the day of Jesus Christ. He was thinking of the second coming of Christ.

Suddenly, the outcome of his Roman tribunal resulted in his execution and death. He knew that it meant for him that to depart, this body meant to be with Christ.

[31 : 26] For me to live is Christ, to die is gain. And that very thought of death as a means of bringing him into the immediate presence of Christ was a comforting and encouraging prospect.

Nevertheless, he looked beyond the day of his death. He looked beyond the day of his death. He looked forward to the day of Jesus Christ.

He looked forward to the day of his bodily resurrection, which still awaits all the saints of God. No one would be glorified before another of the saints of God, because our glorification is the day of Jesus Christ.

Their glorification means our body and soul being brought together, made conformable to the body of Christ. Later on in this letter, he speaks of our vile bodies, and they are going to be transformed, and they are going to be made like into the glorious body of Christ.

And that will not happen until the day of Jesus Christ, until the day of his return. We must remember that our redemption brings more than our souls.

[32 : 48] Our redemption brings our body and soul. Our body and soul has been redeemed, has been redeemed by Jesus Christ.

And while our body is still in the grave, it is united to Christ, remember that. And that is because the body is still precious to Christ.

It is still part of his redemptive price. It is still part of his redemption. And while our body goes back to dust, while our body crumbles in the grave, yet it is precious in God's sight, because it is still part of the redemption that was purchased by Christ.

And so Paul looks for that day, the day of Christ's return, when there will be a bodily resurrection, and when the body and soul will be glorified, made like unto the glorious body of Christ, where we shall receive the apex of our redemption, and when body and soul will enter into the inheritance to be with the Lord forevermore.

this day beyond death, which he anticipates, the day when, at the name of Jesus, every knee will bow in heaven and on earth, and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

[34 : 21] that day for which we await the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.

On that day, the partnership or fellowship will be perfect and complete in all the aspects that we have considered tonight. When Paul prayed for the Christians at Philippi, he was confident for them all because he knew that it was right for him to feel that way about them all and to hold them all into his heart because they were all partakers with them of grace, of the grace of God in Jesus Christ. It is right for me to feel this way about you all because I hold you in my heart for you are all partakers with me of grace. If we properly exercise the grace of God, it should bring us together to unite us, not to divide us.

It should bring us into the true fellowship in the gospel. Paul, as he thought of the group of believers that made up the church at Philippi, diverse as they were, coming from all different backgrounds, but he was filled with joy, holding them all to his heart that he holds them all with the highest affection.

And although they were miles apart, they were at Philippi and he was in a Roman prison, chained to a guard. They were out of his sight. Nevertheless, they were never out of his mind.

[36 : 13] Partakers of the grace of God in Christ Jesus, brought them into a partnership, into a fellowship in the gospel.

Paul's affection for the church at Philippi flows from his experience of their partnership with him, and especially at this time in the time of his imprisonment.

They were all recipients of the grace of God through Jesus Christ. They were all sinners saved by grace. God's grace is the origin, it's the basis and purpose of their partnership or their fellowship in the gospel.

They were sharing in God's grace. God's unmerited, undesigned favour was the source of all that they were, and all that they did, and all that they had, it was all because of God's grace.

In the prophets, we find a man there by Sarubabal. A vision is given to Zechariah, wherein he comes to see Sarubabal putting the top stone upon the temple.

[37 : 27] And there he puts the top stone on the temple with the shouts of grace, grace. grace to it. And that is how it is to be the experience of all the saints of God.

If I am to be in heaven, if you are to be in heaven, it is not because of anything that you have done. It is all by the grace of God and Jesus Christ.

It doesn't matter what platform we have in life, whether we're on the throne or in the gutter, if we are saved by grace. That is what is going to bring us to heaven.

Whether we are preachers of the gospel, whether we are just a person in the pew, there is no difference here. You shall enter, and the preacher shall enter heaven, purely by the grace of God and Jesus Christ.

