

SOUTH GROVE FREE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH LONDON

Lord's Day Morning

Date 22nd May 2022 Hymns Psalm 96v1-7 Tune 58, 277, 306 Read: Philippians 1:1-8 Text Philippians 1:7

Series: Philippians (18) Title: Partakers With Paul of Grace

When Paul was in a Roman jail, sometime later, news had spread to the saints at Philippi, that Paul was imprisoned for the cause of the gospel.

According to **Acts 28:23**, at a certain day and time, Paul was allowed visitors, as **there came many to him into his lodging.**

During one of these visits, the Church at Philippi sent Epaphroditus with a gift, to support Paul in every way they could in the gospel.

Paul then wrote the letter to the church at Philippi and it was sent back with Epaphroditus not only inform them of Paul's condition, but assure God's people,

that God work is not hindered, and also to encourage God's people that while Paul was in Rome, and they were miles away in Philippi, separated by distance, they are united in one Lord, one faith, one Gospel.

when it comes serving Christ in the gospel, Paul said, **Ye all are partakers of my grace.**

Paul is saying by my presence in Rome, you are present also. **Ye all are partakers of my grace.**

The original reading of these words are, **ye are all fellow partakers with me of grace.**

Paul is right to clarify, the gospel is the grace of God.

Paul wrote to the believers at Ephesus and said in **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.**

What is grace, it is God's undeserved, unmerited favour, and goodness extended to sinners who only deserve divine and eternal wrath.

God's grace is amazing, abounding, advancing, and its eternal.

That is reason God's grace never leaves a sinner where it finds them, rather grace saves, grace transforms a life, grace causes spiritual growth.

Grace is the basis to love what God loves and hate what God hates. Grace establishes a love for God's people.

God's grace never left Paul on the road to Damascus, to fall back into sin, and pursue his wild career, persecuting believers.

Rather, God's grace led Paul onward and forward in the things of God, in spiritual matters, a love for believers. Christ likeness, and to enjoy fellowship with Christ.

That is why it is a contradiction when people say they are saved by grace but there is no change in the life, no desire for holiness, no interest, no desire for God's house, no desire to live for God, to read the scriptures and pray. No growth, no going forward.

Rather the opposite.

The Bible teaches in **2 Corinthians 5:17**, of the one saved by the grace of God in Christ, ***is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.***

Therefore, Paul himself was only a sinner saved by the grace of God. That's why Paul then states, ***Ye all are partakers of my grace***, or ***fellow partakers with me of grace.***

The word **partakers** means ***fellow partakers with***, ***it is made up of two Greek words, sun-koinonos.*** (Coin on os) The first part of the word is **sun** which means ***with***, the idea is of ***intimacy, union, oneness.***

The second part of word is **koionos**, (Coin on os) means **companion, partner, communion to share**. it is the same as word **fellowship** used in **verse 5**.

Paul states in the gospel of grace, the saints at Philippi, are all partakers, companions with him, and share with him in the spiritual blessings, saving benefits, and severe battles in the grace of the gospel.

Paul is showing, All the blessings I have enjoyed in gospel ministry, you entered into them because you support me and pray for me,

but equally true, all the sufferings that I endure in gospel ministry you enter into them, because you identify, associate with me, we have the same mind when it comes to the furtherance of the gospel.

Men and woman that is the same truth today, **Ye all are partakers of my grace**, with me in grace.

you share with in in gospel ministry, all the blessings, and battles the gospel ministry in this house, you share in them, because you support, associate, pray and contribute to God's work in this place.

Day by day we may be separated by distance, various places, but when I go around the doors giving invites, Hospitall visits, LTBS radio ministry or witness to anyone or help someone spiritually by whatever means they contact me, weather by email, phone, text, you share and participate in it, you go with me, answering and witnessing with me, **Ye all are partakers of my grace**.

May I even say vice versa, **I am a partaker of your grace**, because this is the Lord's work and we work through His grace. We are one in Christ.

There is none of this divisive, isolation, talk, working alone, or apart from others.

(these are mine and they are yours. Or if I bring anyone into Church, they are mine.)

There is no competition in the Lord's work.

We strive, build, labour, together for the furtherance of the gospel.

We share in gospel ministry, in fact we are all partakers of the grace of God.

Paul encourages the believers Philippi, as he is in Rome, they are partakers with him in grace,

now let's consider in what way the Philippians are partakers with Paul in grace.

I FIRST, THE SAINTS AT PHILIPPI WERE PARTAKERS WITH PAUL OF GRACE IN THE BONDS OF THE GOSPEL.

Verse 7 *“inasmuch as both in my bonds, and in the defence and confirmation of the gospel, ye all are partakers of my grace.”*

Paul was bound to a Roman guard. We read this in **Acts 28:16** *“...Paul was suffered to dwell by himself with a soldier that kept him.”*

He was chained to different guards his whole time.

So, the word **bonds** literally refers *to being imprisoned chained and bounded*. He uses the same word **bonds** in **verses 13, 14, 16**.

But Paul takes this word **bonds**, and applies it to the gospel, and in this sense it refers to the sufferings, afflictions and reproach of the gospel for the sake of Christ.

Notice he said in **verse 13** *“so that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace and in all other places.*

The citizens and authorities where Paul preached the gospel, despised the gospel message of free grace without human intervention.

It was not agreeable, acceptable and accommodating their customs or traditions.

Paul said in **Acts 28:17** *I have committed nothing against the people, or customs of our fathers, yet was I delivered prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans.*

The gospel Paul preached didn't elevate man, rather it exalted Christ, it centred upon Christ's one sacrifice for sin & resurrection to give acceptance with God.

