
THE CAUSE OF CHRIST IN ROME

PHIL 1:1-18

ADEOYE, EMMANUEL (EVANG.)

Philippians 1:1 from Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus — to all God's people in Philippi who are in union with Christ Jesus, including the church leaders and helpers:

Paul does claim one title both for himself and for his companion Timothy; they are **servants of Christ Jesus**. The kind of servanthood Paul has in mind is not that of complete servitude, he is thinking, rather, of a cheerful and willing service which is inseparable from true freedom.

PHILIPPIANS 1:2 MAY GOD OUR FATHER AND THE LORD JESUS CHRIST GIVE YOU GRACE AND PEACE.

The phrase **grace and peace**, combining the Christian concept of "grace" with the Jewish view of "peace" is a formula often used in early Christian greetings.

Grace expresses God's love to sinful people who do not deserve it—the love manifested in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. **Peace** in this

context means not simply an absence of troubles or anxieties, but a state of total well-being, a wholeness of life resulting from forgiveness of sins and reconciliation to God through Jesus.

PHILIPPIANS 1:3 - I THANK MY GOD FOR YOU EVERY TIME I THINK OF YOU;

Paul begins his thanksgiving with the first person singular "I," and the first person singular is maintained throughout the letter. The thanksgiving is offered to **my God**, reflecting Paul's profound personal relationship to God.

In every instance it is closely associated with "thanksgiving" and is used in the sense of "mentioning in prayer" or "remembering in prayer."

Every time may be rendered in many languages as "whenever"; **every time I think of you** "whenever I think about what you have done," or "*whenever what you did speaks to my mind.*"

PHILIPPIANS 1:4 - AND EVERY TIME I PRAY FOR YOU ALL, I PRAY WITH JOY

The word translated **pray** (a noun in Greek) is not the usual word for prayer. Its essential component is "supplication" The supplication Paul continuously makes is **for you all**.

I pray for you must be expressed in some instances as "I pray to God that he will help you" but in others it maybe sufficient simply to say "I speak to God about you."

I pray with joy "I am happy when I pray" or "I feel joy in my praying." In some languages this **joy** may be expressed idiomatically as "my heart dances as I pray."

PHILIPPIANS 1:5 BECAUSE OF THE WAY IN WHICH YOU HAVE HELPED ME IN THE WORK OF THE GOSPEL FROM THE VERY FIRST DAY UNTIL NOW.

Paul now gives the reasons for his "joy"
The way in which you have helped me Paul is here referring to the Philippians' tangible expression of Christian partnership, their gift of money.

Paul is using "partnership" in a wider sense and hence refers to all the cooperation and share in the work of the gospel which the Philippians have shown, whether it be in the spreading of the gospel, in sympathy, in suffering, or in generosity.

Because of the way in which you have helped me may be rendered in

some languages as "because of how you helped me," "...how you made it easier for me," or "...how you made it possible for me."

In the work of the gospel is literally "into the gospel." The word "gospel" originally meant a reward for bringing good news, but later it came to be used for good news itself, often the joyous news of victory in war. The word appears nine times in Philippians and is used in a variety of ways.

The phrase **from the very first day** is obviously a reference to the beginning of Paul's mission and it may be essential to indicate this temporal relation. It may be rendered in some languages as "from the first day I was in Philippi until now," or, perhaps better, "*from the very first day you believed until now.*"

Philippians 1:6 **And so I am sure that God, who began this good work in you, will carry it on until it is finished on the Day of Christ Jesus.**

And so I am sure that is literally "being sure of this very thing" and may be rendered as "and therefore I am sure," **good work** among the Philippians and who would carry it to completion is God.

God, who began this good work. The expression **good work** may refer to the part taken by the Philippians in the work of the gospel, but more naturally it points to the activity of God at the time of their conversion, who began this good work in you. Therefore one

may need to render this clause as "who began to work in you in this good way," or even "...for good.

In combination with a preposition, is rendered will carry it on until it is finished.

The Day of Christ Jesus is not a reference to the day of one's death, but to the Parousia, or the return of Christ, It is the Day of judgment as well as the Day of salvation (***1 Thess 1:10***). Apparently, the early return of Christ is very much in the apostle's mind as he writes this letter. **the Day of Christ.**

PHILIPPIANS 1:7 YOU ARE ALWAYS IN MY HEART! AND SO IT IS ONLY RIGHT FOR ME TO FEEL AS I DO ABOUT YOU. FOR YOU HAVE ALL SHARED WITH ME IN THIS PRIVILEGE THAT GOD HAS GIVEN ME, BOTH NOW THAT I AM IN PRISON AND ALSO WHILE I WAS FREE TO DEFEND THE GOSPEL AND ESTABLISH IT FIRMLY.

