

# Dr. Daniel K. Darko, Prison Epistles, Lecture 9, Philippians 1

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This is Dr. Dan Darko in his lecture series on the Prison Epistles. This is session 9, Philippians 1.

Welcome back to the biblical studies lecture series on Philippians.

We looked at our introduction to Philippians, and we also went through a little bit about the background of the city, the culture, and how Christianity came to Philippi. I drew your attention to how Paul came into contact with the believers in this church and developed a very good relationship with them. That is going to surface as we look through the text and see the themes that are highlighted in this particular text called Philippians.

We will also see some of the uniqueness of the text and the language that is used. If you remember from the last lecture, I ended the lecture by reading a quotation to you that actually shows that Paul uses words in this particular letter that he doesn't use in any of his letters. Partly because Paul was in prison in Rome and writing to Christians in a Roman colony, they do have a shared language that when he used to communicate, they could understand with clarity.

Now, beginning the next lecture on Philippians, we are actually going to have a quick look at the key themes of the letter. You may notice in the course of this lecture that I like to give you what I call the light bulbs or the sparks, things that should be ringing at the back of your mind as we go through the text. So here in Philippians, I'm going to first outline a few themes that you want to have at the back of your mind as we go through the text.

I also draw your attention to some rhetorical strategies of the ancient world that are so important for us to know in order to grasp the way Philippians is written, is designed, how arguments are taking place, how the rhetoric is put together, and how Paul, the strategies Paul is using here to persuade. In fact, one scholar called Ben Witherington would argue that Paul actually knows some of the rhetorical strategies I will show you in this piece, and that actually shaped his writing of Philippians significantly. So, let's look at some of the key themes first.

Looking at Philippians, you want to keep at the back of your mind the theme of friendship. I mentioned that, indeed, in Philippians, friendship is so significant to the extent that you almost sense Paul's emotion coming true in the way he writes. He talks about things coming from his heart.

He talks about a solid relationship he has with them, almost like a father and his children. So, keep friendship at the back of your mind. Second, you want to keep at the back of your the word joy or rejoice.

If you are from some of the churches that I am familiar with, you probably have one or two songs elsewhere that you sing that will have very popular lines in Philippians, such as rejoice. And again, I say rejoice. Paul will be writing some of these lines for a church in Philippi.

Try to encourage them to rejoice in the face of suffering, in the face of thinking about their own suffering, and even possibly some challenges that they may be going through themselves as Christians in the city of Philippi. The other thing you will see and you should have at the back of your mind is the theme of humility in this letter. Paul is going to challenge the church to develop a mindset that is actually worthy of people who call Jesus Christ their Lord.

He is going to touch on a very important theme that I like to emphasize in Pauline writings. The fact that a change of mindset actually affects people's behavior. For behavior changes to take effect, there has to be a radical change of mindset.

Paul will go on to touch on humility to even illustrate how the mindset of believers should be modeled after Christ and then give us what we will call the Christ hymn to talk about how Christ humbled himself and how, because of that humility, God would exalt him and give him a name that is above every other name. That at the mention of the name Jesus, every knee would or should bow and every tongue confess that Jesus is Lord. The other theme you want to keep as a background is Christ as the way for Christian modeling.

And beyond Christ, Paul will be showing different characters, including himself, as a model to follow. In other words, in Philippians, Paul is going to remind us that Christian leadership is modeling. To be a Christian leader is to be in a place where, whether you know it or not, someone is following you, that someone is observing you, and that someone is learning from your way of life.

So, they need to pay attention to that. He will highlight Christ and some of his companions and highlight himself as a good model to follow. Now, this brings me to the point that we have the themes of the background, which also keeps this the background, the rhetorical strategy being employed by Paul.

This has no particular Christian note to it, I should say, because these rhetorical strategies are that which is common to philosophers and rhetoricians, whether Greek or Latin. Let me draw your attention to three key frameworks or arguments that they will put forward in their discussion. So, in Greco-Roman writings or in argumentation, that is what we call judicial rhetoric.

