

Philippians 1

Introduction

- The city of Philippi was founded in 356 B.C. by Philip of Macedon (father of Alexander the Great, about 10 miles inland from Neapolis)
- 42 B.C. – A famous battle was fought there: Augustus and Anthony vs. Brutus and Cassius (latter lost)
- The city was on the Egnatian Way (a major Roman road)
- Roman fort there – **Why would Rome want a fort there?** To protect Rome from the east (Persians and Parthians)
- Philippi was primarily a military city (not a commercial center very much)

Do we have a record of the establishment of the Lord's church there? Yes: *Acts 16*

-Read Acts 16.9-40

-Who were converted? Lydia and her household (*v 15*)

-Next event? The casting out of the evil spirit of the slave girl (*Acts 16.16-24*)

-Result? Paul and Silas were arrested and beaten with rods (*v 22*) and put into prison

-Acts 16.38 – the Roman officials were afraid when they found out that Paul and Silas were Roman citizens

-Why were the Roman officials afraid? There had been a public beating of Paul without a trial

-A very dramatic beginning for the church there

-Acts 16.31 – **When does the Bible say that the jailer was saved?** *V 34* – **After** he had been baptized

-Read 2 Cor. 8.1-2 – The churches of Macedonia were complimented for their generosity in giving

Letter to church at Philippi

- The most personal of Paul's letters
- Not a debate, no warnings, very cheerful and optimistic
- Background: Paul was in prison (*1.7*)
- The "prison epistles"?** Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Philemon
- He was writing the church at Philippi to thank them for their help in supporting him in prison and in his mission work

Philippians 1.1-2

V1 – How did Paul usually identify himself in the salutation to his letters? Apostle

-Why did he not do that here? There was no question about his apostleship by the Philippians, but a question at Corinth

-Timothy – the letter was probably dictated to him

-Who were the "saints"? All faithful Christians at Philippi

-The practice of calling someone "Saint" is not found in the Scriptures – we are all saints (set apart for holy service)

-Who else did Paul address in the introduction? The overseers (bishops) and deacons

-What are the six titles given to elders in the New Testament? Bishops, presbyters, overseers (*Acts 20.28*), elders, pastors, shepherds

V2 – Grace and peace (for Gentiles and Jews)

Philippians 1.3-11

V3 – If we had been Paul, what would we have remembered about Philippi? The beatings and being put into prison, etc.

-What did Paul remember? The Christians at Philippi

V4 – When Paul prayed for the church at Philippi, what kind of prayer was it? One of joy

V5 – Why? Their contribution to his work (from the beginning)

-They had a great love for mission work

-Their "**participation**"? More than just money, but prayers, concerns, physical help

-They didn't just send the money once a month and leave it at that, but they sent their prayers and their concerns

V6 – Antecedent to "**He who began a good work**"? God and Christ

-Paul did not take credit for the establishment of the church at Philippi

V7 – How were the members at Philippi partakers with Paul? Suffering with him (their empathy)

V8 – Paul could not even express his love for them, but "*God knows*"

V9 – What did Paul pray they would have? Real knowledge and discernment (wisdom)

V10 – Why the need for real knowledge? To know right from wrong

V11 – They had the fruit of righteousness

-Summary: Paul had deep gratitude for the church at Philippi

-Similar to the words of Christ to the church at Philadelphia in *Rev. 3.7-13* – very positive

-**How did the church at Philippi compare with the church at Corinth? ...the church at Laodicea?** (thought questions)

Philippians 1.12-20

V12 – Reminiscent of other Scriptures?

Read **Gen. 50.20-21** – Joseph and his brothers

Read **Esther 4.14** – Who knows...?

Read **Acts 28.30-31**

Read **Romans 8.28** – All things work together for good....

V13 – What had been the result of Paul's imprisonment? The guards had heard the gospel that Paul preached

- There were about 9000 Roman soldiers stationed at Rome at that time
- See *Phil. 4.22* – some had been converted

V 14 – Another good result? More courage among "*most of the brethren*"

- Why? See *v 15*

V 15 – Do we have some today who preach from envy and strife? See *2 Cor. 11.13-15* – We will always have such people

- Factious, jealous, "partisan," ignoble purposes

V 16 – What was Paul's attitude toward evangelism? He made a defense of the gospel

- Significance? He never backed down
- Examples of where he would not back down? Mars Hill (*Acts 17.22ff*), before Agrippa (*Acts 26*), Festus, Felix, Peter (*Galatians 2*)
- Paul did not soften the message to impress people
- Read **Acts 24.24-25** (before Felix)
- With Paul, there was no backing down concerning the gospel
- He did not present lessons on how to deal with stress, and he did not need a 10 piece rock band to entertain the audience

V 17 – The wrong motives in preaching the gospel

V 18 – One good thing about those who preached the gospel with wrong motives? At least the gospel was being preached

V 19 – What two things did Paul need? Their prayers and the Spirit of Jesus Christ

- Was Paul in his first imprisonment or his second? It appears to be his first, at the end of the Fourth Missionary Journey – See *Phil. 1.25*

V 20 – Paul's ultimate goal? To exalt Christ with boldness

Philippians 1.21-26

V 21 – What did "living" mean to Paul? Christ...

- His view of death? A new and better experience (see *2 Cor. 5.6-8*)
- Why is death a gain? Going home (or graduating)

V 22 – Advantage of living on in the flesh? More work for Christ

V 23 – What two goals were pulling at Paul? To live on or to go home

- Most of us wouldn't have any trouble with the question
- We are in love with this life and all of its trinkets and gadgets and pleasures
- Whenever the latest electronic gadget comes out, Paul would not have said, *Oh, I have to have one of those....*
- Paul: If choosing based on his own pleasure, he would choose to go home with Christ

V 24 – Which would be better for the Philippian church? His living on in this life

V 25 – Why did Paul know he would continue living (and not be executed)? Because that was best for the church at Philippi, and God always works things out the best for his children

V 26 – Paul believed he would see the Philippians again

-Why were the Philippians proud of Paul? His courage

Philippians 1.27-30

V 27 – But whatever happened, what were Paul's instructions? Live faithful lives

-Why? So Paul would hear of their faithful lives

-Specifically what did Paul want to hear about the church at Philippi?

1. That they are standing firm (for sound doctrine)

-There are congregations today who are beginning to use instrumental music in worship, who make no stand whatever on the marriage-divorce-remarriage question, and who make no stands whatever on other doctrinal errors

2. United in one mind

3. Striving together (not against each other)

-Notice the emphasis on unity

-Disunity is a terrible witness to the world

V 28 – Was the Philippian church then undergoing persecution? Apparently so - "*your opponents*"

-Who would have been their opponents? Pagans, those making money from the heathens

-Why was Paul thrown into prison in Philippi in the first place? For casting the demon out of slave girl and causing the businessmen to lose money on her – See *Acts 16.16-18*

-The persecutors were powerless to crush the church - it just meant their own destruction

V 29 – Two great privileges of the church at Philippi? To believe in Christ and to suffer (*granted to them* = a gift)

-How different we view persecution today!

-Many times in our public prayers, we thank God that we are not being persecuted, but for Paul, it was a great privilege

-Read **Matt. 5.11-12**

-Read **Acts 5.40-41**

-Read **1 Peter 3.14**

V 30 – Probable a reference to *Acts 16* and the persecution at Philippi

Revised 2013-01-22