

THANKSGIVING AND PRAYER, PT. 1; PHIL. 1:3-5 (Ed O'Leary)

TODAY, ~ WE ARE PRESSING ON IN OUR STUDY OF THIS LETTER THAT PAUL wrote to the local fellowship of believers in Philippi.

TODAY WE WILL BEGIN TO LOOK AT THE FIRST MAJOR SECTION OF PHIL., ~ 1:3-11.

▶▶ Mainly in this paragraph, ~ Paul expresses thanksgiving and prayer for these believers.

▶▶ And it's important to keep in mind, ~ as we noted last time, ~ that even though Paul was writing a very personal letter to the believers in Philippi specifically, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ the letter is for all believers of all generations in general.

↪↪ And we will draw out the general principles, ~ lessons, ~ and applications as we move through this paragraph, ~ 1:3-11.

▶▶ This a.m., ~ we'll tackle 1:3-5.

IN VERSE 3, ~ PAUL SAYS, ~ "I THANK MY GOD IN ALL MY REMEMBRANCE OF YOU."

NOW WE MUSTN'T GET THE IMPRESSION BY THE WORD "REMEMBRANCE" THAT PAUL forgot them and then remembered them and

▶▶ The Grk word means to recall information from memory, ~ but without necessarily the implication that persons have actually forgotten.

▷▷ The idea here is, ~ ¶¶

↪↪ "Every time, ~ or, ~ whenever, ~ I think of you, ~ I give thanks to my God."

EVERY TIME PAUL THOUGHT OF THE BELIEVERS IN PHILIPPI, ~ HE THANKED GOD FOR them.

▶▶ And from what he says in the letter, ~ we can see that they must have crossed his mind often.

▷▷ Reading . . . ~ held them in his heart.

↪↪ Yearned for them (in sense that he longed to see them).

→→ In chapter 4 he calls them his "joy and crown." ¶¶ 1/7

▷▷I don't think there's any doubt that these believers were often on Paul's mind.

▷▷Think about it. ~~ Paul in prison. ~~ Yet not wrapped up ~ His thoughts were of them.

↪↪David displayed a similar attitude in Ps. 3

→→Def. lesson

▶▶So whenever Paul thought about this church in Philippi, ~ which was no doubt often, ~ he thanked God for them.

▷▷Recall in Eph., ~ Paul told the Ephesian believers, ~ "I do not cease to give thanks for you."

▷▷Paul continually gave thanks for his fellow believers.

▶▶If you think about it, ~ this is the attitude that we should have toward all of our brothers and sisters in Christ.

▷▷Whenever we think of them, ~ we should thank God for them.

▷▷Someone has said: ~~ "to dwell above with saints we love, ~ will certainly be glory; ~~ to dwell below with saints we know, ~ that's another story!"

▷▷That's true sometimes, ~ isn't it

↪↪But Paul sets the example for us. ~~ We are to continually give thanks for our fellow believers.

▷▷David weighs in on this as well. ~~ In Ps. 16:3, ~ he says, ~ "As for the saints in the land, ~ they are the excellent ones, ~ in whom is all my delight."

↪↪Like David, ~ we should have the attitude that our brothers and sisters in Christ "are the excellent ones," ~ and take pleasure in them and enjoy their company.

ANOTHER POINT ON THIS THEME OF GIVING THANKS FOR OUR FELLOW BELIEVERS.

▶▶Recall that one of the reasons Paul wrote to this church was because he wanted to exhort the church to live in humility, ~ fellowship, ~ and unity.

▷▷As we noted, ~ apparently rivalry, ~ personal ambition, ~ and divisions were present among some of the believers. ↯↯ 2/7

▶▶ IOW, ~ this local fellowship of believers wasn't perfect ~ and didn't have to be perfect in order for Paul to give thanks for them.

▷▷ Didn't say to them (humility, ~ fellowship, ~ and unity)

▶▶ Paul even thanked God for the sin and problem plagued church at Corinth.

▷▷ Divisions. ~~ Infants. ~~ Sin. ~~ Not commend.

▷▷ Yet, ~ 1 Cor. 1:4, ~ "I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that was given you in Christ Jesus."

▶▶ A lesson for all of us.

▷▷ Our fellow believers don't have to be perfect before we give thanks to God for them.

↪↪ Maybe when we start thinking that, ~ we should look in the mirror.

NOW WE SHOULD MENTION IN OUR LOOK HERE AT VERSE 3 THAT THANKSGIVING TO God was a big part of Paul's life.

▶▶ When it comes to prayer, ~ too often I approach it

▷▷ Prayer lives

↪↪ As we'll see in 4:6, ~ Paul tells us, ~ ¶¶

→→ "do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God."

▶▶ But not only in prayer, ~ giving thanks to our heavenly Father needs to be a part of our daily lives.

▷▷ In Col. 3:17, ~ Paul writes, ~ "And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him."

▷▷ And in 1 Thess. 5:18a, ~ Paul declares, ~ "give thanks in all circumstances."

▶▶ So God's children are to be a thankful people.

▷▷ And when we stop to think about it, ~ we have much to be thankful for. ¶¶ 3/7

THERE'S ONE MORE THING I WOULD LIKE US TO NOTICE BACK IN PHIL. 1:3 BEFORE moving on.

▶▶ Notice Paul's wording in [verse 3](#), ~ "my God."

▶▶ This reminds us that the sovereign, ~ almighty Creator of the universe is personal.

▷▷ He's not some untouchable, ~ unknowable God.

▶▶ He is not like what deists claim, ~ that He created everything and then went off and has nothing more to do with His creation.

▶▶ No, ~ He is deeply personal and very much involved in His creation.

