

**SOUTH GROVE FREE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH LONDON**

**Lord's Day Morning**

**Date Hymns Psalm 145 2<sup>nd</sup> Version, verses 1-3, 9-15, t -in Christ alone, 16, 406 364 Read: Philippians 1:9-11 Text Philippians 1:10-11**

**Series: Philippians () Title: Abounding Love Proved (2)**

In writing to the saints at Philippi, the Apostle records his prayer for them.

A prayer which concerns their spiritual growth, a love that will abound more and more as the word of God is read and their knowledge grows of Christ's glorious person and His redemptive ministry.

The very fact, Paul prays that their love may abound indicates that they already possess a love that is spiritual, and therefore, he prays for a greater growth in that love.

It is a divine and spiritual love as Paul said in **Romans 5:5** "***the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.***"

Spiritual Love is the foundational grace or virtue, and all else builds upon it and flows from it.

**verse 9-11** Paul's prayer is founded on a divine love within that is seen outward.

This is a love which is overflowing, keeps rising, like a river that bursts it's banks, it continues to make impact and leaves its mark.

In spiritual terms you say of Christ as pictured in **Song of Solomon 5:8** "***yea He is altogether lovely.***"

This is a love that abounds in delight desires, dedication, discernment to Christ, a love that abounds in lifting believers

out of their comfort zone, helping one another, bearing one another burdens, doing good unto the house hold of faith.

It's Abounding love that gets involved, active, prayerful, supportive, abounding love within the family of God. **1 Thess 3:12** ***"and the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you:***

Paul was burdened for the spiritual development of God's people. That was his great concern.

This is what he laboured, towards in his preaching, his teaching, and his writing, but particularly in his prayer life.

Paul's love for the Philippians and his heart's desire to see them grow in grace is noted by his prayers.

**Abounding love is proved by its Priorities, and its Purity, notice also,**

**III THIRD, ABOUNDING LOVE IS PROVED BY IT'S PEACEABLENESS.**

Paul continues in his prayer ***"that ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ."***

The word **offence** refers to **a scandal, a stumbling block.**

But since its connected to the negative, **without**, then Paul is praying that the love which God's people possess

will continually grow and that their lives **will not be an offence, a stumbling block, hinderance, to others who seek to live for God or to the work of God in general.**

(The word refers ***to a smooth path, not to lead into sin, not to cause to stumble.***)

Paul teaches believers, in **1 Corinthians 8, and Romans 14** not to cause someone to stumble.

That is a solemn thought, believer, that my life your life could be a stumbling block to others around us, even in the God's work.

How could believers be a stumbling block, it is by our reactions, attitudes, murmurings unthankfulness, complaining, criticising.

Not a word of blessings to share.

But above all, when their love is not abounding. When they are hindering the spiritual well being of others.

***Or as the term is often said when there is believer on fire for God, zeal, enthusiastic, getting involved, doing what they can, someone will be ready to pour cold water on them, to put the spiritual flames out by their stumbling words.***

This word **without offence** is used two other times in NT, **Acts 24:16** ***“and herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men.”***

**1 Cor 10:32** ***“Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God.***

The idea is to continuously live in such a way so as not to trip others up by being a stumbling block.

To make every attempt in helping a believer on with God.

***Paul laboured as possible as it was for a saved sinner to serve Christ in the church without offence, without being a stumbling block to others,***

***By encouraging the saints at Philippi to pray and labour with this mind in view.***

***At Philippi, Paul encourages two believers, so Paul wrote in Philippians 4:2 “(I beseech Euodias, and beseech Syntyche, that )they be of the same mind in the Lord.”***

When it comes to the work of God, decisions need to be made, be of one mind, come to the same agreement don't allow a difference of opinion to cause disorder, division and dissociate from the fellowship.

In a more serious manner, we can be a stumbling block by discouraging other believers, because they don't fit our own standard.

Peter was a stumbling block to Gentiles believers in **Galatians 2:11-14**. He brought error among the church.

The matter concerned justification, how can man be just, justified, pardoned with God. The answer is by faith alone, through grace alone in Christ alone.

Peter a Jew saved by grace enjoyed fellowship with his Gentile brethren in Christ, also saved by grace.

Peter sat with them and fellowshiped with them, until certain Jews came from Jerusalem, and Peter out of embarrassment, fear of man, he withdrew himself from fellowship with the Gentiles.

He behaved in such a way to give the impression of the Gentiles were not saved, because they were not Jews.

This caused the Gentile believers to doubt the sufficiency of God's grace in Christ for full salvation.

Within, the church of Christ, Peter created, a them and us situation.

He made his own judgment that a person is only pardoned based on man's standard. And because of this, other Jewish believers sided with Peter.

Peter by his own sin lead others into sin. He was an offence to his brethren, a stumbling block to their growth.

**Verse 11** ***"But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed.*** Later Peter repented, and could write in **1 Peter 5:8** **Humble yourselves.**

Therefore, Paul is praying that such stumbling blocks, **offence** will be avoided at all cost, not just from time to time but until or "**till the day of Christ.**"

The phrase **the day of Christ**, refers to the second coming of Christ. The thought is, as God's people live on earth they are to do so without being a stumbling block an hinderance, to other believers.

We are ever labouring toward this goal. But this can only be achieved as our love abounds more and more, overflowing toward Christ and the saints of God. Then believers will work and prayer together.

Lord help us to be a blessing, an encouragement to one another. To strive in peace together for the gospel.

