

THANKSGIVING AND PRAYER, PT. 3; PHIL. 1:7-8 (Ed O'Leary)

INTRODUCTION.

TODAY, ~ OF COURSE, ~ WE CONTINUE OUR LOOK AT THE FIRST MAJOR SECTION OF Paul's very personal letter, ~ Phil. 1:3-11.

▶▶ This a.m., ~ we'll examine *verses 7-8*.

AFTER HIS PARENTHETICAL COMMENT, ~ PAUL GET'S BACK ON TRACK IN VERSE 7a.

PICKING UP FROM VERSE 5, ~ HE SAYS, ~ "IT IS RIGHT FOR ME TO FEEL THIS WAY about you all."

▶▶ To what does "this way" refer? ~ Most likely it refers back to Paul's main points in *verses 3-5*.

▷▷ And that is: ~ he gave thanks for them whenever he thought about them; ~ and praying for them made him very joyful.

▷▷ So in *verse 7*, ~ Paul is most likely saying, ~ "It is right for me to be thankful and joyful about you all."

▶▶ As I understand it, ~ the word "right" can be looked at as saying "natural."

▷▷ So Paul is most likely saying that it was natural for him to be thankful for ~ and joyful about ~ these believers.

IN VV. 7b-7c, ~ PAUL TELLS THEM WHY IT WAS NATURAL FOR HIM TO FEEL THIS way.

HERE I'LL LIST THEM BRIEFLY FOR YOU AND THEN EXPAND ON EACH ONE.

▶▶ It was natural for Paul to be thankful for & joyful about these believers because: ~ ~ ¶¶

▷▷ 1st, ~ he held them in his heart; ~ ~ ¶¶

▷▷ And 2nd, ~ Paul says, ~ "for you are all partakers with me of grace, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel." ~ ~ Expand

1st, ~ IN VERSE 7b, ~ PAUL SAYS THAT IT IS "BECAUSE I HOLD YOU IN MY heart."

I.E., ~ THEY WERE VERY DEAR TO HIM. ¶¶ 1/7

▶▶ Because Paul had a deep personal affection for these believers, ~ being thankful and joyful regarding them was a natural result.

WHEN WE HAVE A DEEP PERSONAL AFFECTION FOR OUR FELLOW BELIEVERS, ~ THE natural result will be to thank God for them and to be joyful about them.

▶▶ If we find ourselves complaining about or criticizing our brothers and sisters in Christ, ~ we need to check our hearts to see if they are dear to us.

▷▷ And if they are not, ~ then we need to ask the Holy Spirit to work within us until we develop a deep personal affection for them.

▶▶ Jesus wants us be thankful and joyful regarding our fellow believers so we need to

▶▶ Additionally, ~ when our fellow believers are very dear to us, ~ it will be much easier ~ I think, ~ to forgive them for any wrongs they have done to us. ~~

▷▷ And we are to forgive them btw. ~~ And there are to be no limits on how many times we are to forgive our fellow believers.

▷▷ Matt. 18:21-22. ~ NASB ~ "Then Peter came and said to Him, 'Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Up to seven times?' Jesus said to him, 'I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven.'"

↪↪ Jesus is not saying ~ that we should keep track ~ and when a fellow believer sins against us the 491st time, ~ we don't have to forgive them any longer. ~~ No!

↪↪ Rather, ~ this statement that Jesus made means not to keep track of numbers at all. ~~ IOW, ~ Jesus is putting no limits on forgiveness.

→→ There is to be no limit to a believer's forgiveness of another believer.

▶▶ When we have a deep personal affection for our fellow believers, ~ it will be much easier ~ I believe, ~ to forgive them for any wrongs they have committed against us.

▶▶ Now, ~ it's extremely important to understand that having a deep personal affection for our fellow believers doesn't mean that we are not to rebuke them when they are in sin.

▷▷ Prov. 27:5 says, ~ "Better is open rebuke than hidden love." ~~ I.e., ~ "It is better to correct someone openly than to hide your love for them."

↪↪ Jesus demonstrated this with the church at Laodicea. ~~ Rev. 3:19, ~ NIV ~ "Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest and repent." ⇓ 2/7

▷▷ Prov. 27:6a says, ~ "Faithful are the wounds of a friend."

↳↳ Sometimes true friends "wound" each other in order to bring repentance or spiritual healing.

↳↳ Just as a doctor must sometimes cut us in surgery in order to remove what is killing us, ~ true friends sometimes say things that aren't easy but are necessary to hear.

▷▷ And in Matt. 18:15, ~ Jesus said, ~ "If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother."

▷▷ Recall that we had said that Paul even thanked God for the sin-and-problem-plagued church at Corinth. ~~ Safe to assume he had a deep personal affection for them too.

↳↳ And he rebuked them over and over.

BACK TO VERSE 7b. ~~ SO PAUL HAD A DEEP PERSONAL AFFECTION FOR HIS FELLOW BELIEVERS.

▶▶ This attitude was the total opposite of the one he had toward believers before he met Jesus and was saved. ~~ Acts 7:58 - 8:3 ~ 9:1-2 ~ 9:17-22

▶▶ Paul is an example of the radical change that Jesus brings about in the lives of those who put their faith and trust for salvation in Him.

▷▷ But not only at salvation, ~ throughout our Christian lives Jesus brings about radical changes in our lives

▶▶ Paul is also an example that even the worst of sinners is not beyond the reach of Jesus.

▷▷ As we saw, ~ Paul persecuted the church and even condoned Steven's murder.

▷▷ But Jesus didn't hold this against Paul. ~~ Jesus didn't refuse to forgive Paul. ~~ Jesus forgives all who come to Him in true repentance.