▷▷ In [Acts 14:17](#), ~ Paul says, ~ "Yet he did not leave himself without witness, for he did good by giving you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, satisfying your hearts with food and gladness."

▷▷ In [Ps. 145:18](#), ~ David writes, ~ "The Lord is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth."

▷▷ And in [Ps. 34:18](#), ~ David declares, ~ "The Lord is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit."

▶▶ So involved and personal is God that He "became flesh and dwelt among us."

▷▷ In [Jn. 1:11-13](#), ~ John writes, ~ "¹¹ He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. ¹² But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, ¹³ who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God."

▷▷ Everyone who puts their trust in Jesus for salvation has a personal relationship with this very personal and very involved God.

▷▷ Even more, ~ we are now children of God.

↪↪ John tells us in [1 Jn. 3:1a](#), ~ [NIV](#) ~ "See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!"

▷▷ My brothers and sisters in Christ, ~ each of us can say, ~ "God is my God," ~ "God is my Father."

↪↪ I don't know about you, ~ but I think that's pretty awesome! [11 4/7](#)

IN VERSE 4, ~ PAUL TELLS THE PHILIPPIAN BELIEVERS THAT HIS HEART IS FILLED with joy every time he prays for them.

"ALWAYS IN EVERY PRAYER OF MINE FOR YOU ALL MAKING MY PRAYER WITH JOY."

▶▶ The translation here is a little clunky. ~~ This happens on the more literal end of the translation spectrum.

▷▷ The NIV does a good job smoothing it out in their paraphrase and makes it a little easier to understand.

↪↪ "In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy."

▶▶ Now, ~ in the Greek text, ~ Paul emphasizes the phrase "with joy" by placing it first in the second clause.

▷▷ "In all my prayers for all of you, ~ with joy I always pray."

↪↪ So not only does it make Paul joyful when he prays for these believers, ~ it makes him very joyful, ~ very happy.

AND WHAT'S SIGNIFICANT HERE IS THAT ALL THIS GREAT JOY, ~ THAT PAUL HAS when he prays for them, ~ is set against the backdrop of him being in chains.

▶▶ Paul was a prisoner in Rome.

▶▶ It's one thing to be joyful when things are fine and going well. ~~ And it's quite easy.

▶▶ It's a totally different thing and quite difficult to be joyful, ~ let alone very joyful, ~ when things are not going so well or even very badly.

▶▶ And yet, ~ this is exactly what Paul demonstrated despite his not-so-good circumstances.

▷▷ Paul not writing this from cushy office in "Ivory Tower Theological Seminary."

▷▷ He's writing this from prison, ~ probably more specifically under house arrest in Rome, ~ unsure if he would live or die.

↪↪ Even then he was rejoicing.

→→ In 2:17, ~ he says, ~ "Even if I am to be poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrificial offering of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all." ↯↯ 5/7

▶▶ Though Paul wrote his letter to the Philippians from prison, ~ in the midst of personal suffering, ~ he maintains the steadfast joy that he instructs believers to maintain.

▷▷ Considering Paul's circumstances and great joy in the midst of them, ~ Paul's instruction to us is not unreasonable.

↪↪ No one can say to Paul

↪↪ [2 Cor. 11:24-28](#)

▶▶ So what was Paul's secret?

▷▷ Was he some super-hero saint?

▷▷ No. ~~ He was able to maintain his joy because it was rooted in his relationship with Jesus and not in his circumstances. ~~ [Acts 16](#) . . . ~ "praying and singing hymns"

▷▷ Circumstance-based joy flees at the first sign of trouble.

▷▷ As we noted last time, ~ the joy that is rooted in our relationship with Jesus will burn brightly and will withstand anything thrown at it.

↪↪ Perhaps we should rephrase the question from last time and ask it again.

→→ "Is my joy grounded in my circumstances or in my relationship with Jesus?"

IN VERSE 5, ~ PAUL TELLS THE BELIEVERS IN PHILIPPI WHY HIS HEART IS FILLED with joy every time he prays for them.

"BECAUSE OF YOUR PARTNERSHIP IN THE GOSPEL FROM THE FIRST DAY UNTIL NOW."

▶▶ Paul's heart was filled with joy because the believers in Philippi had been his partners in spreading the good news about Christ, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ from the time they first heard it and were saved right up to the time Paul wrote to them.

▶▶ It is thought that Paul founded the church around a. d. 51 and wrote this letter between a. d. 60-62.

▷▷ So for somewhere between 9 and 11 years, ~ these believers joined Paul in the work of spreading the gospel. ¶¶ 6/7

BUT HOW DID THEY HELP?

▶▶No.

▷▷Most likely Paul is referring to their providing help for his needs. ~~ 4:15-18 shows this to be the case.

↪↪4:15-18

▶▶So, ~ my brothers and sisters in Christ here at NHCC, ~ financially supporting the missionaries that we do is no minor thing.

▷▷We are actually partnering with them to spread the good news of Jesus.

ONE MORE THING WE SHOULD MAKE NOTE OF FROM VERSE 5 BEFORE WRAPPING IT UP for today.

▶▶For between 9 & 11 yrs. ~~ Faithful givers.

▶▶Generous

▷▷2 Cor. 8:1-4

▷▷These believers were being tested by many troubles, ~ and were extremely poor. ~~ Yet they were filled with abundant joy, ~ these things could not rob them of their joy. ~~

▷▷And their joy overflowed in rich generosity. ~~ They gave not only what they could afford, ~ but far more. ~~ And they did it of their own free will.

▷▷Look at this, ~ they were begging for the privilege of sharing in the gift for the believers in Jerusalem.

▶▶Generous and faithful ~~ Examples

CONCLUSION. 7/7