

Remnant Life Church
January 9, 2022
The Church of the Philippians
Part 1 - Introduction
Phil 1:1-6

The apostle Paul is responsible for nearly one half of the books of the New Testament

- Of the 27 total books he is the author of 13
- Some attempt to include Hebrews as a possible 14th but I certainly believe there is sufficient evidence to conclude Paul was not the author
- Paul's letters can be broken down into different categories
 - This is done as way to begin providing context to what Paul is writing
 - The 2 books of the Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and the 2 books of Thessalonians are all written to churches that Paul was involved in either by starting them or acting as their spiritual father
 - The 2 books of Timothy, Titus, and Philemon are letters to a person sometimes called pastoral letters as he writes them in a more fatherly or pastoral tone
 - The book of Romans stands somewhat alone as it is written to the believers in Rome, but Paul had nothing to do with their church other than wanting to see them stand firm in the heart of the pagan spiritual capital of the day
 - Some of the letters are also categorized by when he was in prison which are the books of Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon
- The letter to the church in Philippi is perhaps one of Paul's most joyful letters, something that I think is sorely needed in the church today
- But it also carries with it an undertone that is sobering as dictated by when the letter was written and what Paul was facing in his very near future.

By way of background and continuing to develop the context - Philippi

- A city in Greece located northwest of the Aegean Sea coast
- This city, while not the capital of the Roman province of Macedonia (that was the city of Thessalonica) Philippi was still a place of importance
- It took its name from the father of Alexander the Great, King Philip II of Macedon
- He too was a great military who captured the city in 360 BC from the Thracians
- This was the city that, in 42 BC, hosted a great battle on a plain west of the city between an army loyal to the recently murdered Julius Caesar led by Mark Antony and Octavian (who would later be called Caesar Augustus of Acts 2 who called for the census that would send Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem) and the forces of Brutus and Cassius who had led the uprising in the Roman Senate.
- When the victory was won, the town was now called a Roman colony which meant it was under the protection of Rome and could also enjoy the economic benefits
- This city with a famous past and a privileged present was the first church Paul established in Europe as a part of his second missionary journey – one that had not started out very well ([Acts 16](#))
- Paul was almost certainly in prison when he wrote this letter which emphasizes even more the importance of the joyful tone in spite of his circumstances

READ – Phil 1:1-6

Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, To all the saints in Christ Jesus at Philippi, together with the overseers and deacons:

First, notice how Paul describes himself and Timothy within the first seven words – *as servants of Christ Jesus*

- Other versions use the term “bondservant”
 - In the original language bondservant is the word *doulos* – meaning to bind
 - This would have been a very familiar word to the readers
 - Because many of them either were slaves or former slaves in this Roman town
 - It would have been a very powerful word filled with deep emotion and levels of understanding
 - *Doulos* was used to describe a man who was bound to his master in servitude, but it also conveys the idea that the slave is close to his master
 - This was about the attitude and the heart of their relationship
 - The bondservant was trusted in the home
 - Joseph became a bondservant of Potiphar and was trusted with his entire estate
 - The bondservant, in the way Paul uses it, is voluntarily devoted to the master
 - But consider what that also would have said to the reader regarding Paul’s master, Jesus Christ
 - The master was responsible for the needs of the slave
 - He was responsible for the duties of the slave
 - The master was responsible for the supplies of the slave
 - So everything of the slave’s life was provided by the master
 - Because of the price that Jesus had paid for them on the cross Paul and Timothy were declaring themselves to be bondservants of Christ
 - They, like each of us, had once been slaves to sin
 - They were now bought by the shed blood of Jesus
 - Their lives were only of value in service to their Savior
 - A very successful businessman was attending a Bible study where the subject of servanthood was being discussed and he asked the question, “How can I tell if I have a servant attitude?” The reply came back “By the way you react when you are treated like one.”
 - A true bondservant is a life bathed in humility