Believer keep looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of the faith. **1 Peter 2:21** He has left us an example to follow His steps, and also in **1 John 2:6** ***"to walk, even as he walked.*** Delight thyself in the Lord, that your love will abound more and more.

## **IV FOURTH ABOUNDING LOVE IS PROVED BY IT'S PRODUCE.**

**Verse 11** “*Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.*”

Paul is praying regarding the produce, that follows from salvation by or through Christ, *the fruits of righteousness*.

Paul is praying about living a righteous life or doing right, because the one who is saved by grace, is a new creature in Christ, all things become new, they partake of the divine nature.

the righteous Lord loveth righteousness, He doeth right, and He will have His people be like Himself, in holiness, and righteousness in all works.

This is the theme of Paul's prayer that believers will do right, as they are enabled and empowered to do right, because

(the words *Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, refers to an action that has taken place in the past, but the effects or benefits are on going today, in this case from salvation until the return of Christ.* )

At the moment of regeneration meaning new birth, spiritual life, within the sinner saved by grace, *the fruits of righteousness*, all the blessings of grace, that Christ has purchased by His blood, are sown, planted, and from that time the fruits of righteousness start to abound, and continue to ripen, harvest and overflow.

**Paul can pray these words because only a righteous person will produce the fruits of righteousness,**

**where there is a root of righteousness, there will be fruits of righteousness**

**the fruits of righteousness**, include the 9 fold fruit of the spirit in Gal 5, the good works we were created unto after salvation, bearing likeness to Christ, they make up a full salvation.

Its not that a person is saved then at some point they are given fruits of righteousness, rather these fruits are sown, planted **within the heart at salvation**, and as their love **abounds in sanctification** these fruits or spiritual qualities will be evident in their life.

Now while the fruits of righteousness in sanctification will be less or more or grow faster in each believer, the point is there is spiritual fruit to be grown.

In **Matthew 13:3 &23** the Lord Jesus taught in the parable of the seed falling into the good ground, some believers brought forth **“an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, and some thirtyfold.”**

**gospel seed has been sown, to reap gospel blessings.**

**If there is no fruit of righteousness in the life, there is no root of saving grace in the heart.**

But where there is saving grace, grace will lead on.

Can I ask just now – do you have spiritual life, saving faith in Christ alone.

You cannot live for Christ until Christ lives in you.

Paul said in **Gal 2:21** *Christ liveth in me*, when Christ dwells in the heart and life, that person receives all the blessings or fruit, that Christ has purchased for them, but these blessings or fruit of righteousness must be enlarged upon.

For instance, Love is the root of all the other graces,.

There must be a love first within, in order for love to abound without.

This is a love for Christ and His people, but that love grows, deeper, greater, more intense for Christ and His people, that is why Christ taught in **John 13:35** *“By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.”*

Paul recognises *the fruits of righteousness* are *by* or *through Christ*.

to use the words of Christ Himself in **John 15:1** *“I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.”*

Christ said in **John 15:Verse 16** *“Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain...”*

the point is the fruit of righteousness is produced in the believers life because Christ has purchased, planted them and produces them by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Christ is the source and substance of the fruit of righteousness.

Without Christ there would be no fruit to produce.



Therefore, believer at the cross Christ's divine power has bought and given all we need to live the Christian life, bearing the fruit of righteousness.

Unsaved, Christ has never lost any of His power, He able save you now.

## **V FIFTH, ABOUNDING LOVE IS PROVED BY IT'S PURPOSE.**

***“unto the glory and praise of God.”***

Here is the overriding purpose of Paul's prayer, that their love will abound more and more by Christ ***“unto the glory and praise of God.”*** this the specific aim and design of redemption.

All our actions should be directed to this grand end.

Paul is jealous for the glory of God, unto Him is all glory and praise due, as Peter instructed believers in **1 Peter 4:11** “... ***that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.***”

God created man to glorify Him and enjoy him forever, however due to the fall of man into sin, mankind glorifies and praises self.

Paul said in **Romans 1:21** ***“they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.”***

The fall of man did not remove man's purpose to praise and glorify God. but due to sin, this purpose is resisted, and rejected.

However, Christ by His saving power has reversed the effects of sin, and restored men and woman to glorify and praise God.

(As our love grows by the knowledge of Christ and discern those things that are excellent in assisting our love to overflow, then we will bear fruits of righteousness to honour God.)

Paul prays that the love and lives, the devotion and discernment of saints at Philippi in bearing fruit will be **“unto the glory and praise of God,”** because Christ in His life bear fruit **“unto the glory and praise of God.”**

Christ was sent by the Father into this world for a purpose to glorify Him by His obedience unto death even the death of the cross, to honour God and provide a full pardon for guilty men and woman.

Christ loved His Father and was fully devoted to glorify and praise God. He never sought honour for Himself, but He constantly had the glory and praise of His Father in view.

Christ prayed in **John 17:4 *I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.***

***(His work was to die as the sinners substitute, to pay the penalty of sin as the only way to save sinners. All who call upon Him for mercy will receive and enjoy the eternal benefits of His labour. )***

believer, Paul’s prayer is a vital pattern to adopt in our own prayer life.

***The Lord, has inspired it, for our learning.***

We ought to pray this prayer for the reason purpose.

We live in challenging days, sin abounds at every hand, there is much to cause our love to abound elsewhere, to-redirect it. May our love abound more and more in knowledge to discern what is best to make the best choice at that time.