

A Full Christian Life...Together
There's So Much More Than Salvation
Ambassadors for the Kingdom Series - Part 2

11/16-11/17
Philippians 1:7-11

Introduction

- **The Design of the Body**
 - **Human beings are created with an intentional "design flaw"**, we don't operate well on our own.
 - **God is communal and relational** - The nature of the Trinity is communal and relational.
 - **Human Nature craves community.** It's not Good for man to be alone, so another person was created to fill that gap. Think of how 'solitary confinement' is an extreme punishment in prison. We begin and usually end life totally dependent on others. In the middle we tend to get cocky and think we don't need people as much. Meanwhile we suffer and are socially/relationally malnourished.
 - **God designed the Church to work as a community, a plural form, a group.**
 - **Metaphors** - A Body has many parts, The groom has a collective bride, the Family of God, etc. They are all communal.
 - **Spiritual Gifts** - they only make sense in community. We can't teach alone, serve alone, help alone, give wisdom alone, heal alone, prophesy alone...The very things that the Holy Spirit uses to bring power into the Church, are brought collectively.
- **What the Church Accomplishes Together versus alone**
 - The Jesus People movement wasn't one person
 - Promise Keepers and Women of Faith wasn't one man or woman.
 - Billy Graham never led a full crusade alone.
 - The Azusa Street Revival wasn't kicked off with only one person.
 - The Salvation Army, requires an army of believers.
 - Compassion International needs hundreds of thousands to serve millions.
 - Bridgeway Christian Church takes hundreds of volunteers just to pull off one weekend.
- **Together We...**
 - Together we can encourage each other when your heart is down and my heart is up.
 - Together we can pray breakthrough in the Spirit.

- Together we can be the iron that sharpens the iron as we trade ideas to form the best opinion.
- Together we can collectively give hundreds of thousands of dollars to raise up a school in Uganda, help the re-housing in the Camp Fire, carry out the BLESS Project, pull off a weekly Community Closet that feeds hundreds, and a thousand other endeavors.
- Together we can circle the wagons when the going gets tough.
- Together we can use proper peer pressure to realign one of us who has gone off the deep end is and is hurting other people.
- Together, our churches can disciple a region filled with people of every nationality, ethnicity, socio-economic background, education level and health status.

We are BETTER Together

- **What You'll Talk About In Your Groups**
 - We have Missional Communities here at Bridgeway which are small groups of people that gather together to do live with one another. Currently we are having our groups process these sermon series together. If you aren't in a group you can join one by texting _____, or by reaching out to Heather Johnson to get plugged in (hjohnson@bridgeway.church).
 - **Prep Questions** - so I'm going to be sharing some concepts each week that you will be discussing in your groups when you meet this week.
 - **The First of today is simply this:** Where have you seen isolation hurt your spiritual life and where have you seen the Church come together and make a difference?

Lesson

- **The Passage as a Whole**
 - **Php 1:7-11** - *"It is right for me to feel this way about you all, because I hold you in my heart, for you are all partakers with me of grace, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel. ⁸For God is my witness, how I yearn for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus. ⁹And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, ¹⁰so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, ¹¹filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God."*
 - **I Love Paul's intense heart for the Church** - he may be rough around the edges and rude at times, but everything he did, he did for the sake of the

Gospel, His Lord Jesus Christ and the Church. He literally died pouring out for the Body of Christ. Keep this in mind when you read some of his tough to understand passages.

- **Comrades in Arms**

- **Partnership in Advancing the Kingdom**

- **Php 1:7** - *"It is right for me to feel this way about you all, because I hold you in my heart, for you are all partakers with me of grace, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel."*

- **Feel what way?** - Last Week Recap

- **Php 1:3-6** - *"I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, ⁴ always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, ⁵ because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. ⁶ And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ."*

- **Paul Loves the Philippians and so thankful for them** - Paul is so thankful for the Philippians and their partnership in the Gospel. They bring him joy when he prays for them.

- **I hold you in my heart** - that means that he feels intensely for them. It means that he thinks about them a lot. It means that he cares about what they are going through. It means that he has a pastoral, a shepherding heart for them and connection to them.

- **The Heart of a Good Shepherd** - a good shepherd likes sheep. A good pastor likes people. They may drive him nuts and he may want to hide from them at times, but overall, a good pastor thinks about his congregation, loves his congregation and cares for his congregation putting their needs above his own.

