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Our Life Together
Philippians 1:1-11

'But the truth that everyone suffers provides a unique point of contact (and common ground) for biblical community. The fact that everyone else also knows grief can allow me to be vulnerable with my pain and available to love others in the midst of theirs.' - *Life in Community* by Dustin Willis, Pg. 130

Context:

Paul is in Prison

Paul in Philippi - In Acts 16

- Paul lead Lydia, a wealthy woman from Philippi, to Christ.
- Paul was being followed by a slave girl who had power of divination through a demon. Paul cast out the demon and when the slave girl's owner found out they could not profit from the girl's fortune telling they attacked Paul and took him to the local magistrate who had Paul beaten and thrown into prison.
- While in prison in Philippi he lead a Philippian Jailer to Christ.

Historical Setting of the church in Philippi:

- *A Roman City with strong pride in their Roman heritage:*
Acts 16:20-21 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...."
- *Not many Jews in the city:* The church was started when Paul, Silas, Timothy, and Luke went outside the city gate to a riverside where there was a place of prayer. They met a lady named Lydia, shared the gospel with her, and baptized her. (Hansen)

Attributes of the letter to the Philippians

- *A Letter of Friendship:* Affection (I love you), Partnership, Unity of Soul and Spirit (equal soul, one spirit), Like-mindedness, Yokefellow (True companion), Giving and receiving, Common struggles and joys.
- *Paul transforms the meaning and experience of friendship* by redefining each of the essential ideals of friendship in terms of communion with Christ and empowerment by Christ. (Hansen)

Paul's situation when writing the letter

- *Paul is in Prison*: He was motivated to write the letter because of two things that had happened, including the advance of the gospel while he was in chains, and the gift from the church in Philippi through Epaphroditus. (Hansen)

The church's situation when writing the letter

- Disunity: *Philippians 1:27-28* Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel...

- Suffering: *Philippians 1:29-30* For it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in him but also suffer for his sake,

- Opponents: *Philippians 1:28-29* and not frightened in anything by your opponents. This is a clear sign to them of their destruction, but of your salvation, and that from God.

Two Key Themes:

1. *The Gospel of Christ*: Paul's driving passion in all of his work is 'defending and confirming the gospel,' 'to advance the gospel,' and 'the defense of the gospel' (1:7, 12, and 16).

2. *The Community in Christ*: The phrase 'In Christ' has a dominant role in Philippians occurring in various forms twenty-one times. The primary focus of the phrase in Philippians is the community in Christ.

How the Philippian Church's Situation relates to ours

1. *Our lives and passions* are to be centered around the advancement and defense of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

2. *We are called to live in Unified community* with other Christians.

Text:

Philippians 1:1-11

1 Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus,

To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are at Philippi, with the overseers and deacons:

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

3 I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, 4 always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, 5 because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. 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. 7 It is right for me to feel this way about you all, because I hold you in my heart, for you are all partakers with me of grace, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel. 8 For God is my witness, how I yearn for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus. 9 And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, 10 so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, 11 filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

The attitude and quality of our life together:

1. Joyful partnership. (Phil. 1:1-4)

- saints = holy ones (1:1)
- overseers = bishops (1:1)
- prayer = supplication (1:4)
- '4 always in every prayer of mine for you' - Paul actively spends time with God praying for these fellow Christians!
- 'making my prayer with joy,
- 'joy' = a state of rejoicing, gladness

Why does this elicit such an emotion?

2. Joy and Confidence built on loyalty. (Phil. 1:5-7)

- 5 because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now...' - Paul has joy because they have remained loyal to him and the gospel through difficult circumstances!
- participation = fellowship, sharing
- '6 And I am sure of this...' - confidence
- 'because I hold you in my heart, for you are all partakers with me of grace...both in my imprisonment...defense and confirmation of the gospel.' - He sees their loyalty to him in the difficult circumstances and that give him certainty of their salvation!
- defense = apologetics

3. Godly affection for each other. (Phil. 1:8)

- 'I yearn for you all...' - deep intense affection
- 'affection' = inward parts, intestines, entrails, affections, seat of feelings.
- 'of Jesus Christ' = Paul shares this affection only with his Christian brothers and sisters!

The affection of Jesus Christ?

- Jesus saw his followers as family!

Matthew 12:46-50 46 While he was still speaking to the people, behold, his mother and his brothers stood outside, asking to speak to him. 48 But he replied to the man who told him, "Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?" 49 And stretching out his hand toward his disciples,

he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers! 50 For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother."

4. Godly ambitions for one another. (Phil. 1:9-11)

A. To increase in love (v9)

Phil. 1:9 '9 And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more'

B. To grow in knowledge (v9)

Phi. 1:9 'with knowledge'

C. To grow in discernment (v9)

Phil. 1:9 'and all discernment'

- discernment = capacity to understand

D. To approve right desires (v10)

Phil. 1:10 'so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ.'

- *what is excellent* = to be worth more than

E. To live godly lifestyles (v11)

Phil. 1:11 '11 filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ,'

5. Our aim: The Glory and Praise of God

BIG IDEA:

Loyal, gospel-centered, mission-focused relationships bring glory to God and joy to us.