

Philippians 1:3-8

- A. Paul was pleased with the Philippian church for they had not only received the gospel but kept it, even in his absence. **vs. 3-5 c/w PHIL 2:12.**
1. They were not "...hearers only..." but doers. **JAM 1:22.**
 2. They had not received "...the grace of God in vain" (**2CO 6:1**) as do some who bring forth no lasting fruit unto perfection. **MAT 13:19-22.**
 3. They were not as the Galatians who first ran well but succumbed to the influence of false teaching which appealed to the flesh. **GAL 5:7; 4:8-10.**
 4. He thanked God upon *every* remembrance of them to God in prayer. **vs. 3-4.**
 - a. He could give an account of them to God with joy. **v. 4 c/w HEB 13:17.**
 - b. The same could not be said of the Galatian or Corinthian churches.
GAL 4:11; 1CO 1:14; 2CO 2:3-4.
 5. We should give earnest heed to not at ANY time let slip what we have received. **HEB 2:1.**
- B. Paul was thankful for their *fellowship in the gospel*. **v. 5.**
1. fellowship: Partnership; membership of a society. Participation, sharing (in an action, condition, etc.); something in common, community of interest, sentiment, nature, etc.
 2. That which united their fellowship was *the gospel*, the good news of God's work of salvation for sinners through Jesus Christ and the believer's attendant responsibilities. **EPH 2:10; 2CO 5:14-15.**
 - a. Their fellowship was not based upon feelings, miracles, programs, material gain, denominational creeds, politics, national identity, etc.
 - b. Their fellowship was not based upon A gospel or VARIOUS gospels, but THE gospel.
 - (1) There are rival gospels. **GAL 1:6.**
 - (2) True fellowship in Christ is not believing *anything* but believing *something*.
 - (3) It is not just believing something, but believing something together.
 - (4) It is not just believing something together, but believing the RIGHT thing together!
 - (5) That which will keep a church's fellowship on track is the resolve that they will "...stand fast in ONE spirit, with ONE mind striving together for THE faith of THE gospel" (**v. 27**) desiring perfection in the knowledge of Christ and trusting God to manifest and correct flaws. **PHIL 3:13-15.**
 - AA. Mind how important a reliable, genuine Bible which all believe is God's word is to this fellowship. **c/w 1TH 2:13.**
 - BB. This also underscores the importance of personal Bible study and the proper rules for studying it commonly applied.
 - c. Gospel fellowship is the best fellowship: no artificial castes exist. **GAL 3:28.**
 - (1) The lowliest Christians may have gospel fellowship with the greatest apostles and with the Father and Jesus Christ. **1JO 1:3.**
 - (2) There is no Executive Class in Christ. **JUDE 1:3.**
 - (3) Greatness is through service, a blessed duty for all.
MAT 20:25-28; GAL 5:13.
- C. With the kind of evidence of salvation that Philippi was displaying, Paul could be confident that God would fully save them to the day of Christ. **v. 6.**
1. Paul was "...confident of THIS VERY thing..."
 - a. this: Demonstrative Adjective. 1. Used in concord with a sb., to indicate a thing or

