PHILIPPIANS 1:3-11

REVIEW…

- **INTRODUCTION…**
  - The theme of the Book of Philippians is Joy – we are to rejoice always in the Lord!
  - Chapter 1 – Rejoice in suffering – Paul wrote the book while he was in prison…
  - Chapter 2 – Rejoice in serving – following the example given to us by Jesus…
  - Chapter 3 – Rejoice in believing – everything else in life is trash compared to Jesus…
  - Chapter 4 – Rejoice in giving – investing in the work of the Lord!
- **PHILIPPIANS 1:1-3**
  - The opening of the letter is unique – Paul introduces himself as a servant of Jesus…
    - A unusual greeting from Paul (*only 3 times*) - he usually opens with 'Paul an Apostle'...
    - But Paul did not need to establish his authority in order to correct this church...
    - Instead he wanted to come along side them as a servant and build them up in their walk!
  - The letter was not just written to the believers - it was written to the leaders...
    - Paul saw there was no reason for two letters - one for the saints / one for the leaders...
    - Because the saints were grounded - they could receive the same counsel as the leaders!

PAUL'S GREETING TO THE CHURCH… (*3 THINGS*)

- **1ST – PAUL'S THANKFULNESS FOR THE CHURCH… VS. 3-6 (*3 THINGS*)**
  - 1st – Paul was thankful in spite of his trials… vs. 3
    - It had been about 10 years since Paul had established the church in Philippi...
      - Paul was now in prison – you would think Paul would be focused on his problems…
      - But instead he gave thanks every time he thought of the saints in Philippi…
      - The thought of the faith of believers there was enough to put a smile on his face!
      - We tend to think that life revolved around us – we only think about our needs…
      - But when we are self focused it is misery – only seeing our problems / troubles…
      - Instead focus on the blessings of God – the work He is doing all around you!
    - The church in Philippi was an inspiration to Paul in prison…
      - When people think about us – do they give thanks for us…
      - Do we inspire people – encourage them with our walk in Jesus…
      - God calls us to be an example to others – an inspiration pointing others to Jesus!
  - 2nd – Paul was thankful because of their fellowship… vs. 4-5
    - Paul always mentioned the church in his prayers with a heart full of joy…
      - Paul did not pray for the church because he was concerned for them…
      - He prayed for them because of his great love for them – he was proud of them…
      - The reason was because of their fellowship in the Gospel from the 1st day – till now!
      - From the moment Paul arrived in Philippi – sharing the Gospel with Lydia…
      - The church had been a friend to Paul because of the Grace of Jesus Christ!

- We tend to hang out with people who have the same interests as we do…
  - If we work in the 'field' – we like to talk with other people who have the same job…
  - If we like motorcycles – we like to talk with people who have the same interest…
  - But fellowship is not about hanging out and talking about our interests…
  - Fellowship is about believers building up each other in their common faith in Christ!
  - We have fellowship by getting into the Word together and talking about Jesus!
- Like Paul the fellowship is not limited by location…
  - I have had fellowship with people from all over the world – no similar interests…
  - Every notice when you walk into a room with believers in Jesus...
  - Even if you have never met them before - it feels like a family reunion...
  - There is immediate sweet fellowship through our common faith in Jesus!
  - Fellowship that is not limited by distances – we can continue to pray for each other!

o 3rd - Paul was confident in the church… vs. 6

- Because Paul was thinking about the church / had fellowship with them…
  - He knew that God was working to finish the work that He had begun in the church…
  - Do you know if the person sitting next to you is going to heaven…
  - Do you know if they are going through a hard time – struggling in their walk…
  - We are called to invest in one another's lives as believers – encourage each other…
  - Supporting each other so we have confidence in our walk in Jesus!
- Till the day when Jesus comes back again…
  - We began the race the day we believed in Jesus - it ends the day we die...
    - We run the race to receive the prize - Jesus Christ - **Philippians 3:14**...
    - So often as believers we start off well in our race - but we do not finish well...
    - We treat it like a sprint - but after a while we get tired / distracted / and give up...
  - So how do we run the race - running strong till the day Jesus comes back…
    - We get tired because we start to have confidence in something other than Jesus…
    - We begin to depend on ourselves / other people / or some program…
    - But they did not save us – and they cannot finish what they did not start…
    - Our job is to keep our eyes on Jesus – believing He will finish what He started!
    - **Hebrews 12:2** - "Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith..."
  - Maturing in Jesus does not happen overnight…
    - A tree does not bear fruit the day after you plant it – it takes time…
    - And a tree cannot make itself grow any faster – no matter how hard it tries…
    - We also are not made perfect in a day – growing in Jesus is takes time…
    - There is nothing we can do to speed things up – God will finish us in His time!

- **2ND – PAUL'S LOVE FOR THE CHURCH... VS. 7-8**

o The church in Philippi had a very special place in Paul's heart…

- Because the church had stood with Paul while he was in chains…
  - They church was not ashamed of Paul even though he was in prison…
  - We have a tendency to avoid people when they are going through tough times…
  - **Proverbs 19:7** – "A poor man is shunned by his relatives - how much more do his friends avoid him! He pursues them with pleading, they are nowhere to be found."
  - Yet it is in those times when people need us the most – when we show our love!