Judicial rhetoric is the form of rhetoric in which one stands before the audience and makes an argument to actually show what is right and what is wrong. In an ancient world, when you can go to a city hall and make a case and get support, the judicial form of rhetoric is very important, especially if your friend or someone you love is in trouble. You need to be able to learn the skills that are needed to stand, make a case, and draw sharp antithesis to be able to distinguish the right from the wrong, sorry, the right from the wrong so that the person or the persons listening to you will actually yield and say, yes; we've hit at your point, you have made a case; indeed you are right.

There is a particular skill that is supposed to be developed to make such a case. The second rhetorical framework or rhetorical strategy known in the ancient world is what we call deliberate rhetoric. Deliberate rhetoric is intended to persuade or to dissuade about an expedient future action.

So, something is about to come, and you develop this skill. Say, you know, I'll give you an example. The election is coming, and you start the election campaign. That is not a time to learn how to put up very good judicial rhetoric to make a case.

People don't care too much about that. If the election is tomorrow, your whole rhetorical ploy should be designed to get the people to vote. If you try to play on facts and figures too much, you lose them.

You may then, using this rhetorical strategy, learn that maybe the most important thing to do is to connect with the audience. You may also learn that perhaps the most important thing to do is to look at what is important to them and tell them that that is what you want to do for them. Even if it is one of the 30 things you want to do, you employ deliberate rhetoric, put your case forward, arouse the people to your side, and get them to go. Yes, you are the one we would vote for.

The third form of rhetoric is what we call epidemic rhetoric. Epidemic rhetoric uses praise or blame to promote values or affirm a stand. So, if you want to discourage bad behavior, you may start by saying, you know, of all the citizens of this particular town, we have been known for our integrity, and we have been known for our dignity.

We have been known for all the great things that our forefathers have passed on to us. One that is not worthy of us is, for instance, stealing. Then, you can go on to show how embarrassing and blameworthy stealing is.

As you do that, you employ epidemic rhetoric to actually use blame and praise to appeal to the people's conscience to be on your side. Ancient Greek rhetoricians

used this method very often. Roman philosophers, not even Aratus alone, employed some of this method.

Scholars believe that Paul knew about this. After all, Paul, who was he? Well, we know Paul was a Jewish learned man. We know that he studied under Gamaliel.

We know beyond that that Paul was raised in a university town, Tarsos. He knows Greek very well. Do you want to know? You study New Testament Greek and try to study Paul.

But you understand that the students will tell you, how come the Gospel of John is straightforward? And why is Paul so complicated? Well, the guy knows the language, and when he gets excited, he uses words that we just don't understand, and we have to work so hard to follow. He was a learned guy. He understood the Greek culture, Greek system, and Greek language and was able to work with them very well.

Chances are that working in the Greco-Roman world, he also had the opportunity to learn something about Roman, Greek, and Roman rhetoric. That is why scholars like Ben Worthington, who teaches at Asbury Theological Seminary, will say he is persuaded that Paul actually knew about these features in rhetoric when he was writing Philippians. The rhetorical features, these three, are the key part.

There are sub-components in rhetoric that you would like to note because I will refer to some of them as we look through Philippians. One of the details in the way rhetoric works at a sub-level is what we call exordium. Exordium in ancient rhetoric is very, very important.

It is the part of rhetoric and rhetorical skill that hooks the audience, that brings the audience from what they are doing to start focusing or paying attention to what you are doing. It is the hook if you like. Perhaps when you were in high school, you learned some of the three key things of ancient Greek rhetoric.

These three key things are the ethos and the pathos, and the third one is the logos, the pathos, and the logos that you learn first from high school. The logos is the substance, the content. The pathos is the emotional connection that you want to make as a speech deliverer, that you can actually connect with the audience.

Of course, the ethos, the fact that the one who is delivering is a person of integrity and that you have the standing and the right to be heard, are the factors that you need to put into consideration. These rhetorical skills I'm talking about here build off that. Those are three fundamental things that are assumed by any basic educated person.

The ones I'm talking about here are further skills you learn, exordium being one of the key ones. So, if you are preparing a speech, you think exordium. Before I get the people to listen to me, what do I need to do? And you start thinking in those terms.

