

## Saints Alive!

**Text:** Philippians 1:1-2

### Introduction:

1. Review:
  - a. Theme of the Epistle is joy (See 4:4).
  - b. Suggested outlines of the Epistle.  
One suggested outline of the Book taking the mind as the theme is as follows:<sup>1</sup>
    - The Single Mind (Chap. 1)
    - The Submissive Mind (Chap. 2)
    - The Spiritual Mind (Chap. 3)
    - The Secure Mind (Chap. 4)  
Another suggested outline taking Christ as the theme of the Book is as follows:
    - Christ our Life (Chap. 1)
    - Christ our Mind (Chap. 2)
    - Christ our Goal (Chap. 3)
    - Christ our Strength (Chap. 4)
2. F.B. Meyer summarizes the Epistle in these words, “This is the tenderest of all the Epistles. There is no chiding or rebuke. It is suffused throughout with words of good cheer, or joy and peace, though it was written in bonds to which the Apostle makes frequent reference (1:7, 13, 14, 16). There is no trace of despondency or gloom, and though sent to a Church which he had not seen for five or six years, there appeared no necessity for those strictures and reproofs with which the other Epistles are filled.”
3. Findlay adds, “This is an epistle of the heart, a true love letter, full of friendship, gratitude and confidence.”
4. In this message we will study the Apostle’s introductory salutation in the Epistle under three headings:

### I. THE AUTHOR (VS. 1A)

#### A. The Person who wrote Philippians

1. Pauline authorship is crystal clear, Paul’s name appears in the salutation (Vs. 1). Additionally, there are frequent personal references in the Epistle that strongly affirm Paul’s authorship of this Epistle. There is reference to his imprisonment – “my bonds” (1:13) as well as Paul’s close associates Timothy (1:1, 2:19) and Epaphroditus (2:25, 4:18).
2. His name was originally ‘Saul’. Being from the tribe of Benjamin (Phil. 3:5) he was most likely named after king Saul, Israel’s first king. He was not dissimilar to the O.T. Saul in some respects. Before salvation, he was a proud, arrogant and ambitious individual. But God took Saul and changed him into Paul (means little or

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<sup>1</sup> Outline by Wiersbe.

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small). Paul came to view himself as “the least of all saints” (Eph. 3:8).

### B. The Place where Philippians was written

1. Paul wrote during his first imprisonment in Rome (See Acts 28:16-31). Paul refers to his ‘bonds’ (1:14), “the palace” (praetorium) (1:13) and “Caesar’s household” (4:22)
2. Ephesians, Colossians and Philemon were also “prison Epistles” written during the same time period.

### C. The Period when Philippians was written

1. Paul wrote from prison in Rome about A.D. 61, roughly ten years after his establishment of the Philippian church (Hester).
2. The prison Epistles were written towards the end of the Apostle’s ministry. Paul’s final letters, the Pastoral Epistles, would be written approx. 2 years later in A.D. 63.

## II. THE ASSOCIATE (VS. 1B)

### A. Timothy’s History

1. His name. The name Timothy means, “he that honours God.” In Jewish families, names were generally not given without some significance being placed on the meaning of the name. Refer Genesis 29 & 30 (Rachel & Leah). Timothy was blessed with a godly mother & grandmother (II. Timothy 1:5). It is likely that this name reflects their godly desire that Timothy would grow up to be a man who would bring honour to the true and living God.
2. His hometown. Timothy was a native of Lystra with a Jewish mother and Greek father.
3. His conversion. It is likely he was converted during Paul’s first missionary journey. The sowing of the Word of God into his life by Lois (grandmother) and Eunice (mother) prepared him for salvation. 2 Tim. 3:15 “And that from a child thou hast known **the holy scriptures**, which are **able to make thee wise unto salvation** through faith which is in Christ Jesus.”

### B. Timothy’s Ministry

1. He joins Paul on his second missionary journey as a part of the ministry team. He learned from the Apostle and became an able and valuable servant of Christ.
2. Note: If God has called you to the ministry, then be a Timothy and learn from the man God has placed over you.
3. Timothy shared in the establishment of the work at Philippi so was well known to the Philippian church.
4. “the servants of Jesus Christ” = Paul uses the word servant (lit. bondsman) to describe his and Timothy’s position. A bondsman was one “owned by and subservient to the master of the household.” (Fee) This is a fitting title in light of the fact humility is a dominant theme in the Epistle (Phil. 2).
5. Note: It is interesting that Paul did not use his more formal title of ‘apostle’ as in other letters. The same is true in the two Thessalonian Epistles. This again highlights the personal, affectionate tone of the Epistle. Paul did not need to assert his

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apostolic authority. The Macedonian churches occupied a special place in the Apostle's heart (2 Cor. 8:1-4).

