

Philippians 1:9-18

VERSE 9

And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment,

IX. The love of the Philippians abounded already. Paul prays that it will continue to abound more and more. There is no end to love.

A. He prays that their love will abound more and more in real knowledge.

“Real knowledge” is epignosis which implies being fully acquainted, to have a full knowledge, and to have a full discernment.

1. What “real knowledge”? Andrew Wommack points out that the same word is used in the letter to Philemon when speaking of “acknowledging” what Christ has done in us. Notice how this passage is also framed in love.

Philemon 1:4-7

I thank my God, making mention of you always in my prayers, ⁵ hearing of your love and faith which you have toward the Lord Jesus and toward all the saints, ⁶ that the sharing of your faith may become effective by the acknowledgment of every good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus. ⁷ For we have great joy and consolation in your love, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed by you, brother.

2. Thus, the “real knowledge” is most likely the knowledge of what Christ has accomplished in us by His death and resurrection.

So Paul prays that this love may overflow more and more, but that its outflow and application might be brought within the guiding limitations of knowledge and judgment. “Knowledge” is from the Greek work speaking of knowledge gained by experience, as contrasted to intuitive knowledge, which is from another word.
-Wuest

B. He prays that their love will abound more and more in all discernment.

Discernment is aisthesis which has to do with perception and judgment.

1. Notice that Paul says “all” discernment.
2. Wuest writes, “The words ‘all judgment’ are the translation of a Greek word referring to a sensitive moral perception, and a quickness of ethical tact.

C. How are real knowledge and all discernment connected with love?

1. Love accompanied by real knowledge and all discernment is highly effective. If you know who you are in Him AND you have divine discernment, you will be more effective at loving others.

VERSE 10

So that you may approve the things that are excellent, in order to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ;

X. Loving each other with all real knowledge and all discernment makes us able to prove/test/discern what is excellent (valuable).

The word “approve” is from a Greek word which refers to the act of testing something for the purpose of approving it, thus “to approve after testing.”-Wuest

Here the word refers to the ability of the saints to sift or test a certain thing and thus to recognize its worth and put their stamp of approval upon it.-Wuest

A. Knowing what is valuable allows us to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ.

1. **Sincere:** judged by sunlight, that is, tested as genuine (figuratively): - pure
2. **Blameless (without offense):** actively inoffensive, that is, not leading into sin; passively faultless, that is, not led into sin: - none (void of, without) offence

"Sincere" is from a Greek word which means "distinct, unmixed, pure, unsullied."-Wuest

"Without offence" is literally, "not cut against, not stumbled against." This saint is not a stumbling block to others.-Wuest

3. The "sincerity" and "without offense" is before men not God. We are already Holy and blameless before God.-dhh

Colossians 1:21-22

And although you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind, engaged in evil deeds, ²² yet He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach—

Jude 24

*Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling,
And to present you faultless
Before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy.*

VERSE 11

Having been filled with the fruit of righteousness which comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

XI. We HAVE BEEN filled with the fruit of righteousness. Notice the past tense.

- A. This doesn't come through our own doing, but through Jesus Christ. No one can boast in this kind of righteousness. Only God can receive glory and praise for making us righteous.**

2 Corinthians 5:21

For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

1 Corinthians 1:30-3

But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption, ³¹ so that, just as it is written, "LET HIM WHO BOASTS, BOAST IN THE LORD."

The "fruit consisting of true righteousness" has not to do with circumcision, or with any other measurable , religious expression of law-keeping; rather it has to do with boasting in Christ and "serving" by the Spirit, Fee

- B. We have been filled with the fruits, the outward results, the actions toward others which result from being righteous.**
- C. As we act righteously to others, God gets the glory and praise.**

VERSE 12

Now I want you to know, brethren, that my circumstances have turned out for the greater progress of the gospel,

- XII. Paul does not want the Philippians to worry about him. They'd heard of his sufferings. He points them to the fact that his bad circumstances were resulting in the gospel progressing and not to it being suppressed.
- A. *Paul is also indirectly teaching the Philippians a lesson about how to endure persecution. The same Paul who worshipped God at midnight in the Philippian jail after having been beaten severely was now patiently enduring his trials in Rome. He could have complained and whined about it, but instead he rejoiced that the gospel of Christ was being spread seemingly BECAUSE of what he was enduring.*
- B. *Our perspective of our life situations can make a big difference in how we react to them. How we react to hard times can sometimes actually preach the gospel. In the Philippian prison, his attitude of praise had led to an earthquake and the salvation of the jailor and his family. In Rome, his viewpoint was leading to the furtherance of the gospel.*

Very likely even these opening words are in part for their sake: here is how one for whom Christ and the gospel are uppermost responds to adversity. -Fee

VERSE 13

So that my imprisonment in the cause of Christ has become well known throughout the whole praetorian guard and to everyone else,

- XIII. The Praetorian Guard, likely consisting of hundreds of men, knew of Paul's imprisonment and the reason for it. Not only the guard, but "everyone else" knew that he was in jail for preaching the gospel.

