

Series: Philippians Series 2024

Title: Fellowship of Believers

Text: Php 1: 3-5

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Philippians 1: 3: I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, 4: Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy, 5: For your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now;

Paul thanked God for his brethren—we are *bound* to thank God for brethren because brethren, along with everything they are and have is of God.

1 Corinthians 4:7: For who maketh thee to differ *from another?* and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? [that means what hast thou that God did not freely bestow to you by grace for Christ's sake?] now if thou didst receive *it*, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received *it*?

Romans 11: 35: who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? 36: For of him, and through him, and to him, *are* all things: to whom *be* glory for ever. Amen.

We are bound—we are under obligation—to thank God for brethren.

2 Thessalonians 1:3: We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet,...

2 Thessalonians 2: 13: But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: 14: Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

One of God's richest gifts to us are brethren. We are bound to thank God for brethren. God is the Father of mercies. All spiritual and temporal blessings come from God. So it is meet, not only to thank God for the blessings he gives to us personally, but for our brethren and for God's blessings upon them.

And Paul thanked God always—"I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, 4: Always in every prayer of mine." This is a good practice for us to cultivate—every time a brother or sister comes to mind—thank God for them. Not sometimes but every time. Paul said, "I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine." Before we text or call to encourage one another that we are praying for them, actually pray for them. If we are driving down the highway and a brother or sister comes to mind, thank God for them. We cannot thank God too much—both for our own personal blessings but also for brethren and God mercies to them.

Notice, Paul thanked God for each of his brethren—"I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, Always in every prayer of mine for you all..." Paul knew some were weak, others were strong. Some were richer, some poorer. Some educated, some uneducated. He knew at least two sisters at Philippi were not of the same mind with each other. But he prayed for them all. God's grace makes us to be no respecter of persons. We know that each brother, each sister, are what we are by the grace of God. Not all have the same measure of grace. But whatever grace we have, we have according to the gift of Christ.

Ephesians 4: 7: But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.

1 Corinthians 12: 22: Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary: 23: And those *members* of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour; and our uncomely *parts* have more abundant comeliness. 24: For our comely *parts* have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that *part* which lacked: 25: That there should be no schism in the body; but *that* the members should have the same care one for another. 26: And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it. [so Paul prayed for them all]

Paul prayed for his brethren with joy—"I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, 4: Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy,..." That is a good way to describe our prayer to God—"making request." We are at the mercy of God. He knows what we need before we ask him. God knows what is best for us better than we do. So we make request of God. We thank God as we make request

John Gill—"We have always mercies to ask for, we have always mercies to be thankful for."

This is the first of many times Paul speaks of joy in this epistle—"making request with joy." Here was Paul's joy—"For your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now."

WHAT IS FELLOWSHIP?

It is being one in heart and purpose. Fellowship is having all things common in and by Christ.

Ephesian 4: 4: *There is* one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; 5: One Lord, one faith, one baptism, 6: One God and Father of all, who *is* above all, and through all, and in you all.

Fellowship is given us through the preaching of the gospel through the incorruptible Seed, being born again of one Spirit of God, through the preaching of the one gospel of Christ.

1 John 1:3: That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship *is* with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.

Since fellowship is only by being born of the one Spirit of God—it is called *the fellowship of the Spirit*

Philippians 2:1: If *there be* therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies,...

Since the gospel of God making his people one in Christ is only revealed to those born again of God, this fellowship is called *the fellowship of the mystery*.

Ephesians 3: 1: For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, 2: If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: 3: How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, 4: Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) 5: Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; 6: That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel: [that God's elect Jew and Gentile might be one by Christ fulfilling the law and giving us his one righteousness] 7: Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power. 8: Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; 9: And to make all see what *is* the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: 10: To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly *places* might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, 11: According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord: 12 In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him.

God hid this gospel from men. But reveals the mystery to those Christ redeemed, his elect. God's intent is to reveal his wisdom to the angels in heaven by his work in saving his church. God's purpose was in Christ, that in Christ all God's elect, Jew and Gentile, rich and poor, male and female, are made one by the same righteousness and holiness of Christ. We have boldness and access to God with confidence by the FAITH OF HIM—by Christ's own finished work on our behalf.

