

LESSON 1: PHILIPPIANS 1:1-11

Paul's Confidence and Affection

1. Paul is older, Timothy younger, yet both are equally servants (*douloi*) before Christ Jesus. He writes to the saints (*hagiois*) in Philippi. Servants and saints... How do young and old, male and female, rich and poor, each one of whatever color, stand before Jesus Christ then, now, and forever? How critical to the witness of the Church is this fact?
2. Paul refers to the overseers (*episkopois*) and deacons (*diakonois*). What do you understand the respective purpose and duties of each of these offices of the church?
3. Grace and peace (v. 2) appear in every one of Paul's letters. How do these two words express the nature (grace) and effect (peace) of Christ's saving work? Would the full nature of this salutation be understood if you addressed your fellow saints in this way? Or would you have to explain what this form of address means? Could you? Also, what is significant about Paul's phrase "God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ"?
4. What did remembering the time he had spent with the Philippian church (Acts 16), prompt in Paul to write (vv. 3-4)? Do you pray, frequently and gratefully, for those with whom you have had fellowship in Jesus Christ?
5. Their partnership (*koinonia*) in the gospel (see also v. 7, *sunkoinonia*) binds Paul and his Philippian friends. How do you understand the concept of *koinonia*, and what ought it look like in the church?
6. Who is responsible for the salvation of the Philippian believers (v. 6)? What is God's commitment to you in what he has started in your life (see also 1 Corinthians 1:8)? As a saint, what must be your desire and hope? What is "the day of Christ Jesus" to which Paul keeps referring (vv. 6, 10).

7. Paul writes that “it is right for [him] to feel this way about you all” (v. 7). The Greek word translated as feel embraces thought, as well as feeling, implying a course of action on which the mind is set. How does this approach by Paul to life in the Church differ from the emotionalism so often sold as the standard for Christian life in America? Is the world watching a Church that has nothing realistic to say about real problems? Also, what might defending and affirming the gospel involve?

8. Paul longs for the Philippians with “the affection of Christ Jesus” (v. 8). What do you think he means by this?

9. Paul ends this section with a prayer for the Philippians. In what should love “abound all the more,” and to what end and purpose (v. 9)?