You are always in my heart! may be expressed in some instances as "*I am always thinking of you with happiness,*" "*you constantly make me think gladly of you,*" or "*you are very dear to me.*" **It is only right for me to feel as I do about you** may be expressed as "*I am completely justified in feeling as I do about you,*" or "*it is entirely proper that I should feel as I do concerning you.*"

You have all shared with me may be expressed as "*you have all helped me,*" "*you have all worked along with me,*" or even "*you have all been my partners.*"

This privilege that God has given me it refers both to Paul's imprisonment and to his defending and establishing the gospel.

This privilege that God has given "this work that God has specially given to me," or "this task which God has been so good as to give to me." By indicating clearly that God's goodness was involved in giving Paul his ministry.

ALSO, WHILE I WAS FREE TO DEFEND THE GOSPEL AND ESTABLISH IT FIRMLY

references to Paul's activities: **now that I am**, indicating that his imprisonment is a present reality, and **while I was free**, suggesting that his defense and his establishing the gospel were things done prior to the present imprisonment.

While I was free "while I was able to go about," "while I was unhindered," or "while there was nothing to stop me."

Establish it firmly. it is people's faith in the gospel which is made secure and firm, rather than the gospel itself. ***Philippians 1:8*** *God is my witness that I tell the truth when I say that my deep feeling for you all comes from the heart of Christ Jesus himself.*

In the Greek **God is my witness that I tell you the truth** is simply "God is my witness." He appeals to God as the One who knows and who can testify to the truthfulness of his innermost feelings.

Comes from the heart of Christ Jesus himself Paul identifies himself so closely with Christ that the deep feeling he has towards his Christian friends appears to be nothing other than the love of Christ himself, **deep feeling and heart**. Paul's affection for his friends now passes into prayer for them. **true knowledge and perfect judgment**.

PHILIPPIANS 1:9 I PRAY THAT YOUR LOVE WILL KEEP ON GROWING MORE AND MORE, TOGETHER WITH TRUE KNOWLEDGE AND PERFECT JUDGMENT, Your love should not be restricted to the Philippians' love for God, for Paul, or even to their love for one another. It is much more likely that Paul has in mind the most comprehensive Christian love.

True knowledge and perfect judgment as an accompanying feature of love and accordingly translate "that you may love one another more and more, and at the same time have true knowledge and perfect judgment."

PHILIPPIANS 1:10 SO THAT YOU WILL BE ABLE TO CHOOSE WHAT IS BEST. THEN YOU WILL BE FREE FROM ALL IMPURITY AND BLAME ON THE DAY OF CHRIST.

What is best is a general qualification which it is not always possible to employ. so that you will be able to choose what is best to do," or "...*how you should best behave.*" **Then you will be free from all impurity and blame on the Day of Christ. free from all impurity** "without any wrong." The adjective translated **free from... blame**

can mean either "*not causing others to stumble*" or "*not stumbling.*"

Paul seems to have in mind the fitness of the Philippians to stand before Christ on the Day of judgment. In this context it is better to adopt the meaning of "blameless." This concept may be expressed in some languages as "*without having done anything for which you could be blamed,*" or "*without having done what was wrong.*" **On the Day of Christ**, as in verse 6, refers to the Parousia, so it is possible to render it more explicitly as "on the Day when Christ come back.

PHILIPPIANS 1:11 - YOUR LIVES WILL BE FILLED WITH THE TRULY GOOD QUALITIES WHICH ONLY JESUS CHRIST CAN PRODUCE, FOR THE GLORY AND PRAISE OF GOD.

Truly good qualities which only Jesus Christ can produce is literally "fruit of righteousness which is through Jesus Christ." Paul is careful to add that this quality is not something that a man can acquire for himself; it is something which **only Jesus Christ can produce.**

The supreme end of Christian life is **the glory and praise of God**. The word **glory** is an important term in the Bible. The same thought appears often in the New Testament also. In the Pauline letters **glory** appears many times as an ascription of **praise** and it is prominent in the doxologies.

PHILIPPIANS 1:12 I WANT YOU TO KNOW, MY BROTHERS, THAT THE THINGS THAT HAVE HAPPENED TO

ME HAVE REALLY HELPED THE PROGRESS OF THE GOSPEL.

My brothers is Paul's favorite way of describing his fellow believers in the Christian community.

The things that have happened to me

It refers to the apostle's arrest and imprisonment and may be expressed as *"what I have experienced" or even "what I have suffered."* The word translated **progress**, This word signifies advancement in spite of the dangers and obstacles which block the way of the traveler. The **progress** must often be stated in terms of the greater number of people hearing or believing.

PHILIPPIANS 1:13 AS A RESULT, THE WHOLE PALACE GUARD AND ALL THE OTHERS HERE KNOW THAT I AM IN PRISON BECAUSE I AM A SERVANT OF CHRIST.

