

# Philippians 1

# Partnership in the Gospel

Introduction

Thanksgiving  
and Prayer  
1:1-11

Advancing  
the Gospel  
1:12-18

To Live Is  
Christ  
1:19-30

Conclusions



<https://www.pinterest.com/pin/loannis-tz-on-twitter-the-ancient-greek-theatre-of-ephesus-3rd-cbc-httpstcoqhxqatrn5-twitter--371265563039383545/>

# Introduction

- The **city of Philippi** was an official Roman colony, largely settled over the years by retired Roman soldiers - so citizens of Philippi were citizens of Rome
- The **church in Philippi** is the first church Paul planted in what we would today call **Europe**.
- It is the place Paul went to after receiving his **Macedonian Call**.
- Many believe the pastor there was **Luke**.
- To get the backstory on the Philippian church we can turn to **Acts 16**.

Important  
Topics in  
Philippians

What's in  
Philippians 1?

Key Verses



# Five Important Topics in This Letter

- 1. Joy and Rejoicing** - especially in the midst of trials and suffering. The words **joy** or **rejoice** appear **15x**.
- 2. Partnership or Fellowship (*koinōnia*) in the Gospel** - Even when it is not mentioned, we can see that Paul felt a close bond with this church. They were true partners who shared in his ministry.
- 3. The Gospel Itself** – The word itself appears **9x** in this short letter. **Six** of those times are in **Chapter 1**.
- 4. A Right Attitude** - Focusing on humility, unity, a godly mentality.
- 5. The Importance of a Good Example** - Paul will point to several, including himself.

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# What's in Philippians 1?

- Paul begins with **gratitude** for the partnership that the Philippians have maintained with him in the gospel. They supported him and his ministry financially.
- He tells the church how **his trials** have only served to **advance** the cause of the gospel.
- Paul opens up about his **inward attitude**, providing an example for the Philippians and for us.
- He mentions **the gospel 6x, joy or rejoice 4x** and **the day of Christ 2x**.

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# Key Verses

## **Philippians 1:6**

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.

## **Philippians 1:18**

What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed, and in that I rejoice.

## **Philippians 1:21**

For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

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## Thanksgiving and Prayer 1:1-11

- In this opening section we can already see Paul's close and affectionate relationship with the church in Philippi.
- This is not a church in which Paul mainly highlights trouble.
  - We do not have the gross disunity and flagrant sin that we saw in Corinth.
  - We don't see the departure from the gospel that appeared in Galatia.
- Instead we see consistent and persistent partnership (*koinonia*) in the gospel.

Paul's  
Gratitude

Paul's  
Confidence

Paul's  
Prayer



# Paul's Gratitude

From Grant  
Osborne

- Paul had good reason to be thankful for this church.
- By the time he writes this letter he had been held in Roman custody for about four years.
- That was plenty of time for life to move on and for their ties to Paul to become less secure.
- Yet that did not happen.
- This church instead developed a deep friendship with Paul over the years that continued to bear fruit in the midst of Paul's most difficult trials.



Grant R. Osborne (1942 - 2018)  
Trinity Evangelical Divinity School

In Philippians, the main thing that defines believers "in Christ" is their rejection of everything the world offers in order to know and gain Christ ... In this way the Philippians have become "partners with Paul and entered a "fellowship of the gospel" (1:5) as they together join him in the ministry of the gospel of Christ.



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# Paul's Confidence

## **Key Verse #1: Philippians 1:6**

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.

- Paul's confidence is not so much in the faithfulness of the Philippian believers but in God's continued work in them.
- They had been faithful through thick and thin, but Paul sees this as ultimately a work of God.



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# Paul's Prayer

From D.A.  
Carson

- Paul's prayer for the Philippian church is that they would grow in love, but not in an ooey-gooey, wishy-washy way.
- He wants their love to be full of knowledge and discernment.
- In **Revelation 2 - 3**, Jesus personally addresses seven churches.
- One of them, **Ephesus**, was doctrinally sound but had left their first love.
- Another church, in **Thyatira**, was full to the brim with love and good works.
- Yet these things existed side by side with the worst sort of heresy and all kinds of brazen sin.