Paul lifts the meaning of his bonds, to higher ground and sees himself **in bonds to Christ**, bound to the will of God, He views himself in the highest term a prisoner of Christ.

He describes himself this way in **Ephesians 3:1**.

Paul is in bonds, for righteousness's sake, He was a prisoner because he preached Christ. He has suffered reproach for the gospel.

(While chained to the Roman guard, we read in **Acts 28:23-24** ***“And when they had appointed him a day, there came many to him into his lodging; to whom he expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and out of the prophets, from morning till evening. ²⁴ And some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not.”***)

The Philippians are partakers with him, they share in his bonds, in gospel ministry,

But how can this be, they are not in Rome, they are not chained to a Roman guard. Therefore, Paul is speaking of their oneness in Christ, sharing together.

Due to their fellowship in the gospel, having the same mind as Paul, they were one with Paul Spiritually, doctrinally, and prayerfully. The Philippians too were in bonds to Christ.

Believer, we are bound to Christ, and therefore, one in spiritual bonds serving in the cause together.

Throughout the week we are at different locations, leaving literature, speaking to many people, yet as we do, there is a wonderful truth, we in partnership, fellowship with One another, together with Christ, who goes working with us.

we are partakers of grace, advancing the gospel your in your small corner and I in mine.

II SECOND, THE SAINTS AT PHILIPPI WERE PARTAKERS WITH PAUL OF GRACE IN THE DEFENCE OF THE GOSPEL.

Verse 7 “*inasmuch as both in my bonds, and in the defence and confirmation of the gospel, ye all are partakers of my grace.*”

The word **defence**, is the word **apologise, argument, answer** At first that may seem strange, but its meaning apologise in this verse, does not mean what we think it means.

When you think of the word apologise you think of saying sorry, I was wrong, forgive me. That is not the meaning of this word defence or apologise,

Rather it means to give a reasoned argument, an answer or speech in defence of oneself or in this case of the gospel.

In fact this word defence and its Greek meaning apologise is where we get our English word **apologetics**, which gives a strong defence of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

It is a legal term, used in the highest courts to defend the gospel.

God raised up Apologetics or we could call them defenders of the faith, because that's what they did. They defended the gospel in a court of law.

The first time this word defence or its meaning apologetics is used in scripture is **Acts 22**.

On that Occasion the Apostle Paul is defending the gospel, he gives a strong argument or a strong defence for the person and work of Jesus Christ.

Back up to the previous chapter **Acts 21**, Paul has been thrown out of the temple, beaten by the people, nearly killed, then we read in **verse 33** ***“the chief captain came near, and took him, and commanded him to be bound with two chains; and demanded who he was, and what he had done.”***

Then Paul asks to speak unto the people who accuse him of troubling the city.

Verse 40 into Acts 22:1 ***“and when he had given him licence, Paul stood on the stairs, and beckoned with the hand unto the people.***

And when there was made a great silence, he spake unto them in the Hebrew tongue, saying, Acts 22:1 “Men, brethren, and fathers, hear ye my defence which I make now unto you.

we could rightly read these words, ***hear my apology, my argument, my answer, my defence.***

Paul testifies of the grace of the gospel in his life. he does not hold back, He showed himself a sinner.

However, then Paul speaks of the transforming power of the gospel, and how the risen Saviour, confronted him, convicted him and changed him,

verse 8 ***“I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest...”***

v14 He realised God had a will, a purpose for His life,

v16 He got baptised, **v17** He was in prayer.

The man of persecution was now a man of prayer.

**The man who served Religion now served the Redeemer.
Paul's life was changed, transformed by the grace of God.**

(Only when Paul was made to see himself as a sinner, would he be saved. Only when he realised and accepted he was lost in sin could he found by grace.)

This was the Gospel he defended, argued for. Christ was the only answer Paul could give.

In fact Peter used the same word **defence, apology** but its translates as **answer**. **1 Peter 3:15** “ **But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer (defence) to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear.**”

As Paul, Peter, or any apologist, believers are called to defend the gospel, give an answer when asked of the hope we have for life, death and eternity.

As Paul defended the gospel in Rome, in the truest sense the Philippians shared in his defence, they were labourers together, Philippians stood with him at Philippi and prayed for him.

When we do the same today, we are partakers in the gospel of grace, we share with every believer around the world, yeah with one another.

When asked of our eternal hope,

why are you a Christian, attend church, sure your sins are forgiven, by your response you defend the gospel, you answer for the truth.

Maybe there is one today, defenceless, and helpless, no hope within, no answer without.

Jesus is the answer, take Him by faith to be your defence, answer and hope for life, death and all eternity. He will blot out all your transgressions, and give new life.

III THIRD, THE SAINTS AT PHILIPPI WERE PARTAKERS WITH PAUL OF GRACE IN THE CONFIRMATION OF THE GOSPEL.

Verse 7 “The word **confirmation of the gospel** means **to confirm**. It is also a legal term, and the strength of the word means **to guarantee something, to settle, to ratify, to verify, to secure**.

this this case the gospel Paul is confirming, giving the guarantee that gospel which he defends and gives answer to is the gospel of grace, the blood of everlasting covenant of grace, the only way of forgiveness.

Paul was clear in his defence, he confirmed the Gospel is God's sovereign, seeking, and saving grace in Christ Jesus towards guilty sinners.

The saints at Philippi, are partakers with Paul in the confirmation or guarantee that the gospel of Christ is grace alone, that salvation and peace with God is through the blood of Christ alone.

There is nothing any can do to earn favour with God, for sin has brought ruination. In the flesh it is impossible to please God.

Believer you are not saved because you chose Christ, you are saved because Christ chose you to salvation.