VERSE 14

And that most of the brethren, trusting in the Lord because of my imprisonment, have far more courage to speak the word of God without fear.

- XIV. Of course, all the church knew of Paul's imprisonment. Instead of making them afraid to proclaim the gospel, it actually gave them courage to preach it without fear.

Paul's uncompromising stand and the way that it was furthering the Gospel had encouraged others to be bolder in their presentation of the Gospel. Anytime we show strength in the face of adversity, the Lord uses that to motivate others to achieve the same level of commitment. Courage inspires courage. -AWMI

Second, their boldness has led them "fearlessly to speak forth the word." This absolute use of "the word" 52 occurs frequently in Paul to describe the gospel, the message about Christ. Fee

Romans 10:14-17

How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? ¹⁵ And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written:

*"How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace,
Who bring glad tidings of good things!"*

¹⁶ *But they have not all obeyed **the gospel**.*

For Isaiah says, "LORD, who has believed our report?"

¹⁷ *So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by **the word of God** (the word of Christ.)¹*

VERSES 15-17

Some, to be sure, are preaching Christ even from envy and strife, but some also from good will; ¹⁶ the latter do it out of love, knowing that I am appointed for the defense of the gospel; ¹⁷ the former proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition rather than from pure motives, thinking to cause me distress in my imprisonment.

- XV. Man of us formerly naively believed that everyone who "preached Christ" was doing so out of the best of motives, but Paul shows here that it is possible to preach Christ with wrong motives.
- XVI. Those who preached Christ "from good will" did so out of love (for Christ and for Paul). They didn't despise Paul's condition as a prisoner. They understood that he was called to defend the gospel.
- XVII. Those who preached out of envy and strife rather than for pure motives (out of love), did it for selfish ambition (contention, strife, to cause factions). This likely referred to them trying to win disciples unto themselves and away from Paul. They were purposely trying to cause Paul to be distressed while in prison.
- A. *Factions have existed in the church since its very beginning. Some of them were cause by people preaching for wrong motives as is evidenced in these verses. Other factions were created by the people within the church feeling the need to identify with one preacher over another.*
- 1 Corinthians 1:10-13*
- Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. ¹¹ For it has been declared to me concerning you, my brethren, by those of Chloe's household, that there are contentions among you. ¹² Now I say this, that each of you says, "I am of Paul," or "I am of Apollos," or "I am of Cephas," or "I am of Christ."¹³ Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?*
- 1. In the above example we see the divisions were not only based on personality but on what was taught as Paul encourages them to "speak the same thing".*
 - 2. In the example of those preaching for wrong motives, it does not appear that what they taught was in question. Paul said that they were*

¹ NASB

“preaching Christ”. In 1 Corinthians, he said some were preaching “another Jesus”, and in Galatians he said they were preaching “another gospel”. We know that in Galatians he DID NOT REJOICE at what was being preached. So, it is logical to conclude that the reason Paul could rejoice was that the true Jesus and the true gospel was being preached. He rejoiced in that, even though the motivations of some were less than perfect.

VERSE 18

What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed; and in this I rejoice.

XVIII. Imagine the maturity of Paul here. There were those preaching to cause him distress. How could he take this so mildly? Paul knew that the gospel is the power of God unto salvation. Even if it comes from those with wrong motives, if the correct gospel is preached, lives will be changed. Once our lives are changed, we will be able to eventually see that someone is preaching for a wrong motive.

A. We might complain that some churches only talk about Jesus on Christmas and Easter, but “Christ is preached”, and this is a cause for rejoicing. The reason is that God will use whatever He can to reach people, and the Gospel, or words about Christ are the dunamis of God.

Romans 1:16-17

For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. ¹⁷For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, “BUT THE RIGHTEOUS man SHALL LIVE BY FAITH.”

Paul can write things like this because, first, his theology is in good order. He has learned by the grace of God to see everything from the divine perspective. -Fee