



INTRODUCTION

Paul's greeting to the church in Philippi is in his name and in the name of his spiritual son Timothy. This is not to say that Timothy is a co-author of the letter, but that Paul is introducing someone he holds dear. This introduction of Timothy by Paul will help Timothy as a young pastor to gain recognition and respect from elders in the church. As the saying goes, Timothy is "guilty by association". Jesus kept only a few close to Him though He had many opportunities to do otherwise. Jesus appointed His first 12 disciples, He sent 70 out two by two, and at one time fed 5,000, died and rose for all, but only had 3 men in His inner circle. We, as members of the body of Christ, must be certain we fellowship with only those of like morals and beliefs. We must never use the excuse that our heart for the lost caused us to fellowship with those who would compromise our witness. Our ministry cannot be effective in the strip club, casino or night club. We would be labeled, "guilty by association."

Philippians 1:1-6 (NKJV)

¹ Paul and Timothy, bondservants of Jesus Christ, To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, with the bishops and deacons:

² Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

³ I thank my God upon every remembrance of you,

⁴ always in every prayer of mine making request for you all with joy,

⁵ for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now,

⁶ being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete *it* until the day of Jesus Christ;

¹ **Paul and Timothy, bondservants of Jesus Christ, To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, with the bishops and deacons:**

² **Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.**

In the opening of this letter, Paul doesn't introduce himself as an Apostle, but as a bondservant or slave to Jesus Christ. This letter is written specifically to the saints of the church, not to unbelievers. His greeting also indicates he means to include other co-laborers in Christ by their level of office in the church. He wants to let them know that this word is from the Holy Spirit and they need to hear it in spite of their church position. Not only that, he tells them that it is God's desire to give them grace (unmerited favor) and peace. A peace not as the world gives, not just the absence of trouble but calm in the midst of their storm. This peace is a peace that surpasses their understanding. This is a peace that will ease their mind when for all of the devil's intents and purposes, they should lose their mind.

Where does a peace like that come from? This peace can only come from the Father and His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, ⁴ always in every prayer of mine making request for you all with joy, ⁵ for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now,



Wouldn't it be great if every memory of us as co-laborers in Christ would cause someone to thank God for those memories of us? It's possible! If we love God with all our heart, mind and strength and love our neighbors as we love ourselves, every memory of our fellowship with others would cause others to thank God for them!

⁶ being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete *it* until the day of Jesus Christ;

We can always be confident of whatever God does in our lives. How did Paul become so sure of God's perfection of the saints? He gets his confidence from the things evidenced in his life and in the life of other believers. Once Mark turned his back on the evangelism of the gentiles, but later returned and returned with a vengeance penning the Gospel named after him. Peter denied Christ 3 times hours prior to Christ's death on the cross but later became the first preacher of the "Way" (Acts 3:1 et seq).

So, when we feel we have failed in the things that Jesus has called us to do we need to look to the One from where our strength comes. Remember that He remains faithful even when we are unfaithful. Remember that God forgives the sins of omission as well as commission. We should not give up or give in and when we've done all we can do we are to stand (Eph. 6:13).