

Our Partnership in the Gospel

Philippians 1:3-8 I thank my God every time I remember you. In every prayer for all of you, I always pray with joy, because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this, that He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus. It is right for me to feel this way about all of you, since I have you in my heart. For in my chains and in my defence and confirmation of the gospel, you are all partners in grace with me. God is my witness how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus.

Paul begins by expressing his appreciation to God for the partnership in the gospel both he and the church shared together.

They shared in it because they had received it themselves, and because they themselves joined in the great work of gospel ministry to the world.

It meant an enormous amount to Paul to have a church providing such wonderful support to him in his ministry and to further the gospel.

They provided personnel - fellow labourers in the work of the gospel (Epaphroditus (2:19,25 -30), Euodia and Syntyche, Clement and others (4:2-3).

They provided financial support (4:10-19).

*Philippians 4:14-16 Nevertheless, you have done well to share in my affliction. And as you Philippians know, in the early days of the gospel, when I left Macedonia, **no church but you** partnered with me in the matter of giving and receiving. For even while I was in Thessalonica, you provided for my needs again and again.*

We too are called to a partnership in the gospel.

Through our personal support we can work with others to further the great work of spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ and to make disciples of all peoples (*Mark 16; Matt 28*).

What strikes me about the Philippian Church is:

Their heart for Christ and the gospel, and for Paul and others in the work.

...no church but you partnered with me in the matter of giving and receiving (4:15).

Interestingly, their generosity flowed even though they themselves were suffering.

In *2 Corinthians 8:2-3* Paul upholds the Macedonian churches as a model to follow.

“In the midst of a very severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity.

³For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and

even beyond their ability). Because they had a heart for the work, they found a way to help. It is a truism that when someone has a heart for something they give themselves fully to it.

This remarkable commitment was the natural outflow of their hearts because the gospel itself had so profoundly changed their lives.

And, also, because they grasped their call to the work of Christ. Philippians is a reminder to them of this.

Their willingness to make sacrifices for Christ and the gospel.

Epaphroditus. (*Phil 2:25-28*). He risked his life. He was to Paul – ‘*brother, fellow worker, fellow soldier, missionary, and minister to my needs*’.

The impact of what happened at Philippi and the churches ongoing commitment to the gospel was world changing, even to this day.

- It started with a vision - *Acts 16:9*
- a conversation by a riverside - *Acts 16:13*
- a disruptive miracle - *Acts 16:16-19*
- a few converts - *Acts 16:29*

LESSONS

1. We are all called to a partnership in the gospel;
2. We are called to support missionary endeavour sacrificially (Who are you supporting?);
3. Don't underestimate sharing the gospel with just one person (Who are you telling the gospel to?);
4. The gospel is a seed to sow which multiplies exponentially;
5. There is only ONE gospel and the world needs it so desperately.