

WHAT BELIEVERS HAVE IN COMMON
PHILIPPIANS 1:1-11

Introduction:

Paul wrote many letters to Churches in the course of his ministry. Sometimes his letters, like the ones to the Church in Corinth and the Church in Galatia, **were written to combat sins within the Church.** But, the letter to the Church at Philippi was different.

In its pages, we find no words of rebuke or correction. **What we find are words of affection and praise.** It is apparent from what Paul writes that this Church, stood with him in prayer, in partnership and in financial support when other Churches failed to come to his aid. Paul never forgot their ministry of love!

As Paul begins this letter, he uses a word in verse 5 that I want us to focus on. It is the word "**fellowship**". This is a word and a concept that can be and oftentimes is misunderstood by the modern Church.

We are having a get together with some food next Sunday evening after the service and we call it a "**fellowship**." Or, we might meet at Wendy's after Church on some Sunday evening and refer to that as a time of "**fellowship**." That's NOT what this word in verse 5 is speaking of!

The "**fellowship**" that Paul speaks of in verse 5 runs far deeper than a meal or a good time together. The English word "**fellowship**" is the translation of the Greek word "**koinonia**", which means "**partnership**" or "**participation**". It refers to "**things held in common, or things shared.**" It means to be so closely bound together that there is **open and mutual sharing!**

The opposite of that is seen in Paul's usage of this word in *2 Corinthians 6:14*, "**Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?**"

The whole idea in that verse is that light and darkness are so mutually exclusive that they cannot dwell together! They are so different that they share nothing in common! Paul takes that picture and projects it into the life of the believer.

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Believers and non-believers are so different that they should never yoke up!

So, **Biblical fellowship** refers to those things that we are all involved in and share in together. It is those things that we hold in common as believers that I want us to focus in on today.

It appears from what Paul says that the Church in Philippi was a great Church! The reason they were a great Church is that **they enjoyed and promoted genuine fellowship.** It was their realization of these things that they had in common that made them great!

There are some basic truths that all of us who are saved hold in common! These truths form the basis of our fellowship together! A realization of these truths are what will make any Church a great Church!

I. WE HAVE A COMMON BIRTH! (Vs 1)

When I say "*a common birth*" I am not referring to an ordinary birth! There is nothing ordinary about what Jesus did for us when He saved us by His grace!

What I am referring to is the fact that all believers share the same kind of born-again experience. Those who are truly born-again, got that way in the same way—BY GRACE THROUGH FAITH IN CHRIST JESUS!

A. Notice how Paul addresses his letter to the Philippians. He was writing to "***all the saints in Christ Jesus.***"

That designation set these people apart! You see, not everyone in Philippi was ***in Christ Jesus!*** Just like not everyone in Orange Park, FL is ***in Christ Jesus!*** It is this state of being ***in Christ Jesus*** that makes one a Child of God!

1 John 5:12—“He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.”

B. So, how does a person get "***in Christ Jesus?***"

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Depending upon who we might ask, the answer to that question might range from being baptized to living a good life.

However, if we really want to know the truth about how to get **in Christ Jesus**, I think we need to seek our answers from the Bible itself!

C. So, what does the Word of God say about this?

1. First, the Bible makes it clear that **you cannot be saved by your own strength, or by anything that you can do, like works, or good deeds, etc.**

Romans 8:8—“So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.”

Ephesians 2:8-9—“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast.”

2. Second, the Bible is also clear when it states **the true path to salvation.**

John 3:16—“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

Acts 16:31—“And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.”

Romans 10:9-10—“That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. 10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”

3. Third, the Bible is again clear when it tells us that **this salvation is available to all men!**
(Romans 10:13; 2 Peter 3:9; Revelation 22:17)

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Romans 10:13—“For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

2 Peter 3:9—“The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.”

Revelation 22:17—“And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.”

4. Fourth, the Bible is clear when **it teaches us that anyone who does not come to Jesus the Bible way will not be saved and will not go to Heaven.**

John 3:3—“Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”

John 3:7—“Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.”

Acts 4:12—“Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.”

5. So, the answer as to how a person gets “in Christ Jesus” is simple. Respond to the call of God, repent of your sin and receive Jesus into your life. Then you will be in Him and He will be in you and you will be saved! That is how it works!

- D. Now, having said all that, let me say that when a person trusts Jesus as Savior, that person becomes part of the family of God.