- Because they stood with Paul in the defense of the Gospel…
  - Defense – *apologia* - defense / reasoned statement / argument (*apologetics*)
  - It is important to be able to give a defense for our faith in Jesus
  - We do not need to be able to answer every question – know every verse…
  - But we should be able to answer questions - tell people about Jesus!
  - **I Peter 3:15** - "If you are asked about your Christian hope... be ready to explain it."
- The result was Paul had a great love for the church in Philippi…
  - Not because of what the church had done for Paul – but because of Jesus Christ…
  - When we share the Gospel of Grace with others – we share in the reward…
  - To think one day we might stand in heaven and see someone we know…
  - And have them come over and thank us – for telling them about Jesus!

- **3RD – PAUL'S PRAYER FOR THE CHURCH… VS. 9-11 (*4 THINGS*)**
  - 1st – Paul prayed the love of the church would overflow more and more... vs. 9
    - Paul wanted the church to overflow in their knowledge of the Love of God…
      - Paul wanted the church to learn how amazing the love of God for them was…
      - A love that took Jesus to the cross - so that we could be saved from our sins...
      - A love that made us the children of God - heirs to all that God has!
    - A love that is too great / too wonderful to fully be able to comprehend...
      - If I asked you to measure out a cup of water – no problem that is not very much...
      - If I asked you to measure the water in the ocean - problem - it is VERY big...
      - The point being we can learn about the Love of God - experience His love...
      - But the Love of God is SO AMAZING - we will never fully understand all of it!
    - In order to have that knowledge (*epi-knosis*) they had to take the time to study…
      - We take the time to learn about the things that are important to us…
      - If we love basketball – we learn all the names of the best players…
      - In the same way if we love Jesus – we will take the time to learn all about Him!
      - **Philippians 3:8** – "Yes, everything else is worthless when compared with the priceless gain of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. I have discarded everything else, counting it all as garbage, so that I may have Christ."
      - It is unfortunate we waste so much of our time learning about everything but Jesus…
      - Because honestly everything else in life is trash compared to knowing Jesus!
  - 2nd – Paul prayed the church would prove (test) what really matters… vs.10
    - The word prove – *dokimos* – means to test to see if something in genuine…
      - In Bible times there was no paper currency – all the money was precious metals…
      - As a result people would 'shave' / steal the edges of a gold/silver coin…
      - But there were honest men who would make sure their coins were full weight…
      - They were called 'dokimos' – they proved they were doing what was right…
    - Often in life we try and 'shave' our time away from God – use it for other things…
      - Rather than going to church on Sunday morning – something else comes up…
      - Rather than taking the time to read the Bible – we veg in front of the TV…
      - We do not choose where are heart is – we do choose where we put our efforts...
      - Wherever we put our money / time / talents - is where our heart will also be!

- Are we focused on the Lord – or caught up in the concerns of this world!
- If we spend our time focused on life – we will miss out on what is most important!

- 3rd – That the church would have a sincere walk – so they would not be offensive…
  - The word sincere – *helikrines* – means to be judges by the sun…
    - Marble statues were very common in Roman culture – one in every yard…
    - But when the masons were carving the statues – they might make a mistake…
    - Rather than starting over – they would use wax to cover up their error…
    - It looked good – until the heat of the sun would melt the was – revealing the sin…
  - Too many believers today look good – till you take a closer look…
    - They might show up to Bible studies – with a Bible in their hands…
    - But the moment they leave church – they act just like the world around them…
    - When held up to the light of Jesus christ – they melt like wax under a hot sun!
    - As a result they stumble others – they give a bad impression of Jesus…
  - We can do anything we want as believers – but we need to ask ourselves…
    - 1st - **I Corinthians 6:12** – "You may say, 'I am allowed to do anything.' But I reply, 'Not everything is good for you.
      - Can you gamble – can you see that movie – can you go to that party…
      - It is not a matter of can you – you can do anything you want – but should you!
    - 2nd – **I Corinthians 6:12** – "Even though 'I am allowed to do anything,' I must not become a slave to anything."
      - Perhaps we enjoy an occasional smoke - is that sin - not in of itself...
      - But the question is can we stop - who is in control - are we or the habit...
      - If we are not longer the ones in control of our 'freedom' - it is no longer good...
      - There might be something in your life that comes to mind right now...
      - Something you have been convicted of - wanted to stop - but not been able to...
      - If we want to stop - but cannot - then we are not longer in control of our lives...
    - 3rd - **I Corinthians 8:9 –** "Do not cause a brother… to stumble."
      - One man's freedom in Christ – can be another man's undoing…
      - We need to be sensitive to each other – protecting each other from sin!
    - 4th - **I Corinthians 10:31** – "Whatever you do, do all to the glory of God."
      - Make sure whatever you do – or do not do – do it to the glory of God!
- 4th – Paul prayed the church would be filled with the fruit of righteousness…
  - That the church would continue to show their faith through their actions…
    - It is easy to say we have 'faith' and 'believe' in Jesus – but the proof is in our actions
    - If we say we're Christians – but still live like the world – then do we really have faith
  - We bear good fruit through Christ Jesus…
    - The more realize/embrace that – the more we will love/follow Jesus
    - The result of clinging to Jesus is we start to bear good fruit - **John 15:4-5**