The other area is narration. Narration is not applicable in all speeches, but sometimes it is, and that is the part that relates to the background and facts and makes the case. You present the background, relate and narrate them as you know the English word nourishing, and bring them with you.

In modern-day courtrooms, lawyers apply this skill as well. They tell a story. They try to apply it when they talk about case law.

Propositional is another one, stating what is agreed upon and what is contested or being contested. In propositional, your rhetorical teacher will teach you that you need to stop thinking that if you tell people what they are not, they are going to believe you. You need to stop that.

You need to be able to tell them what we all agree. And so, we are all on the same page on this one. We need to be able to decipher with clarity what we are not on the same page on and why they should be on your side of the argument.

Paul seemed to know these skills. Wow. You probably thought I was going to study Philippians.

Now, it seems like I'm studying ancient Greek rhetoric. Yes. And I'll tell you why.

The study of some of these features is so important that you can understand that the New Testament letters were not meant to be read. They are not meant for people to pick up, read, and study. They were actually written for people to hear.

So that one or two people who know how to read become those who will read them with clarity, and the rest will hear. And because they are meant to be heard for most people, rhetoric is important to communicate what is being said with clarity. If you put all the substance, facts, and figures together, they are so boring, and when they are read, people will not follow.

And Paul seemed to have been following these patterns, including probatio, which established proofs based on the credibility of the speaker. If you are known to be someone who doesn't tell the truth and now you are talking about the virtue of truth, you are in trouble. You want to keep that at the back of your mind so that if you are not credible in what you are talking about or what you are making the argument on, you want to make sure you counter that somewhere.

Your rhetoric teacher in the ancient world will draw your attention to these features and say, take into account if you are going to persuade. Last on the list here is the refutation, which is literally, as it sounds in English, the part of the rhetoric that refuses or refutes an opposing argument. Paul seemed to know this.

And now he is writing to friends. He is not addressing some of those complex issues with controversies and all those. And so he doesn't have to really worry about false teachers, what they are going to try to do, and all the complex issues in the other letters.

Now he can sit back and write to friends. It is on this note that we turn to Philippians 1. Philippians 1 from verses 1 and 2, Paul writes, Philippians 1, Paul and Timothy, servant of Christ Jesus, to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are at Philippi with the overseers and deacons, grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. You might, by this time, notice that this is a standard greeting in Paul.

Paul, bringing your attention to how Greco-Roman letters work, is going straight to pick how letter writing functioned there because the three components feature clarity in these greetings. In a Greco-Roman prescript or at the beginning of a letter, the name of the sender will be given, greetings will be given, and the names of the recipients will be mentioned. And guess what Paul does here? Paul identifies those who are sending the letter, and he says it was him, Paul.

It was him, Paul, and Timothy. Timothy was a co-worker of Paul. Look at how he described their relationship with a simple conjunction: Paul and Timothy.

Slaves, if I'm translating literally, slaves or servants of Christ Jesus. We know that Timothy and Paul are not literally slaves. This is a metaphor that actually expresses the nature of their relationship.

The nature of their relationship is that which they see Jesus Christ as the Lord over their lives. And if Jesus is the Lord over their lives and they are the slaves of the Lord Jesus Christ, then their whole life is committed to doing the bidding or the wishes of Jesus Christ. In that sense, they can say we are servants or slaves, and he is our Lord and our master.

To say they are servants of Christ Jesus is to suggest that they acknowledge the mastery of Jesus Christ over their lives. One writer, Moises Silva, actually makes a very good observation in his commentary in Philippians in these simple greetings. Moises Silva notices that when Paul writes Paul and Timothy servants, he goes on to say servants of Christ Jesus, and he goes on to say to the saints in Christ Jesus who are at Philippi, and then later on in verse two, he says grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

And Moises writes this to explain that. It is intriguing to find that of the four epistles in which Paul does not introduce himself as an apostle; three were addressed to Macedonian churches, Philippians, and one and two Thessalonians. The fourth is Philemon, where the delicacy of the occasion, as seen in verses 17 to 20, accounts for this feature.

Paul doesn't have to invoke his apostolic rights in Philippi. He doesn't have to show that he has some spiritual authority. He's writing to his friends.