- person present or near (actually or in thought), esp. one just mentioned. b. Referring to something that is mentioned immediately after.
- b. very: Used (after the, this, that, etc.) to denote or emphasize complete or exact identity.
- c. “This very thing” of which Paul was confident was God's work and faithfulness in salvation.
- (1) Their salvation would fall out exactly as Paul described it.
 - (2) Paul was not confident that the Philippians had begun God's work of salvation in themselves.
 - (3) Nor was Paul confident that the Philippians would preserve God's work of salvation in them by themselves.
 - (4) The confidence was in God's doing, not the flesh. **PHIL 3:3.**
- d. Salvation is here described.
- (1) It is God's work. **EPH 2:10; ISA 64:8.**
 - (2) It is God Who begins this good work in us. **PSA 100:3; 1CO 1:30; HEB 5:9.**
 - a. author: The person who originates or gives existence to anything.
 - b. God wrote the elect in the Lamb's book of life. **REV 13:8.**
 - c. God wrote the terms of the Lamb's sacrifice for the elect. **HEB 10:7.**
 - d. God writes the benefits of the Lamb's work in the hearts of the elect. **HEB 10:16-17.**
 - (3) “Wherever this good work is begun it is of God's beginning: He has begun a good work in you. We could not begin it in ourselves, for we are by nature dead in trespasses and sins: and what can dead men do towards raising themselves to life; or how can they begin to act till they are enlivened in the same respect in which they are said to be dead? It is God who quickens those who are thus dead, Eph.2:1; Col.2:13.”
(Mr. William Harris, Matthew Henry Commentary)
 - (4) It is a good work which God begins and performs until the day of Jesus Christ, i.e., the day of His coming.
 - AA. God begins salvation in us by regenerating the inward man according to His mercies and grace. **TIT 3:5; ROM 7:22.**
 - BB. At the day of Christ we will receive our glorified bodies which will complete the work of salvation. **PHIL 3:20-21.**
 - CC. There is not even a hint of our doing any part of this work.
 - DD. Eternal salvation ultimately is not a matter of us faithfully *persevering* unto the end; it is a matter of God faithfully *preserving* us unto the end. **1TH 5:23-24; 1PE 1:5.**
 - EE. He Who begins this work Himself completes it. He is both Author and Finisher of our faith. **HEB 12:2.**
2. When people turn from sin, self and the world unto Christ and wait for Him with steadfast patience, a confident expectation of glory is rightly concluded. **1TH 1:4-10.**
- D. In v. 7, Paul goes on to qualify why he could have such confidence about the saving grace in the Philippians he mentioned in v. 6.
1. They were with him in his *bonds*.
 - a. Paul was in bonds because of the gospel. **EPH 6:19-20.**
 - b. They had not been only fair-weather friends and saints who denied or abandoned him when persecution arose. **MAR 14:50; 2TI 4:10, 16.**

- c. They identified with him in his bonds and even ministered to his needs. **PHIL 4:14 c/w 2TI 1:16; HEB 13:3.**
 - 2. They were with him in the *defense* of the gospel.
 - a. They not only had not forsaken Paul; they had also not forsaken the gospel. They defended it. c/w **JUDE 1:3.**
 - b. They had not been such as only love the truth until it hurts. **MAR 4:16-17.**
 - 3. They were with him also in the *confirmation* of the gospel.
 - a. confirmation: The action of making firm or sure, strengthening, settling, establishing (of institutions, opinions, etc.).
 - b. Annexed to the *defense* of the gospel is *confirmation* of the gospel.
 - c. The more one defends the gospel, the more he is sure and strengthened. **ACT 9:20-22.**
 - 4. In all three of these things they were partakers of his grace. They shared in the same grace that empowered and sustained Paul in his labors and sufferings. **2CO 12:9-10.**
- E. A notable characteristic of Paul is seen in **vs. 7-8.**
 - 1. He had them *in his heart*.
 - a. Paul's relating to the Philippians was not one of dry, mechanical duty. His ministry was not just a job.
 - b. Paul was not a hypocrite whose heart was not in it. **MAT 15:8.**
 - c. Paul had a genuine heartfelt interest in the spiritual welfare of people. **ROM 9:1-3; 10:1; 2CO 2:4.**
 - d. Genuine Christianity springs from the heart. **ROM 10:8-10 c/w ACT 8:37; ROM 6:17.**
 - 2. He longed after them all *in the bowels of Jesus Christ*.
 - a. long: To think long, desire. To have a yearning desire; to wish earnestly. Const. for (after, occas. at, to) or with inf.
 - b. bowels: transf. (Considered as the seat of the tender and sympathetic emotions, hence): Pity, compassion, feeling, heart.
 - c. Paul had a great yearning desire for the brethren. **PHIL 4:1.**
 - d. Christ also longs after the brethren. **JER 31:20; HEB 2:11-12.**
 - e. Paul was so attuned to Christ that he felt like Christ.
 - (1) The more we are like Christ, the more of Christ will men see in us, which redounds to His glory. **GAL 1:24.**
 - (2) Therefore our desire must ever be, "He must increase, but I must decrease (**JOH 3:30**)."
 - f. He was not just saying this to flatter them. He called God to record in the matter!
 - 3. Questions:
 - a. How great is your longing after the brethren in the church?
 - b. Do you long for their company above the company of this world?
 - c. Do you desire their well-being in all good things and act and pray accordingly?
 - d. How in harmony are you with the feelings of Christ?