

# THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE GOSPEL

## (Part Three)

**TEXT:** Philippians 1:3-7, 12-14, 17, 27-30

**INTRODUCTION:** The reason the apostle Paul still had joy in his heart even as he sat under house arrest in Rome chained to a guard was that he knew the gospel of Jesus Christ was still progressing. These Philippian believers to whom he was writing were a special cause for thanksgiving (v. 3) because they shared with Paul in his suffering and sacrifice for the sake of the gospel. Their fellowship was true *“fellowship in the gospel.”* Their joy – like Paul’s – was gospel joy.

Paul commended the Philippians for not being ashamed of his imprisonment, but for being willing to defend the gospel against those who opposed or perverted it. They were true partakers of the grace that God had given him to suffer for Christ’s sake. How relieved they must have been to finally hear from Paul after wondering about him for several years since Epaphroditus had been sent to try to find him.

**OUTLINE:** What does true “fellowship in the gospel” entail?

**I. Salvation** (v. 3)

- A. The feat of God
- B. The “fellowship of the Spirit” (2:1)

**II. Sacrifice** (vv. 5, 6; 4:15, 16)

- A. The effect of gratitude (*“from the first day...”*)
- B. The work of grace (*“he which hath begun a good work in you”*)
- C. The mark of genuineness (*“until now... will perform it...”*)

**III. Suffering** (v. 7)

- A. Partakers of grace
- B. Partners in the defense of the gospel (vv. 17, 27)
  - 1. Standing for the essentials of the gospel
    - a. Justification by faith
    - b. Substitutionary atonement
  - 2. Standing for the exclusivity of the gospel
- C. Partners in the confirmation of the gospel (Tit. 2:10)
  - 1. Through holy living
  - 2. Through suffering (v. 29)

#### **IV. Surrender (v. 12)**

**A.** The response of a spiritual man (Acts 16:6-10)

**B.** The realization of Romans 8:28

**CONCLUSION:** It's hard to spoil the joy of someone whose joy is all wrapped up in the gospel! Just look at the apostle Paul. Beat him up and throw him in jail – he'll have the jailer converted by midnight. Chain him to an elite guard 18 inches away, and he'll lead him to Christ. Arrest him, and his defense before the king will turn into a vigorous proclamation of the gospel!

Let's get passionate about the gospel! Let's rejoice in its advancement regardless of its ramifications for us personally. Then we will truly be able to say with Paul, *"For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain"* (v. 21).