

Sermon Discussion - 11 December 2022

Read Philippians 1:3-11 together.

Dig Deeper

The reason Paul was always joyful as he prayed for the Philippians was their **participation** (NASB) or **partnership** (NIV, literally “*fellowship*,” Greek “*koinonia*”) in the gospel.

By “the gospel,” Paul refers primarily not so much to a body of teaching or a proclamation. Mostly, the gospel has to do with Christ...both his person and his work. The fellowship in view means sharing together with mutual activity and mutual benefit in a close bond. Partnership in the gospel includes partnership with God and with other believers that the gospel makes possible. It also involves participation in the work of getting the gospel to people.

The Philippians had recently sent Paul a gift (4:10-14) and had done so more than once before (4:16; 2 Cor. 11:9). Even in Philippi he had received hospitality from Lydia (Acts 16:15) and the Philippian jailer (Acts 16:33-34).

However, Paul’s use of *koinonia* here implies a broader meaning than just physical assistance. It probably includes all that Paul and his readers shared as committed Christians who sought to disseminate the gospel.

1. Where do people look to find joy? How is this different from Paul’s view of joy?
2. How do people think of “fellowship” in our church? Does it involve mission or just hanging out? Compare it to Paul’s view of fellowship.
3. Based on the sermon, what is a gospel partnership and why do you need one?
4. Paul puts knowledge and love together in his prayer. Why is it important to keep these two virtues together? Are you submitting your relationships to Scripture and asking how you should love others based on the Word? Why or why not?
5. Paul prays for the believers to be filled with the fruit of righteousness. What does this mean? What might this look like?

Application & Prayer

- Paul moves from expressing his love for people to praying for them. Are you expressing your love for others by praying for them? Choose one person this week outside your home or family to pray for every day.
- Have you ever prayed for discernment? Stop and pray for discernment for both yourself and our church. Pray that you/we would not only do what is *right* but that you/we would also do what is *best*.