Since fellowship is oneness in and by Christ, it is called *the fellowship of Christ our Lord*

1 Corinthians 1: 9: God *is* faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

Do you see that fellowship is being made one in and by Christ?

Ephesian 4: 4: *There is* one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; 5: One Lord, one faith, one baptism, 6: One God and Father of all, who *is* above all, and through all, and in you all.

SAINTS ARE ONE

Being born of one Spirit, robed in Christ's one righteousness, with one God and Father dwelling in us, God's saints are one with each other. Each believer here makes one body.

Like our physical body has many members and each member has its own job to do, so it is with us—each member here makes up one body but each member has his own ministry given by God. In Romans 12, when Paul speaks of our “bodies” plural, he speaks of us together being “one sacrifice.” Then he goes on to explain it is because we are one body with many members.

Romans 11: 36: For of him, and through him, and to him, *are* all things: to whom *be* glory for ever. Amen. 12: 1: I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your BODIES A LIVING SACRIFICE, holy, acceptable unto God, *which is* your reasonable service. 2: And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what *is* that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

What does he mean by that? Read on.

Romans 11: 3: For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think *of himself* more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.

The world is all about exalting themselves over each other.

Romans 11: 4: For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: 5: So we, *being* many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. 6: Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, *let us prophesy* according to the proportion of faith; 7: Or ministry, *let us wait* on *our* ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching; 8 Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, *let him*

do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness. 9: *Let* love be without dissimulation.

Let love be sincere; in unity; not fake, not exalting one over the other as if holier than thou. That is evil.

Romans 11: 10: Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good. 10: *Be* kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another; 11: Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord; 12: Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer; 13 Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality. 14: Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not. 15: Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep. 16 *Be* of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits.

1 Corinthians 12:12: For as the [physical] body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also *is* Christ. [so is Christ' body made up of believers] 13: For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether *we be* Jews or Gentiles, whether *we be* bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

All member of our physical body have different offices, so it is with Christ's body—we are each a member with a ministry Christ has given--and each are necessary.

1 Corinthians 12: 15 If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? 16 And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? 17 If the whole body *were* an eye, where *were* the hearing? If the whole *were* hearing, where *were* the smelling? 18 But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.

Remember that brethren. Christ put each of us in the body as it pleased him

1 Corinthians 12: 21: And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. 22: Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary: 23: And those *members* of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour; and our uncomely *parts* have more abundant comeliness. 24: For our comely *parts* have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that *part* which lacked: 25: That there should be no schism in the body; but *that* the members should have the same care one for another.

Some brethren simply need more attention: some are weak in faith and need more encouragement. Remember, we only faith according the measure of the gift of Christ.

1 Corinthians 12: 26: And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it. 27: Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.

When we partake of the Lord's table we are saying we are one in the broken body and shed blood of Christ.

1 Corinthians 10: 16: The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? 17: For *we being* many are one bread, *and* one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread. [Christ Jesus]

We regard each other as greater than ourselves but we do not regard one less than another—no—we are equally sinners in ourselves and equally righteous in Christ.

Galatians 3:28: There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.

The Spirit of Christ dwelling in his people makes his people easy to be one with—*James 3: 17: ...easy to be intreated*—it means easy to be complied with and easy to comply. Believers love peace because we see what great price Christ had to pay to give us peace with God and with our brethren.

Colossians 3: 10: And have put on the new *man*, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him: 11: Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond *nor* free: but Christ *is* all, and in all. 12: Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; 13: Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also *do* ye. 14: And above all these things *put on* charity, which is the bond of perfectness. 15: And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful. 16: Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. 17: And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.

So the Lord will keep us united and use us to preach the gospel of Christ until the last elect child is called.

Ephesians 4:13: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: [his body, the church, is the fulness of him]

When the last redeemed child is called, God will gather all his people in heaven and in earth in one, even Christ.

Ephesians 1: 9: Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: 10: That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; *even* in him: 11: In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: 12: That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ.

Amen!