The kind of love that Paul has in mind is the love that becomes more knowledgeable. Of course, Paul is not thinking of just any kind of knowledge. He is not hoping they will learn more and more about nuclear physics or sea turtles. He has in mind the knowledge of God; he wants them to enjoy insight into God's words and ways, and thus to know how to live in light of them.

His assumption, evidently, is that you really cannot grow in your knowledge of God if you are full of bitterness or other self-centered sins. There is a moral element in knowing God.



D. A. Carson,  
Trinity Evangelical  
Divinity School



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## Advancing the Gospel 1:12-18

- Here Paul, rather than needing encouragement as a result of his trials, is encouraging the Philippian believers.
- Spending years in Roman captivity assured him a continuous *captive audience*.
- He got to speak to kings and governors, Roman soldiers, and eventually Caesar himself.
- Sometimes our life circumstances can make us feel limited in our ministry.
- We want to serve Christ in one way, and yet that door does not seem to open.
- **Maybe God is opening another door.**
- **That is what he did for Paul more than once.**

Key Verse #2  
Philippians  
1:18

The Story of  
Mrs. Spurgeon



## Key Verse #2 Philippians 1:18

**What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed, and in that I rejoice.**

- The *preachers* Paul speaks of were evidently not false teachers in the strictest sense.
- They seem to be preaching Christ, just without the same sincerity of heart as Paul and the other apostles.
- There is a hint of rivalry or self-promotion in their ministry.
- Sadly, this still happens today as some people go into the ministry for selfish reasons. They like to stand in front of a crowd.
- Paul saw this, yet still rejoiced that Christ was proclaimed one way or the other.



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# The Story of Mrs. Spurgeon

Everyone has heard of **Charles Haddon Spurgeon**, the famous British preacher, but few know the story of his wife, **Susannah**. Early in their married life, Mrs. Spurgeon became an invalid. It looked as though her only ministry would be encouraging her husband and praying for his work. But God gave her a burden to share her husband's books with pastors who were unable to purchase them. This burden soon led to the founding of the "Book Fund." As a work of faith, the "Book Fund" provided thousands of pastors with tools for their work. All this was supervised by Mrs. Spurgeon from her home. It was a pioneer ministry.

-- from Warren W. Wiersbe,  
*The Bible Exposition Commentary*, vol. 2



Charles Spurgeon  
(1834 - 1892),  
London Pastor



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## To Live Is Christ 1:19-30

Key Verse #3  
Philippians  
1:21

Your Manner  
of Life

From Tony  
Evans

- Paul seems quite convinced that he will live to see the Philippian believers again.
- Most Bible teachers believe that he did, only to be rearrested and eventually executed by Nero.
- The Philippian church also knew something about suffering for Jesus.
- Paul encourages them to take that as a gift of God's grace - something to be received by faith.
- Throughout history the church has normally had its opponents.
- Paul was even one of them and still somehow became a faithful servant of Jesus Christ.



# Key Verse #3 Philippians 1:21

From  
D.A. Carson

**For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.**

- I once knew a guy who, as I was first getting to know him, told me, "Beer is my life!"
- I guess there are worse things to live for than beer, but it still seems a terribly limited thing to build your life on.
- For Paul, to live meant **Christ** in every way.
- He served Christ.
- He spoke for Christ.
- He endured all things for the sake of Christ.
- What is the goal, the center, the foundation or the purpose of our lives? Who or what do we live for? And to die is \_\_\_\_\_?

In the context, “to live is Christ” surely means that for Paul to keep on living here means ministry, Christ-centered ministry, Christ-empowered ministry, Christ’s presence in his ministry. To die is to bring that ministry to an end. But even so there is only gain, since the ministry is not an end in itself, and it is now swallowed up in the glorious delight of the unshielded presence of the exalted Jesus himself.

What can you possibly do with Christians like that?