↳↳ Paul testifies to this ~ in 1 Tim. 1:12-14

▷▷ Even the vilest of sinners who come to Jesus in true repentance and call out to Him for salvation will be forgiven and become a new creation in Christ.

▷▷ O perfect redemption, the purchase of blood, To ev'ry believer the promise of God; The vilest offender who truly believes, That moment from Jesus a pardon receives.

▷▷ But we must sound a warning here. ~ There's a shelf life on this promise. ~ It's good for this life only.

↪↪ As Heb. 9:27 tells us, ~ "it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment."

↪↪ Paul clearly makes this point in 2 Cor. 6:2b. ~ "Behold, now is the favorable time; behold, now is the day of salvation."

→→ An urgent call

▶▶ So Paul is an example that even the worst of sinners is not beyond the reach of the Savior. ~ Application for believers here as well.

▷▷ Sometimes when we sin we may think that God could never forgive us ~ The enemy

▷▷ But that's not true. ~ God will always forgive us.

↪↪ 1 Jn. 1:9 ~ tells us, ~ "If we confess our sins, ~ he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

→→ Simply, ~ when we admit that we've sinned and take responsibility

OK, ~ TO RECAP THE FIRST REASON WHY IT WAS NATURAL FOR PAUL TO BE THANKFUL for & joyful about these believers.

▶▶ He had a deep, ~ personal affection for them.

IN VERSE 7c, ~ WE SEE THE SECOND REASON PAUL WAS THANKFUL for and joyful about them.

PAUL SAYS, ~ "FOR YOU ARE ALL PARTAKERS WITH ME OF GRACE, BOTH IN MY imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel."

▶▶ This is a little hard to understand.

▶▶ I ask your patience as we lay some groundwork to help us understand what's going on.

▶▶ "partakers" reminds us of verse 5 where Paul said that they were partnering with him. ~ And that was in the sense of providing help for his needs.

▶▶ The phrase "you are all partakers" could be expressed as "you have all helped me." ↯ 4/7

▶▶ The word "grace" in this context probably refers to Paul's ministry. ~~ NT defines

▷▷ Recall that in Eph. 2:7, ~ Paul used the word "grace" to refer to his gift of apostleship.

▷▷ And elsewhere he used it to refer to his ministry.

▶▶ So, ~ perhaps we could paraphrase verse 7c this way.

▷▷ "All of you have helped me in the ministry that God has given me, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel."

▶▶ Ok, ~ what is the point he's making here? ~~ Notice the last phrase

▷▷ Here, ~ no doubt, ~ is the point he was making.

↪↪ He was thankful and joyful regarding these believers because they have never failed to stand with him, ~ whether under arrest or free.

THINK ABOUT IT. ~~ THEY WERE NOT ONLY FAIR-WEATHER FRIENDS.

▶▶ They didn't abandon Paul or the gospel at the first sign of trouble. ~~ They stayed faithful, ~ through thick and thin.

▶▶ These believers were not intimidated by the mighty Roman empire or its Caesar!

▷▷ They stayed true to Paul and, ~ more importantly, ~ to Jesus.

▶▶ They set a great example for all the believers that have come after them, ~ including us, ~ believers here at NHCC.

▷▷ And especially in the light of current events, ~ let us follow their example in staying faithful to Jesus no matter what, ~ !!

↪↪ and set an example for all the believers who will follow us.

▷▷ There's a chorus to a Christian song that maybe we should turn into a prayer.

↪↪ Oh may all who come behind us find us faithful. ~~ May the fire of our devotion light their way.

→→ May the footprints that we leave ~ Lead them to believe, ~ And the lives we live inspire them to obey. ~~ Oh may all who come behind us find us faithful.

THEN IN VERSE 8, ~ PAUL EXPRESSES HIS LONGING FOR THESE BELIEVERS.

"FOR GOD IS MY WITNESS, HOW I YEARN FOR YOU ALL WITH THE AFFECTION OF Christ Jesus."

▶▶ The word translated "yearn" should be understood as meaning that Paul longs above all to see the Philippians again.

▷▷ Perhaps it can be paraphrased this way: ~ "God himself knows how much I want to see you."

▶▶ Believers always want to be with other believers.

▷▷ I know I do. ~ Every week, ~ I look forward to worshipping and fellowshiping with you on Sunday.

↪↪ When we think about it, ~ it is a very precious, ~ uplifting, ~ and necessary thing to worship and fellowship with other members of the family of God.

AND LET'S THINK ABOUT THIS.

▶▶ Due to his imprisonment, ~ Paul was unable to worship and fellowship with these believers.

▷▷ And he longed to do so.

▶▶ We, ~ believers here at NHCC, ~ should never take it for granted that we are free to gather together every week.

▷▷ Nor should we treat our church attendance flippantly.

↪↪ Like church is just some type of social event

▶▶ The author of Hebrews says, ~ in Heb. 10:24-25, ~ "24 And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, 25 not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near."

▷▷ Some people have gotten out of the habit of meeting for worship, ~ but we must not do that, ~ the author of Hebrews says.

▶▶ We need to understand the importance and necessity of regularly worshipping and fellowshiping with other believers.

▷▷ Here's some homework for you. ~ This week list as many reasons ↵ 6/7

CONCLUSION.

WELL, ~ THAT'S AS FAR AS WE GO TODAY.

▶▶ I invite you to ponder these things this week.

▶▶ After I pray, ~ we'll sing "Revive Us Again." ~ Encourage: ~ sing it from the heart and make it a prayer today.

LET'S PRAY 7/7