Pride has become a killer of many churches today

- In what way?
- In the way that people are no longer discouraged from looking more to those on the stage than to the One who hung on the cross
- In the way that the numbers of those in attendance has taken a greater place of importance and emphasis over the number of those who are coming into the kingdom or are having victory in their lives over sin, temptation, and hardships

- In the way that people liking what I say is more important than people coming under conviction for the sin in their lives by what is said from the pulpit

Paul leaves no doubt in the reader's mind who he is – a servant, giving of himself willing to the cause of Christ

Second, look at who Paul addresses the letter to – *all the saints in Christ Jesus in Philippi*

- What is a saint?
 - In this case it is not a professional football player from the city of New Orleans
 - It is also not a perfect person, because there is no such thing
- A saint, again in the original language, is *hagios* (hag-ee-os)
 - It means someone who is set apart, different, and distinct
 - When you understand that meaning and how Paul addresses the readers of his letters I think you can better appreciate his words in **2 Cor 5:17** where he writes, *This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!* (NLT)
 - Paul is telling the people that in Christ they are no longer the same as they once were
- But also take note of one other small word – all
 - Paul uses this to make sure that the readers know that the love of God is inclusive
 - From the newest believer to the leaders of the church, the love of God and the words Paul is writing are for everyone
 - No matter the economic station
 - No matter the abundance or lack of spiritual gifts
 - No matter the head knowledge
 - In fact, Paul is so adamant that no one be left out that the word “all” appears 7 times in the first 9 verses and 32 times in the entire letter – which is only 4 short chapters
 - I believe he emphasizes that word so early in the text because he does single out overseers and deacons and does not want anyone to think that the words he writes and the instruction he is giving is only for them
- Where do we fall today in our relationship with the people around us?
 - Paul sets a very high bar, doesn't he?
 - All means everybody
 - I will admit, that is not always easy
 - Whether it is someone you know who is an acquaintance, a former friend, how about a family member...how do you respond to that person in times of conflict or disagreement?
- Saint is one of Paul's favorite descriptive words for those who are a part of the churches in his charge
 - Because this word clearly designates the position of the believer in Christ
 - He is set apart, he is different, and he is distinct

- This is not to say that the believer in Christ is better than someone else, but he is different because of what has been done for him by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ
- And what are we set apart from?
- From the profane and evilness of the world
- In another of Paul's letter he writes that we, as saints in Christ are to live in this present age ([Gal 1:4](#))
- And we are to live in a way that demonstrates and reflects what we were re-created to be – and what is that?
- Well Paul answers that question clearly in another one of his letters
 - It is to live within the fruits of the spirit that Paul writes of to the church in Galatia
 - Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control ([Gal 5:22](#))
 - Others seeing those things manifest in your life is what will demonstrate the power of Jesus Christ to change a life and the power of the Holy Spirit for you to live in those godly attributes

Paul's letter to the church in Philippi is one that he most likely very much enjoyed writing.

- That was not always the case
- His letters to the church in Corinth have a very different tone to them
- But Paul is clear that he is very pleased with this church and how they are living as new believers in Christ

To live as a bondservant of Jesus Christ means to demonstrate that life everyday

- It is not easy
- But we are all set apart, saints as Paul calls us, to be different than the world around us because of His great love for us

Let me encourage you to daily check the condition of your life

- Are you regularly demonstrating the love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control of a former slave to sin who has been set free?
- As we continue through the book of Philippians, Paul outlines what it means to imitate the humility of Christ and how we must always be pressing on toward the goal of being transformed into the likeness of Jesus.
- In order to do this, it requires that we daily surrender our lives to Him
- But He is faithful to, like a good and loving master, to provide us the supplies we need to accomplish what He has planned for our lives.
- As a child of God, you are set apart – and it is in and through His love that you will live your life for Him; an example for all to see of what His transformative power can do to a life once in bondage to sin, now set free, and a willing servant of Jesus Christ.