

Intro:

Phil 1:3-11

³ I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, ⁴ always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, ⁵ because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. ⁶ 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.

⁷ 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 defense and confirmation of the gospel. ⁸ For God is my witness, how I yearn for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus.

⁹ And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, ¹⁰ so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, ¹¹ filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

This is the word of the Lord

Paul is being pretty clear with his feelings isn't he. He's expressing his love for the church and how their love and care for him has meant so much. Paul is pointing out also, how God is involved in this and so we find Paul expressing his love towards God and thanks what God has done. Christians, let me encourage you, God has gathered a people who, he desires for himself, and part of his plan and desire for his people, is for them to have deep affections for him and for one another.

And then there is this element of what's come. Future facing right. He mentions "day of Christ" twice, in this short passage of words. Look with me again, v6 "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." And v10 "and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ".

So yes, Paul is thanking them and by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, teaching us, the implications of a sweet partnership together in the gospel. But also, Paul has this long game in mind. Paul is arguing that the

“Providence of God produces truth-bound thanks and affections, so that the church will endure to the end”

Point 1: The gospel leads to thanksgiving vv3-6

Point 2: The gospel leads to godly affection vv7-8

Point 3: Through thanksgiving and godly affection, God’s people endure to the end vv9-11

Point 1, the gospel leads to thanksgiving.

Our passage starts with thanksgiving. Paul is giving thanks to God right there in verse 3. “I thank my God in all my remembrance of you”. Now don’t forget the context, Paul is in prison. A natural disposition for anyone in his state would be the opposite of thanksgiving. Right, he’s in a Roman prison. Now Paul was doing what God has called him to be doing, and what does he get in return? Chains. God has sovereignly placed Paul in prison for doing the very thing that glorifies God. But Paul is filled with thanksgiving. And not only that, Paul is giving credit to God for his thankful heart.

Christians, do you know where thankfulness comes from? It comes from remembering who we are in Christ, and who we use to be without Christ. When we remember this, our hearts are driven to thankfulness. When we meditate on this reality, circumstances all around us, loose impact on the deeper reality of God’s incredible, perfect provision. Thankfulness is what leads us to having hearts that are content, no matter what the circumstances are, we find ourselves confident in God’s sovereign provision. So, Christians, remember what Christ has done. Remind yourselves of his grace and mercy and how unworthy we are of this providential gift of forgiveness.

Well Paul is saying he is thankful to God for this church in Philippi. What is he thankful for? For their partnership in the gospel v5.

They have partnered with him. Later in our text Paul will explain how exactly they are partnering, both in his imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel v7. They selflessly gave to keep Paul alive in prison, not just for his life but for the sake of the gospel. They were driven by the grace of God to care and love Paul. Keep in mind, going out of your way to support and provide for a prisoner of Rome would be no meek or mild thing. I just wrote a letter to someone I know who is incarcerated. This was no bold act. The state is not going to see my letter and then somehow consider me an enemy of the state. No, letters go freely back and forth. But in Rome, affiliation with a prisoner who is in prison because of his faith, his faith which is indirect rejection of Rome, well that's a whole other matter. They were risking their lives by partnering with Paul.

Sovereign Hope Church, does the sovereign hope of God drive you to boldly and selflessly partner with one another and with others, in the gospel? Has what you have in Christ compelled you to live like the church in Philippi.

Their partnership, was not only their life-giving support of Paul, but in their faithful response to God's salvation. This is what Paul means by "partnership in the gospel, from the first day until now." Verse 5 again. Paul was saying, that from the day they were saved, they had been going about their lives, proclaiming this good news. Despite what had happened to Paul, this church in Philippi is boldly boasting of Jesus Christ and the salvation he offers.

Have you ever met someone who has just been saved? They often can't help but boast of the cross. They aren't concerned about social rejection or being considered a weirdo. No, they are often overwhelmed by the love and forgiveness of Christ Jesus and want to share it to all who will hear. What a beautiful picture of what it looks like to respond to the sweet provision of God.

The church in Philippi were being faithful ever since the day they were saved and Paul is confident that they will be doing so until the day of Christ Jesus our Lord.

Why the confidence? How could Paul say, I am sure?

Who is Paul confident in?

Paul sees the fruit of the people, and gives praise to the one whom produces such fruit, God almighty. It is he who began the good work and it is he who will carry it on until the day Christ Jesus.

Praise be to God for it is he who begins this good work in us, saving us from our sin; and it is God who continues this good work, causing hearts to repent and believe, causing his people to fall before the Lord in repentance and seek his forgiveness and love. Praise be to God, for his salvation and ongoing sanctification.

