**PHILIPPIANS**

Class Study - 1:1-11

1. 1:1 - Paul & Timothy - Read the individual pages on these two men. Then list some characteristics of both men.

To the early Christian and even by today’s understanding, prior to his conversion, Paul was a terrorist. (Webster defines terrorism as: “The use of terror, violence and intimidation to achieve an end.” We could add the use of murder to that explanation.) Yet God used him mightily to bring the Gospel to the Gentile world. Paul’s accomplishments are legion. Think of a modern day terrorist.

1. Could God use this person to bring others to Christ?
2. What does that say about God?
3. What is the message for us?
4. What is the comfort in this for us?
5. What kind of a mentor was Paul to Timothy?
6. Do you have or have you had a mentor?
7. How did/does he/she impact your life?
8. Is there someone you can mentor?
9. Give some thought to how you might go about mentoring, including the approach. (Sharing optional)
10. 1:1 Servants - There are different meanings for the word “servant.”

One type would be a servant who earned wages and was free to go at the end of a work day. This would like many employees today.

The other kind was a slave who didn’t even earn wages. He was the property of his master and was completely bound to his master’s will. Since this slave received no wages, all he had to look forward to after a hard day’s work was rest under the shade tree or in a shelter. He was on call 24 hours a day. For Judaism in the time of Jesus, as well as in the Greek world, the slave was on a lower level of humanity. By law the slave was classified with immobile goods, had no legal rights and could not own property. Even his family did not belong to him; it was the property of his master, who might give him a favorite slave in marriage. They had no genealogies, and therefore there was no possibility of controlling their bloodline.

God forces no one into His kingdom at gun point. He calls them through Word and Sacrament. Christians volunteer willingly for such status because God’s love burns so brightly in their heart. Paul believed that he needed to do anything laid out before him to much higher level than anyone around him.

1. What helped Paul to be set ablaze with such fervent motivation to serve Christ?
2. What can you do to raise your passion for service in Christ’s kingdom?
3. 1:2 Overseers and Deacons - Overseers and deacons are mentioned in verse 1. The overseer, bishop, is a term Paul sometimes interchanges with elder and pastor. Deacons tended to the more common chores and duties of the congregation.

Paul’s singling out of these church leaders is unique to this letter, quite possibly a way to recognize their part in gathering the gift they had sent to Paul.

1. What could this imply about the degree or stage of development of this congregation?
2. What does it say about the spiritual maturity of at least some of its members?
3. 1:2 Grace and peace - The words “grace” and “peace” were a standard part of Paul’s greeting in his epistles.

“Grace” was the Gentile greeting word. This was grace like Christ’s grace.

Grace always denotes the undeserved goodness of God.

“Peace” was the Jewish greeting word coming from the OT Shalom. It is a state of feeling of happiness where one’s welfare is secure. It wished prosperity in body and soul to the person being greeted. Peace denotes the condition of those who are reconciled to God.

The order of the two is significant, especially in this letter and in verse 2. First there must be grace; then peace follows.

1. Why do you suppose that we humans have so little peace?
2. How does this apply to our personal lives?
3. 1:3.Remember. “Remember” here is a habit.
4. How are habits formed?
5. What does this say about Paul’s feelings toward the Philippians?
6. How do you think the Philippians felt when Paul told them that he was thanking God for them?
7. How do you feel when someone says that they thank God for you?
8. What difference would it that make in your life to be told this frequently?
9. Whom do you remember? (Sharing optional)
10. What do you do about that remembrance? (Sharing optional)
11. 1:4.Pray with joy - People can and do disappoint us. The Philippians (at least some) probably disappointed Paul at times.
12. What does that say about his declaration in this verse?
13. How could you follow his example in your own life? (Sharing optional)
14. 1:5. Partnership. - The Greek word for “partnership” is koinonia. It is often used for fellowship. But here it is “having a partnership with someone.” They are not just spectators from a distance but are full partners.
15. What are the conditions that go into partnerships in businesses, friendships or marriage?
16. How do you suppose the Philippians reacted to such an honorable status?
17. How does God work with us as partners in His kingdom work?
18. 1:6.Confident - To be confident means to be convinced, to be assured and to totally rely on something that has been promised.
19. How do the following passages give us further assurance: 1 Corinthians 1:8; Matthew 28:20b; Hebrews 13:5; Hebrews 13:8?
20. Can you think of some other verses that express the same certainty?
21. How are these texts comforting in daily life?
22. 1:7 Share in God’s grace - Being locked up might not seem to be working from a position of advantage.
23. How do the following passages assure us that our location or circumstances do not restrict the gospel? (See Isaiah 55:11; Hebrews 4:12)
24. Can you think of some other examples from Paul as well as other Christians where being in prison was not an impediment?
25. What does that mean when it comes to you being a powerful witness?
26. 1:8. Affection - Affection literally means “desire…with the inward part”; the location within a person where the deepest feelings reside.
27. What does “for all of you” tell us about Paul’s feelings for the Philippians?
28. How does that compare with John 3:16?
29. How can we become more caring?
30. 1:9. Abound more and more…depth of insight - Our actions are based on our attitude. Our attitudes are influenced by what we have learned or are learning.

a. What kind of behavior does this fact suggest?

b. What kind of behavior changes might you want to make? (Sharing optional)

c. What does it mean to grow in “depth of insight? Use Ephesians 1:17 in

 answering this question.

d. How can we 21st century Christians grow in depth of insight?

1. 1:10 Discern - To discern literally means “that you may test the things that differ,” i.e., to distinguish between good and evil, lawful and unlawful.”
2. What are some good practices for spiritual learning that you find in Acts 17:11?
3. What are some culprits that sometimes or even often get us sidetracked from doing God’s will? (Sharing optional)
4. How will discernment help avoid Satan’s traps?
5. 1:11. Filled with fruit of righteousness.
6. What can we learn from Luke 6:43-45; Ephesians 2:8-10 and how it applies to this passage?

Luther says that “when we feel Satan’s temptations coming we should immediately run to the Lord for help.” He also says that “our life as a Christian is one of constant repentance.”

1. How might this Luther quote be of help? (Sharing optional)
2. What is your most meaning passage or phrase from this section? Why?