



Paul's Epistle to the Philippians

Philippians 1:1-5 - Greeting and Prayer

- ***Phil 1:1 - Paul and Timothy, bondservants of Jesus Christ, To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, with the bishops and deacons:***
 - The standard salutation: Writer, to the Addressee, Greetings
 - So, what about *Timothy (Timotheos - he who honors God)*?
 - Constable – ‘Timothy was an associate of Paul's and may have served as his secretary as Paul dictated this letter, but Timothy was not the co-author. The Philippians knew him since he had been with Paul when Paul had founded the church in Philippi (*Acts 16:1-12*) and on subsequent occasions (*Acts 19:22; 20:3-6*). Now Timothy was with Paul in Rome during Paul's house arrest there.’
 - Why does Paul describe Timothy and himself as *bondservants of Jesus Christ*?
 - McCalley – ‘Their backgrounds were as diverse as they could be—different in nationality, age, background, position, and experience. Despite this, they found a unity in their relationship of common submission to Jesus Christ.’



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- *bondservant (doulos)*- one who gives himself up wholly to another's will.
 - Isn't this the exchanged life?
 - » *Phil 1:21 – For to me to live is Christ*
 - To whom is this letter being addressed?
 - Why *all saints* and just not some (those *set apart*) – here *to Christ Jesus*?
 - Of interest, in no other of his epistles did Paul address the elders and deacons of the church, specifically in the salutation. – why?
 - Describe *bishops* and *deacons*.
 - *bishops (episkopos)* – best described as an *overseer*, perhaps an elder of the local church, who makes sure that things are done correctly.
 - *deacons (diakonos)* - one who, by virtue of the office assigned to him by the church, cares for the poor and has charge of and distributes the money collected for their use (Strong).
 - Is their role today?
- ***Phil 1:2 - Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.***



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- What do you find interesting about this greeting?
 - *grace (charis)* – is this *unmerited favor* or in general *good-will, loving-kindness, and favor*?
 - **Wuest** – ‘In the case of the Greek, the favor was done to a friend, never an enemy. In the case of God, it was an enemy, the sinner, bitter in his hatred of God, for whom the favor was done. God has no strings tied to the salvation He procured for man at the Cross. Salvation is given the believing sinner out of the pure generosity of God's heart.’
 - *peace (eirēnē)* – the tranquil state of a soul assured of its salvation through Christ, and so fearing nothing from God and content with its earthly lot, of whatsoever sort that is (Strong).
 - Is this *peace* of God or *peace* with God?
- ***Phil 1:3-5 - I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine making request for you all with joy, for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now,***



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- All of Paul's epistles except *Galatians*, begin in a similar manner with thanksgiving, indicative of a warm sentiment.
- How's this for a message to be received by the Philippian church?
- Does Paul really mean *every* or *all remembrance*?
 - Wuest – ‘The word "every" in the Greek text has the idea of "whole."’
 - McCalley – ‘The word *all* shows that Paul does not have a specific incident in mind for which he is thankful, but rather is referring to his total experience with them.’
- *in every prayer of mine*
 - Remember, Paul is praying from hi jail in Rome.
 - However, might this reflect what Paul says about prayer elsewhere?
 - » *1 Thess 5:17 - pray without ceasing,*
- *making request for you all with joy*
 - *for you all* indicates that Paul desires to declare his love for *all alike* and will not recognize any divisions among them.



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- *joy* – in part, a theme of this epistle!
 - » See *Phil 2:17-18, 3:1, 4:4, 10*
- How should we interpret *fellowship (koinonia)* here?
 - McCalley – ‘Fellowship is viewed three ways in Philippians. First, there was fellowship with Christ, which was revealed in suffering (*1:29*). Second, there was fellowship with one another, which was revealed in unity (*2:1-11*). Finally, there was fellowship with Paul, which was revealed in financial giving (*4:16*).’
 - Constable – ‘The fellowship in view, as the use of this word in the New Testament indicates, means sharing together with mutual activity and mutual benefit in a close bond. Partnership in the gospel includes partnership with God and with other believers that the gospel makes possible. It also involves participation in the work of getting the gospel to people. The Philippians had recently sent Paul a gift (*4:10-14*) and had done so more than once before (*4:16; 2 Cor. 11:9*). However, Paul's use of *koinonia* here implies a broader meaning than just physical assistance. It probably includes all that Paul and his readers shared as committed Christians who sought to disseminate the gospel.’
 - » How does this reflect on our fellowship today?
 - I like Wuest's translation of verse 5 better:



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- *'I am constantly thanking my God for your joint-participation in the furtherance of the gospel from the first day until this particular moment.'*
 - *first day* - reflects on Paul's past and more recent events in/from the church at Philippi beginning with Lydia, the Philippian jailer, to the gift from Epaphroditus.