As a result indicates that what follows in verses 13-14 is the consequence of **the progress of the gospel** **As a result** may also be rendered as "because of this" or *"because of what happened."*

The whole palace guard and all the others

it would be a reference to the imperial palace in Rome or to the ruler's residence, where the emperor lives." The whole palace guard may be expressed as *"all of the soldiers who are guarding the palace," or "...the house where the emperor lives."* All the others here *"all the other people here,"* or simply *"everyone here."*

Because I am a servant of Christ

"because I serve Christ," "because I

work on behalf of Christ," or *"because all I do is to help Christ."*

1:14 AND MY BEING IN PRISON HAS GIVEN MOST OF THE BROTHERS MORE CONFIDENCE IN THE LORD, SO THAT THEY GROW BOLDER ALL THE TIME TO PREACH THE MESSAGE FEARLESSLY.

My being in prison has given most of the brothers more confidence in the Lord ("my imprisonment has given the majority of the brotherhood greater confidence in the Lord"). **My being in prison** constitutes the cause for Paul's fellow believer's becoming more confident.

The Lord is the basis of confidence and hope. more confident because of the Lord," or even of agency, *"the Lord has caused them to be more confident."*

They grow bolder may be expressed negatively as "they do not fear so much," or "they fear less and less." The fundamental change expressed in **grow bolder all the time** must be rendered in some languages as "becoming bolder constantly," or "are constantly more and more bold." **To preach the message** is literally "to speak the word."

PHILIPPIANS 1:15 OF COURSE SOME OF THEM PREACH CHRIST BECAUSE THEY ARE JEALOUS AND QUARRELSOME, BUT OTHERS FROM GENUINE GOOD WILL.

Paul is here referring to preachers in general on the ground that jealous and

quarrelsome motives can hardly be compatible with the attitude of **confidence in the Lord** which some of them apparently had.

It is very difficult to determine who these preachers are. That they are Jewish Christians who insist on going back to Jewish ways seems unlikely, since Paul does not accuse them of any false teachings. In any case, they are "pro-Christ" but "anti-Paul" preachers.

Because they are jealous and quarrelsome explains the motives of the preachers. the so-called "object" of jealous, in which case it is probably best to say "*because they are jealous of me.*"

Yet one must be cautious in the use of a term such as "jealous," they are envious because of my success." **Quarrelsome** may be rendered as "they quarrel with others," "they habitually quarrel with people," or "they quarrel with me." In some languages "to quarrel" is "to fight with words."

Paul is speaking of the preachers' attitude toward him in the context. "Good will" toward the gospel which he proclaims is, of course, presupposed. If **good will** is understood to refer to the attitude of these preachers toward the gospel, then one may translate **from genuine good will** as "because they like the gospel," or "*because they are fully in favor of the gospel.*" In rendering **good will**, the concept of "right intentions," **from genuine good will** as "because their purposes are

altogether good" or "because what they want to accomplish is perfectly right.

PHILIPPIANS 1:16 THESE DO SO FROM LOVE, BECAUSE THEY KNOW THAT GOD HAS GIVEN ME THE WORK OF DEFENDING THE GOSPEL.

In rendering **these do so from love**, it is important to make certain that **these** points to the last-mentioned group, namely, **the others** who preached Christ from genuine good will.

God has given me the work implies that God had assigned the particular work to Paul by way of a direct command. God has said to me, This is your work," or "God said to me, Your work is to defend the good news."

PHILIPPIANS 1:17 THE OTHERS DO NOT PROCLAIM CHRIST SINCERELY, BUT FROM A SPIRIT OF SELFISH AMBITION; THEY THINK THAT THEY WILL MAKE MORE TROUBLE FOR ME WHILE I AM IN PRISON.

Not... sincerely may be rendered in some instances as "with bad motives," "but what they want to accomplish is not right," or "but their purposes are personal."

From a spirit of selfish ambition is literally "out of partisanship." The word "partisanship" originally meant "working for pay." Since a man who works solely for pay works from a low motive, the term later acquired a bad sense-describing a person who serves in an official position for his own selfish

purposes and to that end creates a "partisan spirit"

They will make more trouble for me they will cause me to suffer more," or "they will cause me to have more difficulties."

PHILIPPIANS 1:18 *It does not matter! I am happy about it —Just so Christ is preached in every way possible, whether from wrong or right motives. And I will continue to be happy,*

Paul will not allow himself to be troubled by those preachers who proclaim Christ from impure motives and in open hostility toward him.

"What they want to do to me does not matter," "What they are doing does not really concern me," or "...cause me anxiety." Similarly, **I am happy about** what has happened."

Whether from right or wrong motives (literally, "whether in pretense or in truth") further expands and defines **in every way possible**. The word rendered "pretense" in some

translations is a noun meaning "ostensible" (usually insincere) reason. Paul is not suggesting here that the preachers do not really believe what they preach, but rather that they use the name of Christ as a cover or pretext for selfish ends.

CONCLUSION

whether what they want is right or wrong," "whether what they expect to gain from such preaching is right or wrong," or "whether they are preaching for the sake of Christ or only for their own sake."

Paul is assured that the future will bring fresh reasons for happiness: **And I will continue to be happy** (future tense in Greek). The reason is given in verse 19. **And** here has the force of "yes"

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

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