Philippians 1:8-18

Introduction:

I. Paul’s Passion – 1:8

A. The Witness to His Passion – 1:8a

“For God is my witness,” (See also Rom. 1.9)

Paul calls God to the witness stand to testify to the truth of his love for the Philippians. Paul was aware—as were his readers—that they could not know his heart, but God knew it perfectly.

B. The Width of His Passion – 1:8b

“how greatly I long for you all” [all 18 times in the book]

We pointed out last time that “all” left no one out. Those who had caused him grief as well as those who were still a problem to the church are included.

C. The Warmth of His Passion – 1:8c

“with the affection of Jesus Christ.”

Paul’s love was not something that he had conjured up. It was no mere human interest or attraction. It was commanded and provided by the Lord Jesus, Himself. He loved with the σπλάγχνοις – not just the heart, v7, but, the inmost part of the love of Christ Jesus.

II. Paul’s Prayer – 1:9-11

A. Love May Abound – 1:9

“And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more”

“Continually” περισσεύῃ - present tense, “Abound” “more and more” with some left over.

1. Knowledge - ἐν ἐπιγνώσει - full knowledge

Notice how he subordinates knowledge to love. Knowledge puffs up – love builds up. (I Cor. 8:1)

To have all knowledge but not love = nothing. This is the Knowledge of God’s word.

2. Perception - αἰσθήσει – insight, experience, discernment

It distinguishes the good from the bad. This is the insight into the ways and purposes of God.

B. You May Approve – 1:10a

“that you may approve the things that are excellent,”

Approve of the things that have passed the test. These are not things outside of the Philippians, but inside.

1. Be Sincere - εἰλικρινεῖς to try by sunlight.

“that you may be sincere”

The cracks in pottery would be filled with wax and painted over to hide the cracks.

 If you held it up to the sunlight the cracks would be visible. Or put it in the sun and the wax would melt.

2. Be Without Offense - ἀπρόσκοποι

“and without offense till the day of Christ,”

In I Cor. 10:32 Paul uses this word to urge the Corinthians not to cause anyone to stumble. Give no offense, either to the Jews or to the Greeks or to the church of God,

C. You May Appropriate

“being filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.”

Paul prays that they (and we) will bring forth a full harvest of the best fruits of heaven.(Hendrickson) The fruit of the Spirit is a good place to start: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ﻿gentleness and self-control.

III. Paul’s Preaching – 1:12-18

“But I want you to know, brethren, that the things which happened to me have actually turned out for the furtherance of the gospel,”

How can we talk about Paul’s preaching when he is in prison? That seems to be the purpose of this section.

Question: Why is there suffering in a world created by an all knowing all powerful, all loving God?

Answer: Either He doesn’t know about it. Or He knows, but He is powerless to stop it – Or He knows and could stop it, but He does not care.

The Answer: – None of the above -- Sin came by the rebellion of man against God. A righteous God must punish sin. But, obviously Paul is not suffering because of his sin.

Paul gives the answer (s) in his epistles: A believer may suffer because:

1. He failed to confess and forsake sin in his life (I Cor. 11)

2. It is the means of gaining spiritual experience (Rom. 5:3-5)

3. To prevent sin in his life (II Cor. 12) i.e.: thorn in the flesh.

4. To increase the effectiveness of his testimony.

The last one seems to be the reason that Paul is in prison.

A. The Purpose of God in Paul’s Imprisonment – 1:13

1. The Palace Guard and Others Heard the Gospel – 1:13a

“so that it has become evident ﻿﻿to the whole ﻿﻿palace guard, and to all the rest, that my chains are in Christ;”

a. They learned the truth about Paul.

Even though Paul is in his own rented house, a guard was changed to him night and day. They learned that he was no criminal. He was there because he preached Christ.

b. They learned the truth about his message

They had to listen to every conversation. They had to read everything he wrote. Word got around the whole praetorian. It could be the barracks or even the Palace.

2. The Brethren are Preaching the Gospel with Boldness – 1:14

“and most of the brethren in the Lord, having become confident by my chains, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.”

They reasoned, “if Paul can preach to everyone who comes to him, we can and should preach also.

Note: Most commentaries take the next three verses to be speaking about groups out of the one in v. 14 – maybe, but maybe they are other groups. To me, they don’t seem compatible to that group.

3. Some Preachers have Wrong Intentions – 1:15a- 16

a. They preach out of envy and strife – 1:15a

They may have been that Paul, an out of towner was getting all of the attention. We are the center of the world, etc.

b. They preach out of selfish ambition – 1:16

Coupled with that was the desire for their own desire for attention. Do preachers do that???

4. Other Preachers have Good Intensions – 1:15b-17

a. They preach out of good will – 1:15b

These have pure motives. They simply want to get the good news out to the world. They are happy to have Paul there. Remember that he wrote a letter to this church and desire to come to see them.

b. They preach out of love – 1:17

What is the greatest motive for preaching the Gospel?

1. Jesus commanded it.

2. Mankind is lost without it.

3. The love of Christ compels us.

For the love of Christ compels us, (II Cor.5.14) that is the love of Christ for us.

B. The Response of Paul to God’s Purpose – 1:18

“What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is preached; and in this I rejoice, yes, and will rejoice.”

1. The Question: “Τί γάρ”

What then *is my response*? How do I feel about sitting in prison when I could be out there winning souls.

2. The Answer:

“Only that in every way” - πλὴν ὅτι παντὶ τρόπῳ,

a. Paul’s observation – 1:18a

Christ is preached –

1) In pretense - in pretense - προφάσει

2) In truth - ἀληθείᾳ

Note: Paul is not talking about the content of the message He would not rejoice about that (Gal 1;8-9). He was speaking about the motives of the preachers.

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b. Paul’s Determination –

1) In the present – I am rejoicing.

2) In the future – I will go on rejoicing.

Paul was not concerned about what men thought, His concern was always, what his Savior thought (See v. 21)