



Break Notes

Prison Break – Mission and Contentment under Arrest

*The Mission Continues—Philippians 1:1-18a
For the People of the Inversion Fellowship
September 7th 2006*

Philippians 1:1-18a—Holy Bible, English Standard Version

¹Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are at Philippi, with the overseers and deacons: ² Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

³ I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, ⁴ always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, ⁵ because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. ⁶ And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ. ⁷ It is right for me to feel this way about you all, because I hold you in my heart, for you are all partakers with me of grace, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel. ⁸ For God is my witness, how I yearn for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus. ⁹ And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, ¹⁰ so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, ¹¹ filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

¹² I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel, ¹³ so that it has become known throughout the whole imperial guard and to all the rest that my imprisonment is for Christ. ¹⁴ And most of the brothers, having become confident in the Lord by my imprisonment, are much more bold to speak the word without fear. ¹⁵ Some indeed preach Christ from envy and rivalry, but others from good will. ¹⁶ The latter do it out of love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel. ¹⁷ The former proclaim Christ out of rivalry, not sincerely but thinking to afflict me in my imprisonment. ¹⁸ What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed, and in that I rejoice.

Three Things To Remember

Warm Greetings to the People at Philippi

Friendships in the body of Christ are centered in the grace and peace of God. Each of us having a role and function in the church and the attitude of leaders in the church should be that of servants who have been given responsibility, not of big shots who just want to run things.

The Endearment of Missional Friendships

Friendships in the body of Christ, the family of God, are by nature both deeply **intimate** and purposefully **missional** – centered around the person and mission of Jesus. Such friendships can be deep and meaningful, especially in the midst of life's struggles.

The Highest Priority – The Gospel Going Forth

The Gospel going forth is a central unifying theme for the people of God. His work in us through Jesus Christ brings fruit in our lives which literally shows God off. By taking broken people and working in our lives God makes Jesus look good in the midst of our community.

The Junk Drawer

A Simple Greeting?

In the first two verses of Philippians Paul tells us some significant things about our life together in the gospel. A few thoughts I thought would be helpful:

- Paul writes first of all to the **saints** at Philippi. The word “saints” (*hagios*) literally means holy ones, set apart ones, ones that are different because of God’s action in their lives. All believers in Christ are therefore identified as saints in the New Testament. Even when we don’t feel so saintly, we need to remember that God in his grace has set us apart as his own.
- With/Including/Along With the **Overseers** (episkopoi) and **Deacons** (diakonoi)

Episkopoi— Who are these Overseers? The term we are most familiar with in our current culture is “Pastor.” We use the term “Pastor” a lot, in fact if you have THE MESSAGE, a useful paraphrase of the Bible, Eugene Peterson’s version of this passage translates the terms “pastors” and “ministers.” This can be misleading because “Pastor” is not a common New Testament title for church leaders. Pastoring/Shepherding (the word *poimnen*) is used mostly as a verb, the action of shepherding. This calling is usually given to men who are called “Elders/Overseers.” In fact, we know that the same people are called elders *and* overseers in the same context in both Acts 20 and 1 Peter 5. The New Bible commentary on Philippians has an insightful summary of who elders/overseers were and their function:

*Eldership was their place in the community, oversight their responsibility.*¹

Note – A man named Polycarp wrote a letter to this same church about 50 years later which was addressed to a group of leaders he called “elders.”²

Deacons – Many are confused today as to what “deacons” are and what they are to do in the church. To put it very simply, deacons are those who have been called upon by the pastors/elders to serve all sorts of needs which arise in the church. The word simply means “servant” or “minister” - Both men and women are called deacons in the New Testament. A church can call out deacons to serve in many areas of need. There can be deacons of administration, serving needs within the congregation, and serving the poor. There can be deacons who assist in worship, deacons of technology, communication, design and just about anything that serves a need for the people of God. In our church many team leaders and community group leaders effectively function as deacons. But we don’t use the word “Deacon” - it could freak some people out and bring misunderstanding.

One key thing to notice about those in the church called to be leaders is that they are servants and they are to be alongside and with the people. They are not to be lording power trips in the church. The one person who is called a senior pastor in the New Testament is Jesus. Church leaders must see themselves as part of the congregation with specific, God-ordained, responsibilities. The issue is **responsibility** not **lofty positioning** or power trips. Pray for your Pastors that we would be servants and slaves of Jesus, neither serving money or the glory of our own names.

