

Philippians 1

¹ Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, To all the saints in Christ Jesus at Philippi, together with the overseers and deacons:² Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

servant - *doulos*: one who gives himself up to another's will, those whose service is used by Christ in extending and advancing His cause among men

overseer, bishop – *episkopos*: - used interchangeably with the elders - always plural - later used to designate an overseer of elders but not until the end of the apostolic period; the superintendent, elder, or overseer of a Christian church.

This greeting is unique in that it is addressed to the body, elders, and deacons.

Grace and peace come from God and JC alone. Man can be gracious but he cannot give you grace that leads to peace with God. The world gives a different kind of peace, transitional, dependant on circumstance. Peace from God passes understanding. 4:7

³ I thank my God every time I remember you.⁴ In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy⁵ because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now,⁶ being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

There were some problems in this church like there are in almost all churches, but Paul still thanks God for them each time they come to mind. That thanks at their remembrance turns to joy in his prayers. The joy is because they are advancing the Kingdom. A servant of God finds joy in any who also partner in the Good News. We are not alone. None is perfect, yet we all desire to advance the Kingdom, soldiers fighting on various fronts. All those imperfections are being worked on, and Paul sees the completed likeness of Christ that will one day be. No wonder he is joyful when He thinks of them. I would encourage this verse as a joyful promise of hope, that God is working in you and the brother who recently offended you. 1Thes 5:23,24 Heb 13:20,21

⁷ It is right for me to feel this way about all of you, since I have you in my heart; for whether I am in chains or defending and confirming the gospel, all of you share in God's grace with me. ⁸ God can testify how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus.

It is right to be joyful about your brothers, no matter your condition, for they are fellow recipients of God's grace just as you are. He says they are in his heart. Lord, help us have our brothers in our heart, - not just acquaintances, but truly in our heart. 2Cor 7:3 1Jn 3:14 There is too much of a tendency today to point at differences that divide us than the wonderful thing that unites us, recipients of God's grace. The results of being in your heart is the affection of Jesus that would pray the prayer of the next verse. This is not just a flowery greeting but a condition of his heart that results in actions of prayer. Do we love our fellow

Christians – long for them, with the affection of Christ? What a fellowship we will be as the Lord works his love for one another in each of us!

⁹ And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight,¹⁰ so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ,¹¹ filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ--to the glory and praise of God. That your love increase in knowledge and depth of insight- Love should not be blind - it needs discernment, God's wisdom, proper application in the way God would direct. Sometimes love firmly says, "NO! You must stop that!" Even at the risk of breaking off relationship. Eph 4:15

On the other hand, some are always exercising firm love, when gentleness would be the direction of the Spirit and the need in the life they are sharing with. How can you know? This is just what Paul is asking for them, knowledge and depth of insight. If there is knowledge and depth of insight, then they can discern the best - not just the good. Ep 5:17

O.Chambers says the good is often the enemy of the best for it distracts you from the best. This knowledge and insight resulting in discernment to do the best will keep you on the path of completion Paul mentioned in vs 6. The undiscerning may err in the path of the 'good' and get caught up in error that will pull them down. I've been there, trying not to offend, carnal desires get caught up in being the gentle nice person, wanting them to respect you - and slipping past boundaries. Abound in knowledge and insight so you know by discernment what real love would direct. This is the desire of Paul and all those who labor in the Kingdom, to see themselves and their brothers and sisters be pure and blameless until the day of Christ. We want to stay under the blood and not willfully wander away from the fold.

That walk is full of the fruit of righteousness - not our own - but that which comes through Jesus Christ and glorifies God, not man. The result is that God is praised. If you see a life overflowing in righteousness of Jesus you know that the person has love that has a depth of insight. The life of Christ in them brings glory and praise to God.

This is God's will for us and so Paul prays this for the Thessalonians and the Colossians in Col 1:9. As we know this is God's will we should pray this for this fellowship and our brothers and sisters in Christ.