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# Your Manner of Life

- The phrase "manner of life" (ESV) is related to the word *citizenship* in Greek.
- The NLT translates this section,

**Above all, you must live as citizens of heaven, conducting yourselves in a manner worthy of the Good News about Christ.**

- The phrase "of heaven" is not present in the original, but makes sense in light of what Paul says later in the letter

Philippians  
3:20

Suffering  
Well



## Philippians 3:20

But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.



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# Suffering Well

## **Acts 16:19-25**

But when [the demonized slave girl's] owners saw that their hope of gain was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace before the rulers. And when they had brought them to the magistrates, they said, "These men are Jews, and they are disturbing our city. They advocate customs that are not lawful for us as Romans to accept or practice." The crowd joined in attacking them, and the magistrates tore the garments off them and gave orders to beat them with rods. And when they had inflicted many blows upon them, they threw them into prison, ordering the jailer to keep them safely. Having received this order, he put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks.

**About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them.**



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Believers in Jesus Christ are called to take a stand for the gospel in love and truth regardless of repercussions, knowing that some people will support us and others will oppose us. That's to be expected. The goal, whether it leads to life or death, is to make Christ look good and glorify his name. He takes note of everything and will not forget it.



Tony Evans, Bible Teacher  
and Commentator



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# Conclusions

- **Philippians** is a letter full of affection. Paul is addressing close friends (perhaps Luke?) and partners in his ministry.
- In this letter we will learn about **joy and rejoicing in Christ**.
- We have already seen **the importance of the gospel** and the need to make Christ the focal point of all that we live for.
- Paul also showed us that **we can submit to the limitations** God puts on us.
- He was a prisoner and yet God used that to advance the cause of the gospel.

A Gospel  
Affirmation

Homework  
Assignment

From Chuck  
Smith

A Final  
Prayer



# A Gospel Affirmation

This is not an official creed or statement of faith of any church as far as I know. Still it is not a bad way to quickly affirm our faith in Christ.

- **Christ died for my sins.**
- **He rose again.**
- **I have put my trust in him!**

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# Homework Assignment

There are three parts to our assignment for this week.

1. The first part will consist of reading and rereading the key verses from this chapter.
2. The next part will involve partnering with someone in their gospel ministry - like the Philippians with Paul.
3. The final part will be to pray daily using the prayer of Paul for the Philippian believers.

**1. Key Verses**

**2. A Call to Action**

**3. Paul's Prayer**

# 1. Key Verses

- Read the three **Key Verses** from **Philippians 1** every day this week and pray that God would write the reality of what they say upon our hearts.

## **Philippians 1:6**

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.

## **Philippians 1:18**

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## 2. A Call to Action

Become a committed partner with someone in their gospel-advancing ministry this week.

- For example, begin supporting a missionary - maybe Marat!
- Locally, you can join the team of KIDS Inc. or WAYS as they reach out to youth in our area. (Talk to Mavis about that second one.)
- If you do not support the church regularly, begin to do so. (Giving is not God's method of raising money, it's a part of how he raises his children - by training them to be generous and to trust in him.)



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### 3. Pauls Prayer

- Pray **Paul's prayer** for the Philippians for our church daily - the one from **1:9-11**.

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



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- Paul also showed us that **we can submit to the limitations** God puts on us.
- He was a prisoner and yet God used that to advance the cause of the gospel.

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Smith

A Final  
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Chuck Smith (1927-2013),  
founding pastor of the  
Calvary Chapel Movement

It was appropriate that Paul would write to them from prison, exhorting them to have the joy of the Lord, since he had been in prison in Philippi and was singing while in chains there years earlier ... Philippians is a special book that shows us how to live above the present circumstances, rising above adversity not just by surviving, but by thriving in the joy of the Lord.

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# A Final Prayer

Dear Father in heaven,

- We thank you for giving us a place in your family and giving us a part in proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ.
- Thank you for beginning a work in us by giving us new life in him.
- Help us to value Jesus as the very center of all that we are and all that we do.
- Teach us to face every circumstance that we face with joy and faith that you are always working out your perfect will in our lives.
- And finally, cause our love to abound, along with all knowledge and discernment.
- In Christ,
- Amen.

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