WILLING SERVANTS OF JESUS CHRIST – Philippians 1:1-2

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CAPITOL COMMISSION

Colorado State Ministry

Confident that God had given him clear direction, Paul sails with Timothy and Luke on his second missionary journey to Philippi in Macedonia, a Roman colony. Upon Paul's arrival, he seeks out the Jews and finds there were not enough to even form a synagogue. (It took 10 men). But God has a plan. Little does Paul know that God's plan mean that he would end up in jail. God knew there was a Roman jailer and his family who needed salvation. The events of this trip mark the beginning of the church in Philippi, the same church that Paul addresses some 10 years later with his letter to the Philippians, while in prison. It is a practical letter for us all, revealing Paul's passion to pursue Christ-likeness with a dominant theme of joy despite the circumstances.

I. PAUL'S INTRODUCTION

"Paul and Timothy, bondservants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, with the bishops and deacons; Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ" Philippians 1:1-2.

"Bondservant" – Greek word: ***"doulos"*** means to serve as a slave, subjecting your will to the will of another. To the Greeks this was shameful. It is a person who is deprived of all personal freedom and totally under the control of his master. A slave could own no personal property. A slave's identity was solely in that of his master. In this context, our identity is in Christ.

A. SERVANTS

1. PAUL

Paul came to know Jesus Christ as his Savior while on his way to persecute Christians and became a faithful servant of Jesus Christ. He wrote over half of the books in the New Testament and is a model example for every Christian. In Philippians 3:17, Paul calls us to model how he lived and ministered. Could we say that of ourselves?

Paul has amazing credentials. His resume ranks with the "Who's Who" of his day. Philippians 3:4-8 gives us the short list of his qualifications. Even so, Paul considers all these things valueless compared to the surpassing value of knowing Jesus Christ as his Lord. Paul is a man of conviction who has one passion, that of serving Jesus Christ. Are we impressed by our own credentials? Or is the greatest privilege serving Jesus Christ?

2. TIMOTHY

Timothy is Paul's son in the faith. In Acts 16, he joins Paul and Silas in their ministry and is well spoken of. Timothy becomes Paul's dear companion and he disciples him in the faith.

In Philippians 2:19, Paul talks of Timothy as being his messenger. In Philippians 2:20, Timothy is described as the only one like-minded with Paul. Even though Timothy is Paul's disciple, many times Paul calls him his son. Philippians 2:21 states that Timothy did not seek his own selfish concerns, but rather the concerns of Jesus Christ.

From Acts 16, we learn that Timothy is in Philippi when the church is established and that he has a great concern for the Philippian believers. Timothy is a true co-worker of Paul's and a constant companion as they travel and establish churches. Thus, Paul includes Timothy in the greeting of his letter to the Philippians.

Now that Paul is in prison in Rome, Timothy is vital to Paul for the furtherance of the Gospel. Eventually, Paul leaves the ministry to Timothy, because Paul will be martyred (2 Timothy).

3. BONDSERVANTS OF JESUS CHRIST

"Paul and Timothy, bondservants of Jesus Christ…" Philippians 1:1

A bond slave willingly serves his master. He gives ownership of his life to a master of his own free will out of affection, love, and loyalty. To the Greeks this thought was ludicrous. To the Romans, a slave was the lowest human in society. But Paul and Timothy willingly submit their lives to the Lord Jesus Christ as slaves.

In Matthew 20:20-28, Jesus said that He came not to be served, but to serve. The way to the **world's greatness** is by pleasing and being served by men, but the way to **God's greatness** is by pleasing God and serving others.

Often, the word "servant" or "slave" simply described the lowest level of hired help who needed little training or skill. But in Matthew, Jesus elevates the servant or slave to a place of great significance, using this term to describe His most faithful followers.

Jesus certainly could have used more noble words to characterize his obedient disciples. But He chose this one, "*doulos*," because it best reflects the unselfish, humble life that He honors and exemplifies. Jesus presented the principles and lived the pattern. He was the King of Kings and Lord of Lords and had the right to be served by others. Yet, He came as a Servant of servants and gave His life to serve others.

This is totally out of character for us in a culture that values personal freedom. But our greatest call as a believer is to be a slave of Jesus Christ. Vines Expository Dictionary explains that the bondservant is subject to the master without the idea of being in bondage. Is this a contradiction? No, because the willingness of the slave removes the thought of being in bondage. In fact, we are totally free in Christ as we see in Paul's life here in Philippians. Can we grasp this concept of being totally free yet a slave?

Are we willing to give up our lives, our possessions, our pursuits, our personal freedoms to serve our Master? It will require personal sacrifice. It did of Paul and Timothy. Paul was not a slave of Rome, but a slave of Christ.

"And the king's servants said to the king,

***'We are your servants, ready to do whatever my lord the king commands' "* 2 Samuel 15:1.**

We need to serve Christ in this manner, ready and willing to do whatever He commands.

B. THE SAINTS

"To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi…"

"**Saints**" – Greek word **"hagios"** carries the meaning of purity, set apart, devoted to God, sharing in God's purity, and abstaining from the world, wholly devoted to God.

Philippians 1:1b.

Saints refers to the true believers in Jesus Christ. The result of being a saint, "*hagios*," is to be sanctified, set apart for Christ. Saints are described by Paul as being "*in Christ.*" This is an important phrase repeated throughout the New Testament. It reveals our position before God when we become a believer. God sees us as "*in Christ.*" When He looks at us, He sees Christ and declares us righteous, not because we are righteous, but because Christ was righteous and atoned for our sins by His death on the cross.

Ephesians 1:1-23 reminds us of the blessings that are ours because we are "*in Christ*." Paul writes to the Philippian believers to remind them that they are saints in Christ, set apart for God.

C. PAUL'S GREETING

"Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ" Philippians 1:2.

Paul often uses this greeting in his letters.

Grace is a favor done without any expectation of return. It is receiving something we do not deserve. It is being better than we actually are.

Peace refers to a state of being untroubled or undisturbed. It is an inner peace that comes from God and allows the believer to face danger or troubles without fear.

Grace and peace give us joy and come from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Look nowhere else. God will not fail us whatever circumstances we are in. The Philippians faced persecution and Paul reminds them of blessings that are theirs in Christ through the toughest of times. What a comfort that must have been to Paul and to the Philippian believers! What an enduring comfort it is to us!

Our greatest calling as believers is to be a willing servant or slave of Jesus Christ. It will not be easy, but God will provide what we need through His grace and peace!

Jim Elliot, a missionary who was speared by headhunters while serving in Ecuador in 1956 said: ***"He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose."***

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Bible Studies

Legislators, Governor & Spouses: Tuesday, 7:15 AM, Capitol Basement, Room 0109, Breakfast Served

Staff, Lobbyists, Journalists & Sergeants: Tuesdays at Noon, SSB, 1525 Sherman, RM #603, Across Colfax from Capitol