

“The Mind of Christ”
Week 1: Philippians 1:1-11

Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, to all God’s holy people in Christ Jesus at Philippi, together with the overseers and deacons: Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, 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.

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

And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the truth of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ – to the glory and praise of God.

1. Read Romans 1:1-7; 1 Corinthians 1:1-3; 2 Corinthians 1:1-2; Galatians 1:1-5; Ephesians 1:1-2; Colossians 1:1-2; 1 Thessalonians 1:1; 2 Thessalonians 1:1. Compare these passages to Philippians 1:1-2. What similarities do you notice between the opening of the letter to the Philippians and the other letters? What differences do you notice? How would you explain the differences, and how important do you think they are?

2. What hints do you see in these opening verses about what is to come in the letter?

3. Remember the themes that we've identified as being important in Philippians:

Joy

Jesus

Grace

Cruciform living ("take up your cross and follow me")

Partnership in the Gospel

What do you see in verses 1-11 of chapter 1 that refer to these themes? In your opinion, how do these statements set the tone for the rest of the letter?

4. What other things stand out to you from verses 1-11? There are no "right" or "wrong" answers to this question; it's a matter of recognizing what the Holy Spirit is saying to you as you study God's Word.

5. What comes to your mind when you read in verse 1 that Paul and Timothy are "servants" of Christ Jesus? Would your view change if the word were translated "slaves" rather than "servants"?

6. What is the significance of Paul's directing this letter not only to the believers – "God's holy people in Christ Jesus at Philippi" – but also to "the overseers and deacons"?

7. Notice the different reasons that Paul mentions in verses 3-11 for thanking God for the Philippians. What does that say to you?

8. If you had to pick one word from verses 1-11 to summarize those verses, what would it be? Why?

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