

Totally Committed
Phil. 1:3-11

Intro:

This is a great book, written to the church at Philippi by the apostle Paul. Generally, this book follows Pauline writing style, but whereas Galatians really deals with the issue of salvation by faith alone and not by works, this book really compels the Church to live a life that is “worthy of the Gospel.” In a couple of ways, Paul stresses the idea that the Christian life is not just about the future (hanging on until we get to Heaven), but really is about the here & now – and living lives that brings honor and glory to Jesus. Most likely written from a Roman prison, he stresses unified living and cooperative living, and he wants to give a church a warning of the reality that they will probably face further persecution as they endeavor to serve God.

1. Commitment to one another (v. 3-5)

a. Paul’s commitment to the Church

- i. We know that Paul was committed to these NT churches. He traveled to minister to them, he wrote many letters, probably more than we have collected after all these years.**
- ii. Paul’s prayer for this church indicates that he prayed regularly for this church, not just as a blessing or remembrance – he was committed to praying for this church**
 - 1. Lucy’s prayers – very consistent, and have taught me a valuable lesson about consistency**

that God is concerned about us and our here & now, but Paul is encouraging a future hope and expectation)

- 2. God will complete the work of Salvation in us, has not forsaken us**
 - a. It is so common for us in our modern Evangelical language to look at salvation as a future event, when we “get to heaven.”**
 - b. The reality for Paul was always that we have been justified through faith, and we are “being” saved continually, but the culmination of that is definitely a future event!**
 - c. So, for Paul and the Philippians, and for us, regardless of current realities or struggles, GOD WILL COMPLETE IN US WHAT HE HAS BEGUN – THAT IS A GOOD WORK!!! (RICK)**
- iii. Ultimately completed at the day of Jesus**
 - 1. This will be the culmination of all things – every knee shall bow, the trumpet shall sound, etc...**
 - a. This is again where Paul points us constantly, not to a past event of salvation, but a future hope and expectation of salvation!
Salvation and restoration of His bride, the Church**
 - b. The “Present/Future” mentality (as opposed to “past tense”) of**

Paul regarding our salvation is why he constantly affirms that we live Godly lives in the present, the here & now! (which brings us to the final section of this passage)

3. Paul's Prayer for this Church (9-11)

i. THIS A FANTASTIC PRAYER, AND ULTIMATELY PAUL'S HEART FOR THE CHURCHES, AND I BELIEVE GOD'S HEART FOR US!!!

b. Abound in love

i. Echoes Jesus - Greatest commandment (Mark 12:30-31), proof of discipleship (John 13:34 – Read), etc

ii. Didn't say that we should abound in Spiritual gifts, prosperity, even in attendance, but that we abound in love

1. I'm challenged by this, because it's the thrust of so many of our Churches, yet so many outsiders feel that we have not love!!! (Didn't Paul say something about this earlier? 1 Cor 13)

2. In a recent Newsweek, the article "The End of Christian America" says that the decline of churches and the increase of unidentified religious people is a threat to the Evangelical church. Perhaps if we have more LOVE and less law, the opposite would be inevitable! What a great time to BE THE CHURCH – when the abounding in prosperity and numbers is not truly

making disciples and building the kingdom...

iii. MORE & MORE...

- 1. Connotes a continual abounding, that it's never ceasing in its increasing. This is a continual reality for the Church, that more and more and more and more... we abound in love!!!**

iv. With Knowledge & ALL Discernment

- 1. Our love is knowledgeable of God, his kingdom, his Word, his world, of people, of needs, of God's will, etc!**
- 2. We are to grow in Discernment**
 - a. This is part of how we live upright and godly lives in this present age.**
 - b. Discernment is the coupling of knowledge and wisdom in order to wisely follow Jesus**

c. Be Pure & Blameless

- i. Again, this is about the here & now, not the after life**

- 1. Scott Moore – “God expects us to sin and mess up. We're not supposed to be perfect!”**
 - a. While the second part of that is true, we are being perfectED – that is, made in his image and transformed by the renewal of our minds...**

d. Be Filled with the Fruit of Righteousness thru Jesus

- i. This is righteousness that is not because of any affiliation, whether with the church or**

with a teacher/preacher. The fruit of our righteousness is only through relationship with Jesus Christ and growth in him!

What a great opening prayer from Paul! I'm encouraged to know that the Church is a place where people are committed to each other, to the furtherance of the mission of God, and that this type of commitment is not autocratic, nor is it based on any expectations (that we are committed as long as...)

I'm really excited to know that God is committed to us for the long haul! His character and his commitment is seen consistently throughout the Bible – he was with Moses, Joshua, David, Jesus, Paul, and with us – and he has always promised not to leave us!

Conclusion;

So I want to challenge you to be committed to the Church, locally and globally. Allow the Church to be committed to you as well! As a pastor, I want to be committed to you, and it gives great joy to serve and pray over a group that is committed!

I want to encourage you that God is committed to you! The good work he has begun, he will carry on to completion, unto the day of Jesus! Don't lose heart. Don't feel discouraged or abandoned! Realize God's commitment to you, and trust it!

Finally, my prayer for you is the same that Paul had for this church! That we **ABOUND IN LOVE... MORE & MORE!!!!** That we are not seen just as the “big college group,” but that we truly abound in love! That we abound in knowledge and discernment, so that we may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through **JESUS!!!**

Will you commit also to praying this prayer over our ministry?