

Philippians Chapter 1: Passages and Notes

Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say rejoice! (Phil 4:4)

“Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who, though he existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be grasped”

“Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your request be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”
(Phil 4:6-7)

1 Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus,
To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, with the bishops[a] and deacons:

2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ

Verses 1-2

1. Why include Timothy?

- One of the major themes in Phil is unity. Another is humility. Karl Barth: “A hero, a genius, a ‘religious personality’ stands alone; an apostle has others beside him like himself and sets them on his own level.”
 - Emphasis on community and shared leadership
- Timothy had a Jewish mother who became a follower of Jesus and a Greek father.
- Traveled with Paul on many of his missionary trips.
- Timothy's name appears as the co-author on [2 Corinthians](#), [Philippians](#), [Colossians](#), [1 Thessalonians](#), [2 Thessalonians](#), and [Philemon](#).

2. Consider the translation of “servants” vs. “slave.” Which one is a more powerful idea for you in verse 1?

- **Explanations on Biblical Hermeneutics site:**

- “Translation involves careful and precise understanding of both the source language and the target language. Considering the massive differences between Israelite and Roman era slavery compared to the trans-Atlantic slavery most modern readers are more familiar with, it's natural for Bible translators to question whether "slave" in English is actually an accurate translation for anyone who isn't an expert in ancient history who is already familiar with those more ancient institutions of slavery. That isn't bowdlerisation, that's just the normal task of translation.”
- Slave to money, slave to addictions and sins etc. Implies a willful servitude to whatever one's heart belongs to.
- Interesting that, unlike in Galatians, Paul **doesn't feel the need to state his credentials**, to remind folks that he is an “apostle,” someone with authority. May speak to how comfortable he is with this group.
- This use of “slave” vs. “servant” will come up again in Philippians. Paul is clear that “his entire being is given over in love, dedication, and service to his living Lord” (Migliore, p. 21)

3. Why use “all”? And who are these bishops and deacons?

- Emphasis on unity—a major theme
- Bishops and deacons as used here had responsibilities much different from ones typically assigned now. However, these may have been the beginnings of leadership in a church. BUT, note how Paul mentions them last, after saluting “all”. Again, **humility**, even in leadership.

4. Note the use of “grace” and “peace”. Paul often uses these words in his salutations.

- “Grace” is Paul's signature word: refers to the “free gift of God's love, forgiveness, and new life embodied in the ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus. It “guards the distinctive biblical meaning of the love of God” (Migliore, p. 25)
- “Peace” means more than lack of conflict. Refers to “the fullness of life in community, the flourishing of human life in relationship to God and others”
- Both are not meant to refer to general meanings; **they come from God the Father and Jesus Christ, the Lord.**
- What does that say about our “Passing of the Peace”?

Verses 3 - 11

3 I thank my God for every remembrance of you, **4** always in every one of my prayers for all of you, praying with joy **5** for your **partnership** in the gospel from the first day until now. **6** I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work in you will continue to complete^[c] it until the day of Jesus Christ. **7** It is right for me to think this way about all of you, because I hold you in my heart,^[d] for all of you are my **partners** in God's grace,^[e] both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel. **8** For God is my witness, how I long for all of you with the tender affection of Christ Jesus. **9** **And this is my prayer, that your love may overflow more and more with knowledge and full insight** **10** **to help you to determine what really matters, so that in the day of Christ you may be pure and blameless,** **11** **having produced the harvest^[f] of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ for the glory and praise of God.**

Paul almost always includes a thanksgiving for the people to whom he is writing.

1. In what ways are Paul and the Philippians partners?

- Providing material gifts
- Receiving the gospel and continuing to worship and spread it
- Recipients of God's grace and bound together

2. What is Paul's prayer for the Philippians?

- Your love may overflow more and more with knowledge and full insight
- That love will help you determine what really matters, enabling you to produce a Godly harvest
- Note the Greek word translated "insight" could also be translated "discernment"
- Note reference to "harvest of righteousness" in verse 11. Who is responsible for the harvest?

Verses 12-18

12 I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that what has happened to me has actually resulted in the progress of the gospel, **13** so that it has become known throughout the whole imperial guard[g] and to everyone else that my imprisonment is for Christ, **14** and most of the brothers and sisters, having been made confident in the Lord by my imprisonment, dare to speak the word[h] with greater boldness and without fear.

15 Some proclaim Christ from envy and rivalry but others from goodwill. **16** These proclaim Christ out of love, knowing that I have been put here for the defense of the gospel; **17** the others proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely but intending to increase my suffering in my imprisonment. **18** What does it matter? Just this, that Christ is proclaimed in every way, whether out of false motives or true, and in that I rejoice.

Yes, and I will rejoice, **19** for I know that through your prayers and the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ this will turn out for my salvation. **20** It is my eager expectation and hope that I will not be put to shame in any way but that by my speaking with all boldness Christ will be exalted now as always in my body, whether by life or by death. **21** For to me, living is Christ and dying is gain. **22** If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me, yet I cannot say which I will choose. **23** I am hard pressed between the two: my desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better, **24** but to remain in the flesh is more necessary for you. **25** Since I am convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with all of you for your progress and joy in faith, **26** so that, by my presence again with you, your boast might abound in Christ Jesus because of me.

27 Only, live your life in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that, whether I come and see you or am absent and hear about you, I will know that you are standing firm in one spirit, striving side by side with one mind for the faith of the gospel **28** and in no way frightened by those opposing you. For them, this is evidence of their destruction but of your salvation. And this is God's doing. **29** For he has graciously granted you the privilege

1. In 15-18, Paul ends by saying that it doesn't matter that some proclaim Christ for ill motives, as long as Christ is proclaimed? Do you agree?
2. In v 19, some translations use "deliverance." What do you think Paul is being delivered or saved from?
3. In v 20 Paul is concerned about being put to shame. What do you think that's about?
4. What is the "struggle" Paul is talking about in v 30?