

Pressing on toward the Goal

(Further Reflection and discussion in the series – Philippians 1:1-8)

The Joy of Missional Living

Background:

1. The letter of Paul to the church in Philippi was written while Paul was in prison. He writes to this church which he was instrumental (humanly speaking) in planting; it is because of his faithful response to the call of God that the gospel was taken into the land of Europe. (see Acts 16)
2. The two big themes of Philippians are (a) the gospel of Christ and 9b) the community in Christ.
3. When viewed together, what comes into focus is Paul's pointed encouragement for 'God's holy people in Christ' to live out the reality of being the family of God on the mission of God.

Looking at the Text:

- A. This letter is specifically sent to, in first place, God's holy people (the people of the church in Philippi) and then to the overseers and deacons (the leadership). There is no doubt that Paul's words, especially about their partnership in the gospel, are 'penned' for the average believer, not to the leadership.
 - i. What is special about this?
 - ii. What are some of the possible implications
- B. The attitude, motive and context of Paul's prayer for them is provided in vs 3-8 (the content is in 9-11 but this will be covered in week two reflection)
 - i. The thought of the Philippian people moves Paul to gratitude –
 1. Why is this so? (look at the following verses)
 - ii. His prayers for them always result in JOY, and the source of this joy is the partnership in the gospel that they enjoy.
 1. Think about and discuss, why it would be that the partnership (fellowship) in the gospel is what brings joy?
 2. List some of the things that might sit behind the comment "from the first day until now"?
 - iii. What is significant about Paul writing that he is confident that God will complete what God has started?
- C. As you reflect upon verse 7 and 8,
 - i. what is Paul saying is the basis for the affection he has for them?
 - ii. What does he mean when he says "longs for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus"?

Application:

- For Paul, Joy is NOT the result of finding it comfortable or living in wonderful circumstances. JOY is seen in the GOSPEL MAKING PROGRESS through the circumstances of the people of God IN COMMUNITY in Philippi.
 - How might such a view of Joy in living missionally for God translate to how we live today as God's holy people in Christ?

NEXT WEEK – we will start with the content of Paul's prayer (vs 9-11) as an introduction to the "Challenge of Missional Living" (vs 12-30)