- **You are partners with me in my imprisonment** - Paul is in jail for sharing the gospel. He will ultimately be released but he doesn't know that. For now, he is locked up and feeling frustrated that he can't spread the gospel more. But the Philippians were his workers on the outside. While he couldn't provide for himself, they provided for him. While he couldn't get the word out, they were doing the work of evangelists. Their activity for the Kingdom made him feel less trapped.

- **You are partners with me in the defense and confirmation of the gospel** - The gospel had strong opposition in Paul's culture. The opposition primarily came from two sides: 1.) Pagans; 2.) Jews.

- **Pagans** - Most people were secularly-spiritual in the Roman Empire. They didn't have a personal connection to their gods, but they had a

lot of ritual connection to their gods. They based their culture on interaction with ceremonial rules and name dropping their gods they invoked. But it wasn't about morality for them. Their system was very much external adherence to a program, but they took that seriously. Morality-wise they were secular and did whatever they felt was right at the time. So, when Christianity started invading the area, they didn't like it. Suddenly there were demands upon their interior world, upon their morality, upon their hearts. Suddenly, what they believed and how they operated was challenged and they didn't like that. They lived in a highly tolerant civilization, and Christianity wasn't very tolerant of pagan living. So they wanted them to go away.

- **Jews** - The Jews were a whole different situation. They were hardcore about their systems too, but Christianity was too close for comfort. Christianity was messing with their stuff. They could easily dismiss the pagan Romans for being way off base and involved in stuff that didn't matter, but Christianity was claiming that it was the fulfilled form of Judaism, that the Jewish Messiah was Jesus, that the Anointed One from God had come, and they weren't having it. Christians were making them look bad and seemed to them to be filled with heresy and blasphemy which are the unforgivable sins to a Jew. They wanted Christians shut down by any means necessary.
- **Defense of the Gospel** - wherever Paul went He had to deal with one group or the other. At all times he was defending the Gospel perspective. He would argue with the stoics and Greek philosophers of the Roman world. He would debate with the Jews about who the Messiah really is. He was constantly contending that Christianity was right on all levels (both from Scripture and reason). The Philippians were doing that in their neck of the woods. They were helping Paul not only do his thing, but they were doing it too in their context.
- **Confirmation of the Gospel** - Confirmation of the gospel can mean a couple things. I personally think it meant showing proof of the power of the Gospel: changed lives, signs & wonders, miracles, healings, etc. Or it could simply be a synonym of 'defense'-type proof. Either way it was living it out and showing the world that it was legit.

- **Loving From the Heart**
 - **Feeling Emotions for Your Spiritual Family**

- **Php 1:8-9a** - *"For God is my witness, how I yearn for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus. ⁹ And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more,..."*
 - **God is my witness** - Paul isn't playing around here. He doesn't swear by stuff, so this is his highest confirmation statement that he really means what he says.
 - **I yearn with affection** - Paul feels this stuff. He truly is moved by the Philippian people. What happens to them really affects him in a real way. His heart and emotions are involved in his ministry. Are yours?
 - **Do we love through our ministry?** - or have we made it all rather cold and calculated?
 - **The Affection of Jesus Christ** - does this mean that he loves like Jesus Christ did? Or does it mean that he loves through the affection that Christ has given him? I think that the love and affection that God has for His people has so consumed Paul's heart that it is both a motivation internally and a role modeling externally for him. He loves like God.
 - **Joshua Pock?**
 - **What You'll Talk About In Your Groups**
 - **What's your Love Level for Bridgeway like these days?** - do you care about what happens here? Do you care about the people inside these walls? Do you think about them? Do you pray for them? Do you want to know them? Do you miss them when you aren't able to be here?
 - **I pray that your love would grow too** - Paul is not content with him having all these intense feelings for the Church, he wants everyone to feel that same way since we are a family and families are supposed to love and care for one another. He prays that the Philippians would grow in love for one another. They have been so loving to him, he wishes they would feel the same way about one another on a daily basis.
 - **How do we grow in love?** - sometimes that concept can feel a bit ethereal. How do we make our feelings of love more intense for someone? Either we feel it or we don't, right? Wrong.
 - **First of all, LOVE, when it is used in a Christian context, is an action concept.** Loving someone, like God loves them, is to have a disposition toward them that seeks their highest and best interest, and you put your needs secondary. It's a posture and process, more than it is feelings. However, feelings do matter, which brings me to the second issue:

- **Feelings are secondary to thoughts.** We are atmospheric beings and we are highly suggestible creatures. We are moved by our surroundings. So, if we want a change in our emotions, we need a change in either our actual environment (circumstances) or our perception (mindset). When our perception changes, we think different things, when we think different things, we feel different feelings.
 - **Example: Movies** - Marley & Me example. You walk into the movie in one mindset and it rapidly changes, so you emerge in a different mindset with different feelings.
 - **Renewal of Relationships:**
 - **With God**
 - **Marriages**
 - **Friendships**
 - **Partnerships**
 - **Connections**

- **Spiritual Navigation**
 - **Seeking and Finding the Will of God**
 - **Php 1:9b-10a** - "...with knowledge and all discernment, ¹⁰so that you may approve what is excellent,..."
 - **That KNOWLEDGE Abounds More and More** - Knowledge is awareness of the facts. We need to know what's really happening if we are going to live a purposeful, intentional and aligned life with God.
 - **That DISCERNMENT Abounds More and More** - Discernment is perceiving what's really going on when it's not completely obvious. It's connecting the dots. When Pharaoh heard that a great famine was coming on his land, he needed someone who could see all the pieces and how they fit and discern out a healthy plan for the nation of Egypt (Gen 41:33-39). Joseph was such a man. Solomon prayed for discernment and an understanding mind so they could lead Israel as their king (1 Kings 3:6). Proverbs talks about this process over and over. It's really important.
 - **You CAN Approve God's Will (what's excellent)** - it's possible to know what God wants generally and sometimes very specifically. God is not trying to hide His opinion and make us go on a wild goose chase or scavenger hunt to find it. He wants us to know His heart. He wants us to know His will. It's possible to know His desire for us.
 - **What You'll Talk About In Your Groups**

- **Discerning God's Will** - how do we do that? Pastor Brian and I have taught in many different environments about discerning the Lord's will and what that might mean, but what have you seen work in your life? How have you figured out what God was telling you? Was it reading the Bible? Listening to the advice and wisdom of others? Random circumstance assessment? How do you find out what God wants?

- **Let it Flow**
 - **The Result of Living According to Christ = holy living**
 - **Php 1:10b-11a** - "...and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, ¹¹ filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ,
 - **The Result of Knowledge and Discerning the will of God = Aligned Living** - when we know what's real and what God is doing. When we perceive what He wants. Then we can follow Him in obedience. **As we follow in obedience two things happen:**
 1. **We become pure and blameless** - Sin is present when obedience is not. That means that if obedience is in full force, sin is removed. Sin is anything that is contrary to what God wants. The more we live into what God wants, the less sin is involved. So, aligned living leads to a pure (exactly what God wants) and blameless (no one can pin sin to you) walk of life.
 2. **We are filled with Christ's righteousness and Power to live** - Our righteousness, or moral purity, doesn't come when we do everything right. It comes when we align with the will of God and the righteousness of Christ flows into us and through us. It's less about avoidance of sin and more about aligning with God. The more we are lined up, the more God flows. The more God flows, the more righteousness fills our lives and the more God does things through us by His power. Victory is about alignment.

- **The Highest Purpose**
 - **It's all for the Glory of God**
 - **Php 1:11b** - "...to the glory and praise of God."
 - **What is it all for? Glory and Praise to God** - whatever comes out of our lives, whatever our behavior produces, whatever our hearts pour forth, the point is always glory and praise to God. Who's doing the glory and praise? How is God glorified and praised?

- **Glory and Praise from US** - First it should come from a heart that loves God. When we do the things that He empowers us to do, and we see the incredible response, we should constantly be amazed and in awe of what God can do. When our hearts fill with being impressed by God, naturally glory and praise rises from our soul as well as our lips.
- **Glory and Praise from HEAVENLY BEINGS** - As we conduct our lives, angels and heavenly beings are looking on. When they see God do something incredible through a human being, they are amazed and glory and praise rises up to God.
- **Glory and Praise from FELLOW PEOPLE** - When we do things through the power of God and true transformation happens, it stuns and amazes the people who live around our sphere of influence. People start to get impressed with God more and more and start thinking about Him more and more and taking Him more and more seriously. This results in praise and glory.

Conclusion

- **The Richness of a Full Christian Life...TOGETHER** - Invest your heart here at Bridgeway.