

## Introduction to Philippians - Opening greeting

- The story begins in Acts 16: Paul, on his 2<sup>nd</sup> missionary journey, responds to the call to take the gospel to Macedonia and founds the first European church in Philippi, a Greek city which became a Roman colony in 42 BC. There he is imprisoned and has a miraculous release.
- 12 years later he writes this letter to encourage the Philippians from his prison cell in Rome around 62 AD.
- The main subject is the gospel and the central themes are joy, thanksgiving and peace.
- ♦ What tone is set by the opening lines of Paul's letter?

Philippians 1:1-11 New Living Translation

### *Greetings from Paul*

1 This letter is from Paul and Timothy, *slaves* of Christ Jesus. I am writing to *all of God's holy people* in Philippi who belong to Christ Jesus, *including* the church leaders and deacons.

2 May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you grace and peace.

## vv 3-6 Thanksgiving and joy-filled prayer

- When Paul thinks back to the founding of the Philippian church, the time he spent working with them to build it up and the continuing contacts he has had with them, he is filled with joy and wants to thank them for all their faithful support in the gospel.
- The believers in Philippi were Paul's partners in sharing the good news of their life-changing encounter with Jesus, and their Christ-centred focus gave Paul great joy when he prayed for them.
- Paul wants them to have the assurance that their Christian growth is a work in process, still to be completed in God's perfect timing.
- ♦ Are our prayers with and for our fellow-workers full of joy?
- ♦ Do we have the assurance that Jesus is with us always?

### *Paul's Thanksgiving and Prayer*

3 *Every time I think of you, I give thanks to my God.* 4 *Whenever I pray, I make my requests for all of you with joy,* 5 *for you have been my partners in spreading the Good News about Christ from the time you first heard it until now.* 6 *And I am certain that God, who began the good work within you, will continue his work until it is finally finished on the day when Christ Jesus returns.*

## vv 7-8 God's favour and the bond of love & unity in Christ

- There is a special place in Paul's heart for these co-workers from his eventful 2<sup>nd</sup> missionary journey who have remained in touch.
- Their shared experiences of God's favour in their times of trial have created a lasting bond between them.
- Paul is unafraid to share his yearning to be reunited with them, and this shows the depth of their oneness in Christ.

- ◆ What opportunities do you have to share your Christian life and witness with others?
- ◆ Who would you turn to for prayer or practical help in times of crisis?

<sup>7</sup> So it is right that I should feel as I do about all of you, for *you have a special place in my heart. You share with me the special favour of God, both in my imprisonment and in defending and confirming the truth of the Good News.* <sup>8</sup> God knows how much I love you and long for you with the tender compassion of Christ Jesus.

## vv 9-11 How to focus in prayer for spiritual growth

- Pray for overflowing love
- + growth in knowledge and experience
- + Holy Spirit discernment to understand the ways of the Lord
- so that their transformed lives will be increasingly fruitful.
- Aim to bring glory to God and draw others into His kingdom.
- ◆ In what ways have you grown spiritually over the past year?
- ◆ How can we grow in love and so help others to fulfil their potential?
- ◆ What effect will that have on the church? What small steps forward can we take?

<sup>9</sup> I pray *that your love will overflow more and more, and that you will keep on growing in knowledge and understanding.* <sup>10</sup> For I want you to understand what really matters, so that you may live pure and blameless lives until the day of Christ's return. <sup>11</sup> May you always *be filled with the fruit of your salvation—the righteous character produced in your life by Jesus Christ—for this will bring much glory and praise to God.*

## Philippians 1: 1-11 Conclusion and response

- Pray that we may keep Jesus at the centre of our lives.
- Read John 15: 1-17 .
- SoF 129: *God forgave my sin in Jesus' name*
- SoF 220: *I know whom I have believed*

### Jesus, be the Centre (SoF 1377)

Be my source, be my light

Jesus

Jesus, be the centre

Be my hope, be my song

Jesus

*Be the fire in my heart*

*Be the wind in these sails*

*Be the reason that I live*

*Jesus, Jesus*

Jesus, be my vision

Be my path, be my guide

Jesus

Written by: Michael Frye

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### You are the Vine (SoF 629)

*We are the branches*

*Keep us abiding in You*

*You are the Vine*

*We are the branches*

*Keep us abiding in You*

And we will go in Your love

And we will go in Your Name

That the world will surely know

That You have power to heal

And to save

Danny Daniels & Randy Rigby

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### 1 I know not why God's wondrous grace

To me He hath made known,

Nor why, unworthy as I am,

Redeemed me for His own.

#### Chorus:

*But "I know whom I have believed,*

*And am persuaded that He is able*

*To keep that which I've committed*

*Unto Him against that day."*

### 2 I know not how this saving faith

To me he did impart,

Nor how believing in His Word

Wrought peace within my heart.

### 3 I know not how the Spirit moves,

Convincing men of sin,

Revealing Jesus through the Word,

Creating faith in Him.

### 4 I know not when my Lord may come,

I know not how nor where;

If I shall pass the vale of death,

Or 'meet Him in the air'.

### God forgave my sin in Jesus' name

I've been born again in Jesus' name

And in Jesus' name I come to you

To share His love as He told me to

*He said, "Freely, freely you have received*

*Freely, freely give*

*Go in my name, and because you believe*

*Others will know that I live"*

All power is given in Jesus' name

In earth and Heaven in Jesus' name

And in Jesus' name I come to you

To share His power as He told me to