Non-Christian, whether it seems to be true or not, whether you believe and accept this or not, God tells us that all; you, me, the person sitting next to you, all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. You know what that means? It means a part from Christ Jesus, you have been judged and found guilty. And not by just any judge, but the creator of heaven and earth, the perfect judge.

But it is that same judge, that same creator of all, who with grace and mercy sent his Son to take the punishment we deserve through his death on the cross. And it was Jesus alone, truly God and truly man, who was able to conquer death and rose again so that any who believe in him might share in his glory, clothed in his righteousness, in his blameless state be pure, and have eternal life. This is the greatest news. Do not ignore it. Please find someone to talk after the service.

And this, Christians, is why we are thankful. This provision is greater than any gift, any economic status, power, house, job, friendships. That we might be saved and have Christ our Lord is the greatest news that causes our hearts to rejoice and be thankful.

With thankful hearts, this provision from God

Point 2 The church then, has godly affection

Paul says the church in Philippi is in his heart. (verse 7). It would be right for you to understand that any fruit that comes from the church plant in Taiwan would be attributed to you because of your partnership in this gospel work. Do you understand that. This is just one example, there are many ways you are partnering in the gospel and Lord willing, many more ways you will be partnering in the gospel.

God is using his people, as they partner with one another, to defend and proclaim the gospel. This of course is not reason to boast, but rather praise God almighty and say let us take his provision, and partner with one another and see God glorified among all nations.

Do you have a heart for the nations? God does. But let me be clear, the nations are all around us. God may have made you to thrive well in a cross-cultural context. But don't hear this and think oh I'm for sure going. You need the church to partner with you and you need to partner with the church. In other words, you need to pour into the life of the church. Partner with what is before you. The question to be asked is, does my partnership with one another reflect the affection of Christ Jesus? Are you loving Christ's bride, your church family and those around you, in a Christ-like way?

Multiple ways this can play out. Your love for other will be based on the gospel, not what you get out of the relationship but based on what you have been given in Christ Jesus. You will love those who are not like you. Your love will not be purely based on ease or even efficiency. You will seek after those whom you are in covenant with here at Sovereign Hope and seek ways to care love one another, pointing them to the gospel. Or even this, your love will extend to difficult ones to love. The ones that are rough around the edges, the ones you don't necessarily look forward to loving. Your love will not be based on pride or self-interest, but pure as the love that is found in Christ is pure. Because of the gospel, because of God's provision, our affections for one another and for God become Christlike.

And finally point 3

Because of the provision of God, we have thankful hearts and a godly affection for one another, and as a result, God's people endure to the end.

Here's Paul's prayer. (verse 9-11)

Our love requires growth, there is a necessary progression. None of us are born with a natural ability to love in a pure and godly way. The opposite actually, because of our sin, everything is tainted. But because of God's provision, we are able. Because of Christ's work on the cross, we are cleansed and can love like he loves. The question is, what is this love? Well, let me start with what it isn't. This kind of love is not merely an expression or feeling. It requires a knowledge and every kind of discernment. If we are to love as we are called to, we must be tethered to knowledge and every kind of discernment that comes God's word. There's no way around it. We cannot love with wisdom and pure motives without the gospel.

This is why we gather as the local church. And this is why our gatherings ought to be centered around God's word. As individuals, we desire to be independent, and unfortunately, we desire to be independent from God; especially from God sometimes. And so, we lean on our own understanding, rather than his truth. And like the original sin in the garden, we reject God's word. I want to be my own king; I want to be my own authority.

How thankful of a heart do you think exists, when I am my own authority? How can I love like Christ, when all that I love is me? This is not a description of child of God and certainly not one that Paul would say, "I am certain he who began a good work in you will complete until the day of Christ."

This is not the fruit of someone who has been transformed by the gospel. But how often are we guilty of this heart posture. How often, do I lean on my own understanding?

And yet, still, God pursues. While we were still sinners, he sent his son on our behalf. By God's grace our sin is exposed and the lies of boasting and pride are revealed. Brothers and sisters in Christ, see your deep need for God, yes, your deep need for his grace and mercy, that grace and mercy that is revealed to us in his word.

Our need to listen and obey so prevalent, so utterly dire. If we want to see fruit of righteousness in our lives, we must have a love that is bound by his truth. We must submit ourselves to the

life-giving word of God. And by grace, because of the salvation we have in Christ and in Christ alone, we endure until the day of Christ Jesus our Lord.

So beloved, because of the gospel, have thankful hearts and Christlike affection that is marked by partnering in the gospel; and by his grace, the church endures to the end.