

Philippians 1:7-11

<https://thebiblesays.com/commentary/phil/phil-1/philippians-17-11/>

Paul references that he is currently imprisoned (in Rome, under house arrest). He tells the Philippians how dear they are to him, that they share the favor from God that he receives for suffering for Christ, since they are faithful witnesses and supporters of his ministry. He encourages them to grow in love and understanding, to pursue all good things until Christ returns, experiencing the result of living harmoniously with one another, which brings glory to God.

Paul expresses that it is only right for me to feel this way about you all, because I have you in my heart. In the previous verses Paul expressed his constant “remembrance” of the Philippian believers, as well as their “participation in the gospel,” which included financial support of Paul. Further, Paul expressed his total confidence that each of them had a “good work” begun in them by Jesus, the work of “participation in the gospel from the first day until now.” Paul expressed that he had confidence their work would continue so long as this age remained. By saying he had the Philippian believers in my heart, Paul expresses the affection and desire he has for the welfare and benefit of the letter’s recipients.

The word translated feel is the Greek word “phroneo” which occurs in some form ten times in this short letter. It means “to adopt a mindset.” Much of what Paul advocates in this letter is for his spiritual children from Philippi to be wise stewards of their choice of perspectives. Paul’s sense here is “I have chosen a particular perspective about you, and it is the right one to choose because you are partakers with me in the gospel.” The major theme of this letter is “Be careful to adopt the proper mindset (“phroneo”), one that is true and right.” In chapter 2, Paul will set forth that the proper mindset (“phroneo”) to choose is a mindset which believes that radical obedience to God is the path of our own true self-interest.

Paul has the Philippian believers in his heart also because both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, you all are partakers of grace with me. The word translated grace is “charis” just as in verse 2. “Charis” means “favor.” The context determines who is favoring who, and for what reason. In this instance, Paul is expressing his fondness for the Philippian believers because they are partakers of the favor Paul had in the defense and confirmation of the gospel. This tells us that Paul considered it a great privilege to be called by Jesus to minister in the cause of the gospel (good news) of Jesus Christ. Paul states that he has been given great favor by God to suffer for the sake of the gospel. The Philippian believers share that favor by sharing with him in the gospel through financial means as well as with their own witness.

The word translated confirmation means “to produce confidence.” Paul’s calling was to not only defend the gospel, but also to produce confidence that it was the true way, the best way to live. The Philippian believers were partakers in Paul’s favor of advancing a defense of the gospel and producing confidence in the gospel, both in Paul’s imprisonment as well as defending and

producing confidence in the gospel within their own spheres of influence. One way it appears the Philippians were partakers in Paul's imprisonment was through providing him financial support (Philippians 4:10).

The occasion of the writing of this letter was that Paul was under house arrest in Rome, while awaiting the hearing of his appeal before Caesar, in hopes of being cleared from false accusations (Acts 25:11; Acts 28:19-20). Paul furnished his own rented house while in Rome for two years (Acts 28:30). It seems probable that the gifts from his supporters from Philippi were a source of finances that allowed him to pay rent and other expenses during these two years.

These facts explain why Paul then states For God is my witness, how I long for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus. A bit later, Paul will state that he longs to see the Philippian believers, and hopes to come to them soon (2:24). But Paul's longing goes further than mere affection. Paul has the affection of Christ Jesus. That means Paul's affection is not primarily rooted in what the Philippians have or can do for him. Rather it is rooted in a genuine desire to advance their best interest. And their best interest is that their love may abound still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment. Paul's affection of Christ Jesus is for his Philippian disciples to approve the things that are excellent, in order to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ.

Paul's affection of Christ is to see the Philippians be spotless until the day of Christ. The word translated until is usually rendered "into, to, unto, for, or in." The phrase until the day of Christ here seems to point to the judgment seat of Christ, when Jesus will judge the deeds of all believers, to give rewards for deeds done during this life (2 Corinthians 5:10). This would mean that in Paul's mind, the way he can do the very best for these Philippian believers, for whom he has the affection of Christ, is to lead them to live a sanctified life, dedicated to the obedience of Christ. Paul says this I pray relating to his desire for the Philippians to gain knowledge and all discernment, and to approve the things that are excellent. This is how to gain the greatest rewards at the judgment seat of Christ, and why Paul has led these believers to gladly embrace suffering for the cause of the gospel.

Paul states his desire is to be sincere and blameless between now and the moment when all believers stand before Jesus, having been filled with the fruit of righteousness which comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God. Gaining knowledge and all discernment will lead to living a life that is filled with the fruit of righteousness. This fruit of righteousness only comes through Jesus Christ. And when the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ pours out of our lives and into the world, it results in the glory and praise of God.

The word translated righteousness is "dikaiosynē" which means "all the parts of a body working together in harmony to achieve a common purpose." The wisdom of God will lead us to find a role we play well, and play it to the best of our ability to serve a common mission. This is the fruit of righteousness. And such fruit or results only comes through Christ Jesus. This is how we serve the Body of Christ, and please our Lord.

When believers live this way, it leads to great rewards for us at the judgment seat of Christ. This is what pleases God, and what He seeks to reward. It leads to the glory and praise of God. This could be speaking of the glory and praise God will give to those who suffered for His sake, who

lived a life of obedience (Romans 2:6; 1 Corinthians 3:11-17; 2 Corinthians 5:10). It could also be talking about glory and praise given to God by others who see the fruits of righteousness that come through Jesus Christ. In this case, people are seeing God's character and nature flowing through His people, and when they do so it brings glory and praise to God (John 15:8). It seems likely Paul has both in mind, since the way to gain glory and praise from God is to live in such a way as to bring glory and praise to God.

Biblical Text

⁷For it is only right for me to feel this way about you all, because I have you in my heart, since both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, you all are partakers of grace with me.

⁸For God is my witness, how I long for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus.⁹ And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment,¹⁰ so that you may approve the things that are excellent, in order to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ;¹¹ having been filled with the fruit of righteousness which comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.