



Brown CG Zoom Lesson

To Be Content: Our Fellowship

Phil. 1:1-11

September 13, 2020

I. Starter Thoughts and Context:

What does true contentment look and feel like to you? How would you describe someone who is truly content? Does being content have anything to do with your events, a current or past difficult situation or your current place in life? Think if a difficult situation you encountered, how did your perspective at the time affect your experience, attitude, and how you responded to the difficult situation?

II. 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: ² Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. ³ I thank my God every time I remember you. ⁴ In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy ⁵ because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, ⁶ 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. ⁷ 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. ⁸ God can testify how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus. ⁹ And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, ¹⁰ so that you may be able to discern what is best and may 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.

Explanation:

Paul began this epistle by identifying himself and his companion Timothy, and by wishing God's richest blessings on his readers. Paul's lack of reference to his apostleship is in harmony with the overall emphasis of this epistle (1 and 2 Thess. and Phile.). In his other Prison Epistles, Paul introduced himself as an apostle, but here he began by calling himself simply a "servants of Christ." This was a personal letter—rather than one giving correction, that needed apostolic authority behind it so the recipients would accept it and act on its instructions. Paul was fond of addressing his fellow believers as "saints" (cf. Rom. 1:7; 1 Cor. 1:2; 2 Cor. 1:1; Eph. 1:1; Col. 1:2; 1 Thess. 3:13; 2 Thess. 1:10; Phile. 5, 7). This title reflects the Christian's present justified standing before God, though not necessarily his or her present sanctified standing in the sight of other people. "Grace" and "peace" were Paul's favorite words of blessing in his epistles. He wished that God would bestow these gifts on the Philippians *even more* than He had so far. "Grace" refers to God's unmerited favor and divine enablement. "Peace" is the cessation of hostilities, and the inner tranquility that are the result of God's grace. The reason Paul was always joyful as he prayed for the Philippians was their "participation", or partnership (

fellowship), "in the gospel." The fellowship in view, as the use of this word in the New Testament indicates, means sharing together with mutual activity and mutual benefit in a close bond. "Partnership in the gospel" includes partnership with God and with other believers, that the gospel makes possible. It also involves "participation" in the work of getting the gospel to people. The Philippians had recently sent Paul a gift (4:10-14), and had done so more than once before (4:16; 2 Cor. 11:9). Even in Philippi he had received hospitality from Lydia (Acts 16:15) and the Philippian jailer (Acts 16:33-34). However, Paul's use of *koinonia* here implies a broader meaning than just physical assistance. It probably includes all that Paul and his readers shared as committed Christians who sought to disseminate the gospel.

III. **Group Discussion Questions:**

1. What is the difference in the way Paul introduces himself in Verse 1 of this book compared to other epistles written in prison? Why would he do this?
2. What does Paul say is the reason he is so joyful as he prayed for the Philippians?
3. What is the "good work" that Paul refers to in verse 6?
4. When you think of contentment, what does that mean to you?
5. What do we learn about Paul's perspective on life and contentment from his prayer (v 9-11)?
6. How does a lack of focus on Christ and his ways lead to a lack of contentment?
7. How might we apply Paul's prayer to our own lives?

IV. **Responding in Prayer:**

Pray today for God's grace to cover each person in your CG, each member of our church, and each citizen of our community. Pray for love to permeate hearts to heal where division and hatred seem to be so prevalent. Pray for perspective on life and contentment with each circumstance, knowing that God's plan for each of us is perfect in His timing. Pray for endurance and patience in proclaiming the name of Jesus and the gospel to a dark and hurting world, and that the light of Christ be made known.