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Regardless of his or her background they become one with all other believers. We all share a common birth that places us in the same family.

- E. So, have you experienced that new birth? Are you “in Christ Jesus?” Are you genuinely saved this morning? If you are, praise God! If not, you can be by trusting Jesus and His shed blood!

WE HAVE A COMMON BIRTH!

II. WE HAVE A COMMON BLESSING! (VS. 2)

Paul gives his standard two-fold blessing to this Church!

Our “COMMON BIRTH” brings a two-fold blessing in our lives!
Grace and Peace!

A. Grace Be Unto You (from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.)

This should remind us that not only are we the recipients of God’s grace at Salvation because of the Lord Jesus Christ, but we are continually recipients of grace because of that relationship.

1 Peter 5:10–“But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.”

(Grace for every need is available from the God of all Grace!)

B. And Peace (from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ).

This should remind us that we received **peace** at the moment of our Salvation because of the Lord Jesus Christ and we continue to receive **peace** because of that relationship.

Romans 5:10–“For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.”

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Colossians 1:20-21–“And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. 21 And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled.”

WE HAVE A COMMON BIRTH...A COMMON BLESSING...

III. WE HAVE A COMMON BURDEN! (Vs 3-7)

This section of the passage is summed up well by Paul's statement in verse 7 where he says, ***"I have you in my heart."***

Paul is reminding these believers that they hold a special place in his life. They are in his heart! Think about what this statement says.

Paul is in a Roman prison awaiting trial before Caesar. Yet, his thoughts are filled with praise for these special brothers and sisters in Christ! Even as he can see his own impending death, he still expresses his love for the brethren!

This ought to be a challenge to every child of God this morning! The place that our fellow believers hold in our own hearts reveals a great deal about where we stand with the Lord! Because, just as surely as we all share a common birth experience, we should also all share a common burden experience.

Paul shares the two-fold burden of his heart for the Philippian Church and in doing so teaches us how we should feel about our brothers and sisters in Christ. By the way, a burden is not always a negative experience!

A. There Is The Burden Of Prayer With Praise. (Vs 3-5; 8-11)

Paul tells us that his heart is filled with joy every time he remembers his fellow believers there in Philippi. He prays to the Lord and praises the Lord that they are in the family together. This was his attitude toward all believers!

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Then Paul prays for some very specific things for this Church!
Romans 1:8-9—“*First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world. 9 For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers;*”

Romans 6:17—“*But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you.*”

1 Corinthians 1:4-5— “*I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ; 5 That in every thing ye are enriched by him, in all utterance, and in all knowledge;*”

Ephesians 1:15-16—“*Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, 16 Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers;*”

Colossians 1:3-4—“*We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, 4 Since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have to all the saints*”

1 Thessalonians 1:2-4—“*We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers; 3 Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father; 4 Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God.*”

That ought to be the attitude of our hearts when we think of our fellow Church members here at Central Baptist! How do we remember them?

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Do we think of the times they did something we didn't like?
Do we remember the time when they said something hurtful?

Or, do we rejoice that **we are saved** and **they are saved** and that **we have the privilege of serving God together?**

Certainly, one of the great marks of a healthy Church is a deeply felt thanksgiving and **praise** along with **prayers** offered for one another!

B. There Is The Burden Of Partnership! (Vs 5)

Paul is thankful that these people have joined with him in carrying out the Gospel ministry the Lord has called him to!

This Church was faithful to stand with Paul in his times of need, Philippians 4:15-19! They partnered with him in carrying out the ministry of the Lord!

Oh how we need to see that we are in this thing together! Think of it, the Lord founded this church to reach people for Jesus! And, each of us is essential to getting that job done!

We need one another more than we will ever know! May we learn to appreciate the fact that we are partners in the work of God!

The Church is a team! Someone pointed out, **there is no “I” in “team.”** We are partners in the ministry!

Conclusion

This Church in Philippi was a great Church! It was because they shared these three things we've looked at:

A COMMON BIRTH...Born again into the Family of God!

Have you been born again by the Spirit of God through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ? If not, why not come?

A COMMON BLESSING...Grace and Peace

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A COMMON BURDEN...Burden of Prayer, Praise, and Partnership!

As a result, they grew strong in the Lord and honored Him. They were great because they stuck to the basics and worked hand in hand with Jesus (and those who knew Him and were called of Him) to carry out His will in the world!