

“A Lifetime, and Beyond”

Philippians 1:1-11

1/15/23 Epicenter/BAC

Rev. Brian T. Smeal; pastorsmeal@gmail.com

All Scripture quoted from ESV unless otherwise noted

Into a scene of moral and ethical confusion, the gospel message of salvation in Jesus Christ flashed like a revelation from heaven^[1]

- The first years of the Christian movement were marked by great success, as men and women recognized and embraced hope and truth for the very first time

The book of Philippians reflects the character, heart, teaching, and divine inspiration of our heavenly Father, revealed through the hand of the Apostle Paul, first to the believers at Philippi and now to the believers in our own church.

- This is a letter from a friend to his friends; a letter of thanks, a letter of encouragement, a letter of spiritual counsel

Philippians 1:3 (MSG) – “Every time you cross my mind, I break out in exclamations of thanks to God.”

- Can you imagine having relationships like that?
 - It’s a depth of relationship rarely obtained, and often underappreciated

The deepest relationships you will ever have will be the most ***Valuable***, and the most ***Dangerous***, as vulnerability can be very uncomfortable and may lead to deep hurts

- But those are the relationships that will remain strong despite the miles that come between you and the years that go by so very quickly

Developing genuine relationships means...

Sharing in a common ***Goal***

- *The bonds of true Christian fellowship are forged through the mutual quest for ***Lasting Impact****
- *We are on a mission that ***Matters...****

Sharing a common ***Growth***

- *Speaks of ***Salvation*** (began a good work) and of ***Sanctification*** (will bring it to completion)*
- *As you lean into God’s grace more and more, His ***Fingerprints*** become more and more evident in you*
- *We are on a mission that moves us ***Closer****

Sharing in a common Grace

- *The bonds of true Christian fellowship are forged through shared Spiritual experiences*
- *God's grace is not a Fair-Weather Friend*

Love is the Prerequisite for mutual knowledge, discernment, and even righteousness

[1] The Pulpit Commentary; Introduction to Philippians, page i

DIG IN!

Here are some farm-fresh questions that will help you to personalize and apply this morning's message.

1. *What was most surprising, unexpected, or helpful from today's passage/message? Why?*
2. **What does Paul mean by saying, 'partners in the gospel'? With whom are you a partner in the gospel?**
3. **If Paul's prayer (v.9-11) were answered in your life, how would it affect your relationships with your fellow Christ followers?**
4. **Read through the book of Philippians (come on, man, it's only 4 chapters.) How does the tone of Philippians compare with that of Paul's letters to the Corinthian church?**
5. *What have you learned through your personal time of Bible reading this week?*
6. **What excuses have you given for not sharing the Gospel message? Are they valid? Who will you share your faith with this week?**