### III. THE AUDIENCE (VS. 1C-2)

#### A. The Apostle's Description of them (Vs. 1c)

Paul writes to:

1. The Saints in the Congregation – 'saints'
  - a. Their Spiritual Position
    - i. 'saints' = set apart ones. You are a saint, now behave in a saintly manner! We need to seek to put our sanctified position into practice. Positionally, we have perfect sanctification but practically we are still learning and growing in the working out of that position. F.B. Meyer writes, "We are not to infer from this that they were perfect in character, but that they were set apart from the world, by the cross of Christ and the anointing of the Holy Spirit for high and holy service in the world."
    - ii. "in Christ Jesus" = a frequent N.T. description of the believer's position in Christ. This is a place of spiritual safety in a morally polluted world.
  - b. Their Geographical Position
    - i. "at Philippi" = the earthly location of these believers.
    - ii. Teaches us an important lesson that God does not remove the believer from the world the moment he gets saved. Rather, he leaves the believer in this world for a time to be a light and witness for His glory.
2. The Shepherds in the Congregation – 'bishops'
  - a. The word 'bishop' means 'overseer'. It is made up of two words – 'epi' (over) and 'skopos' (sight). "It means to look upon, to inspect as an overseer or a superintendent, comparable to the modern 'foreman'." (Gromacki) The term is used interchangeably in the New Testament with 'elder' and 'pastor'.
    - i. The use of 'elder' and 'bishop' in the same context of Titus 1:5-7 confirms that one office is in view.
    - ii. The three terms are found in Paul's address to the Ephesian elders. In Acts 20 Paul calls the 'elders' (Vs. 17) together. They had been made 'overseers' (bishops) by the Holy Ghost and had a duty to 'feed' (pastor) the church of God.
    - iii. The three words are again found in 1 Peter 5:1-2 in Peter's address to elders. "The **elders** which are among you I exhort, who are also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: **Feed** (pastor) the flock of God which is among you, taking the **oversight** (bishop) *thereof*, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind;"
    - iv. Bishop Lightfoot writes, "It is a fact now generally recognised by theologians of all shades of opinion, that in the language of the New Testament the same officer in

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the Church is called indifferently “bishop,” or “elder” or “presbyter.”

- b. We therefore believe in one office with three titles.
  - i. Elder – refers more to spiritual maturity in Christ rather than merely to physical age. The qualifications of the pastor-elder-bishop make it clear that a man who is a ‘novice’ cannot hold the office. The word means “newly planted” and therefore refers to one who is newly saved and young in the faith. Timothy was in pastoral ministry and Paul exhorted him “Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.” (1 Tim. 4:12). The exact age when a man is ready for such a position will vary from candidate to candidate. Spurgeon commenced pastoring at the age of 19 and was greatly used of God. For most, that would be a premature age to take on such a high office. The local church is tasked with examining the candidate in light of the Scriptures to determine if the candidate is ready for office.
  - ii. Bishop – refers to the overseeing function of the office. The pastor-elder-bishop is not to be a dictator, seeking to control every minute detail of the members and their ministries (a lord over God’s heritage). That said, the office is invested with authority from God to rule in the house of God and God’s people are duty bound to obey and submit so long as the pastor is ruling in accordance with the Scriptures and the confines of his office (Heb. 13:17; 1 Thess. 5:12-13).
  - iii. Pastor – means shepherd and refers to the feeding, nurturing and leading aspects of the office. The pastor-elder-bishop is to tend the flock, teaching the Word of God and ministering to their spiritual needs.
- c. The Question of Plurality. The word is in the plural indicating that the church at Philippi had more than one pastor. Some accuse Baptists of being guilty of a one-man ministry. To that accusation we offer the following thoughts for consideration:
  - i. There is no set rule in Scripture as to the number of pastors and each local church under the headship and leadership of Christ needs to determine this. “The multiplicity of these positions depends on the church’s individual needs and upon the availability of qualified men.” (Gromacki)
  - ii. More than one pastor in a church can be a blessing but they must be **called** and **qualified** men. This narrows down the pool of candidates considerably.
  - iii. The multiplication of the offices will largely be in proportion to the growth of the church. If the church has 10 members it is inconceivable that you would have 5 bishops! If you have a church of 10,000, you will likely have many pastors.

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3. The Servants in the Congregation – ‘deacons’
  - a. The word means ‘servant’. It is made up of two words – ‘through’ and ‘dust’; hence painting the picture of one who moves quickly in the performance of his duties.
  - b. This is the second office of the New Testament church. Its function is to support the pastoral ministry, unburdening the pastors of the domestic load of the church so that they can be more effective in the performance of their duties (See Acts 6:1-7).
  - c. Ruling is not a function of the diaconate; it is a function of the pastorate. The deacon office is a position of influence but not one of authority in the local church.
  - d. Note: Notice the word “with” – “with the bishops and deacons”. These office bearers are a part of the whole alongside the other saints.

### **B. The Apostle’s Desire for them (Vs. 2)**

1. The Specific blessings he Desired (Vs. 2a)
  - a. Grace – this was a gentile greeting. The Philippian’s had experienced grace in salvation but Paul desired that they would know grace in sanctification.
  - b. Peace – this was a Jewish greeting. The peace of God follows experiencing the grace of God.
2. The Source of the blessings he desired (Vs. 2b)
  - a. The Father.
  - b. The Son.

### **Conclusion:**

1. Will you allow God to change you from a condemned sinner to a forgiven saint?
2. What is your attitude towards yourself? Do you have the bondsman mindset or are you puffed up in pride?