The Day of Christ Jesus

There is a theme throughout the Bible which reoccurs in both the Old and New Testaments. In the Old Testament it is called the Day of the Lord and in the New Testament it is simply called the Day of Jesus Christ. We must never forget the great promise and warning of the Old Testament that the Day of Yahweh was seen as a day of dread for the enemies of God and consummation and rejoicing for God’s people. It is spoken of by almost all the OT Prophets (See Joel 2.1, Amos 5.20) as a coming day of complete ruin and judgment for those who oppose the reign of God in the earth and the time when the salvation of believers – already inaugurated, already started, will be complete.³

There remains a theme throughout the New Testament that we must find refuge in God’s provision for salvation. That we must escape the wrath coming upon us for our sin by trusting, finding grace, mercy, forgiveness in the good news of Jesus’ death for our sins. In the New Testament the “Day of the Lord” is reflected as The Day of Christ Jesus and fills out the meaning of the phrase further. God’s good work in his people will be complete and we will be perfected. We will no longer be weak, lazy, prideful, selfish, broken, dying people. We will be changed – we will be like Jesus, forever with him in his Kingdom, serving, working, creating culture, living in an undying, unbroken world forever. And that my friends is cool.

The Day of Christ should be a joy we look forward to and a sober reminder of our friends’ all around us and the need for the forgiveness of Jesus. There will be a day when it will all be finished. While it is still called today, follow Jesus, trust him, and share his gospel with your friends.

The Junk Drawer...Cont.

Defense of the Gospel

There is a word found two times in Philippians chapter 1 which is translated as “defense” - in both verse 7 and 16 we see that Paul’s imprisonment is for the “defense” of the gospel. What does he mean? The word translated defense is the Greek term *apologia*—and it means to make a speech or case or a defense for a person or idea. Paul uses it here to mean that part of his ministry was to provide a reason for belief in the good news to the unbelieving world.

The word is where we get the term Apologetics—the discipline of theology which provides a case for the truth of the Christian faith. Unfortunately, Apologetics gets ripped from its context in mission and becomes simply an intellectual mind game between really smart Christian guys and really smart Non Christian guys who write books against each other. In Paul’s life, he used a defense of the faith in his proclamation of the good news. He would share it and defend his position when God called him to do so.

In our world which is increasingly both spiritualized and secularized, we need to be good apologists for the faith. We need to understand what we believe and why so we can understand people with whom we desire to share Jesus. A good start in preparing yourself is reading some of the really smart guys and gals’ books. But more importantly to talk to people you know who need Christ. What are their Questions? What are their struggles with believing in God and Jesus’ work on the cross for them? Once you have questions, then you can lovingly *walk with* a friend towards satisfying answers.

Paul was put in jail for his *apologetic*, will you love and engage those around you who need to understand the grace and love of God in Christ?

For a little more reading on the topic, check out my entry “Apologetics in Contemporary Culture” over at: http://www.powerofchange.org/blog/2005/10/apologetics_in_contemporary_cu.html

How Much do you Love Them Paul?

It is fun to play a game with my daughters where we use fun analogies to tell how much we love each other. I love you all the way to the moon and back!!! Or Kayla’s final trump card—I love you all the way to the end of the Universe, to the heart of God, and back. OK, you win!

In Philippians 1:7,8 Paul uses some interesting language to describe his love for the Philippian Christians. In verse 8 he tells them he yearns for them with all the *affections of Christ Jesus*. This last part of the verse is quite interesting. The language actually reads I yearn for you with all the *bowels* of Christ Jesus. Bowels? Innards? It really means I love you with the guts of Christ Jesus. What a great picture to have for us. Paul is telling them that he loves them with a deep, deep, inward affection. To the depths of the bowels of Jesus.

Kayla, my girl born in September of 2001, told me once that she loved me so much she could explode from her insides. I think this is what Paul is getting at. He loves them with the deep love from the depths of Christ.

How much do you love them Paul? To the depths of the guts of God. Got it...you really do love those Philippian folks. This is the love we can have for our brothers and sisters in Christ. Don’t try to muster this kind of love up on your own. Allow the Spirit to put it in your heart. After all, it is his affection which helps us to love others. Especially the difficult

Remember, God is about adorning his bride and pimping out your ride. He will trick you out, set your life in a new direction, and then send you out on mission amongst your friends. All of them need to see the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus – they need to see the living Jesus, living in a community of authentic, broken, yet redeemed people. A people who care about others and the good of this world, as we long for the world to come.

Many Blessings, All Glory to our God,



References

1. D. A. Carson, ed., *New Bible Commentary*, 21st Century Edition, Rev. Ed. of: The New Bible Commentary. 3rd Ed. / Edited by D. Guthrie, J.A. Motyer. 1970., 4th ed. ed. (Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity Press, 1994).
2. FF Bruce, *New International Biblical Commentary on Philippians*, page 28.
3. Bruce, 32.

My Notes—Philippians 1:1-18a

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