That is what will bring us into heaven. The grace of God in Jesus Christ. That's the source of all that we are. That's the source of all that we do.

[38 : 39] It is all because of God's grace. And that's how we shall enter into heaven, by God's grace alone.

God's grace in Jesus Christ alone. And so we can be confident that if we have this partnership in the gospel, we can be confident that where he has begun a good work, that he will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.

Yes, we look beyond it today. We look beyond the day of our death. We look to the day of Jesus Christ.

We look to the return of Jesus Christ. That's a promise that he has given to us, that he is going to return.

How often do we reflect upon that promise? Upon that promise. He is coming back.

[39 : 46] He is going to return. And he is going to return to complete the work of redemption. He is going to return to complete that work that he has begun in your soul.

He is going to return to complete it. For in that day, your body will be made conformable to the body of Christ.

That day, he will transfer, sorry, he will transform, he will transform our lowly body, our vile body, to be like his glorious body, so that in body and soul we shall enter into heaven with him.

That's when the saying will be fulfilled that we are forever with the Lord. We are forever with the Lord on that day that he shall return.

Well, in the midst of all our own feelings and all our own emotions and with all our imperfections, yet if he has begun this work in your soul, then you can look beyond today and beyond the day of your death, looking to the day of his return, when he will complete that work that he has begun in your soul.

[41 : 16] What a living hope we have. What, how we should look with anticipation and expectation of the second coming of Christ.

How we should move and live and witness in this world. when we have this anticipation and great expectation of the completion of the work of our redemption.

No wonder the word ends with come Lord Jesus. It was as if there was a longing, a longing for the second coming of Christ, a longing for his return.

And you know, I am sure that if we as believers, such our hearts, there is a longing there for the second coming of Christ. Because of this anticipation and expectation that we have, that our redemption will be on that day completed.

And surely that is our desire, that is our longing, to have our redemption complete in body and in soul. May the Lord bless our thoughts.

[42 : 39] O Lord, our God, we give thanks that although we live and walk in a world that is full of imperfection, and although we mourn the imperfection that belongs to ourselves, knowing that we are still in this body of sin and how often we yield to the pressure of temptation, how often we sin against thee.

But Lord, we give thanks that thou has begun this work in the soul of thy people, and that thou art bringing that work on until that day of Christ's return, when in body and soul we'll be perfected, will be made glorious, when in body and soul we will enter into the inheritance that thou has purchased for thy people, when in body and soul we shall be forever with the Lord.

We give thanks to thee tonight for that living hope that we have, that we can look with anticipation and with great expectation to the return of thy Son, Jesus Christ, to complete the redemption of his people in body and in soul.

We ask, O Lord, that thou would watch over us during the coming days, and forgive us for all our sins, in Jesus' name. Amen. We shall bring our service to conclusion by singing from Psalm 96, which you'll find on page 359, Psalm 96, sorry, on page 360, 360, Psalm 96, at verse 10.

Sorry, I think I've given the wrong page number. It's page 359, page 359, verse 10. Among the heathens, say God reigns, the world shall steadfastly be fixed from moving.

[44 : 37] He shall judge the people righteously. Let heavens be glad before the Lord, and let the earth rejoice. Let seas and all that is therein, cry out and make a noise.

We shall sing to the end of the psalm. So that's Psalm 96, page 359, verse 10 to 13. Among the heathens, say God reigns.

Among the heathens, say God reigns, the world shall steadfastly be fixed from moving.

If he is proper, if he shall judge the people righteously.

Let heavens be glad before the Lord, and let me have rejoice.

[45 : 51] Let seas and all that is therein, cry out and make a noise.

Let fields rejoice. Let fields rejoice. Let everything, the stream above the earth.

Let woods and everything shall sing. With bloodless and with mercy.

Before the Lord, because he comes, to judge the earth from sea.

He'll judge the world with righteousness. The people rightfully.

[47 : 15] The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all, now and forevermore.

Amen.