It is more of who they are together in Christ. They are servants of Christ. They are saints in Christ.

They are saints who reside in Christ at Philippi. Let me just have a quick exercise about Timothy. Why is Timothy in this account? Because Timothy's connection with the region goes back to an earlier ministry of Paul in Macedonia and Achaia.

Back when they went to the area that we will call today, or in this particular letter, we'll call Philippi and Thessalonica. Paul seems to be the sole author from all indications, but he also seems to be mentioning Timothy to show that he's not alone, that Timothy is actually with him, and increasingly, scholars are leaning towards the opinion that Paul may be writing mentioning Timothy this time not because he's writing he's writing literally with Timothy but showing that Timothy is actually there with him and they are all servants of Christ together. It is suggested that this may also be an attempt to bring a familiar person into the discussion as a collaborative witness, and Silva points that out.

However, when you look at this text, it is important to notice how important Timothy is in this equation. Paul is not necessarily asking Timothy if I run one line, I write one line, you write a second line but more of what it seemed to be happening here, as I would argue, is Paul writing and showing that Timothy is physically present with him and if Timothy is not writing with him at all Timothy is seeing what is writing and Timothy is in one spirit with him. Witherington has this to say Timothy is mentioned in the preface of several of Paul's letters, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon, which indicates that Timothy was certainly with Paul during his house arrest, an event that likely transpired during 60 to 62 AD or CE in Rome.

Witherington would like to connect the fact that Paul likes to mention Timothy whether he's writing with him or not. It is not new. Paul wants to show that Timothy is with him.

And that brings me to the recipients. Verse 2, or excuse me, is the second part of verse 1. Paul refers to them as saints. They are saints.

They are those who are set apart for God's use. They are not saints who are made saints by the Pope. They are saints because they are set apart to be kept holy or to be kept for a particular service for the Lord, namely service in the Lord Jesus Christ.

And they are not saints of anyone. They are not set apart for any cause. But they are saints in Christ.

And Christ here could be the locale in which they reside and operate as saints. In the sphere where Christ is Lord. In the sphere where their teaching and their conduct are shaped by Christ.

Interestingly, the prescript quoting and referring to them as in Christ has some interesting dimension to it. And let me read the text to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are at Philippi.

The question is, does the fact that Jesus precedes Philippi in Christ suggest that Paul wants to emphasize who they are in Christ first before he mentions their citizenship or their place? Knowing very well that these are Christians in Philippi. They are proud of their citizenship. They are proud of where they come from.

When you run into trouble with them, as we saw in Acts, the citizens of Philippi actually said, we are Romans, and Paul and others have come to try to change our customs. Is it possible that Paul, at the very beginning, is throwing out a hint here that your true identity is in Christ? And you are believers in Christ who just happen to be at Philippi.

If that is so, then some of the comments we will see in the rest of the letter will make a lot of sense. Paul is going to touch on citizenship and help them to understand where true citizenship should be seen. Paul makes an interesting comment here.

When he mentions that he's writing this to the saints in Christ Jesus who are at Philippi, he also goes on to say with overseers and deacons. This is the earliest reference to bishops. The Greek word translated there for you on the screen is episcopal.

In other words, elders or bishop is the first time we are able to see this. This word can be translated. Those of you who come from traditions like Catholic or Anglican may be familiar with the word bishop, or sometimes the Latin equivalent episcopos is used in those contexts to mean an elder or an office.

Paul throws this word here in Greek, and the question is this. Does it mean there were bishops? In the church at Philippi, have the church already developed to the extent that people could hold offices as bishops? That is an interesting question to note because these two words appear elsewhere in First Timothy to designate



leaders. The word episcopal or elders shows up there more in reference to people who are leaders, and the Greek word diakonos or a minister also appears there as an office.

But we need to be careful in the way we bring this emphasis back to Philippians because if we pose the question of whether episcopal in the way it is used in a non-Christian sense has some of these elements to it, the answer would be yes. Politicians use that. They use that for the office of a commissioner or the office of an overseer of a colony.

But is it possible that Paul is just using it in a different way to say there are elders and there are people who serve in the church without saying there are institutional structures in place where we have bishops and we have deacons. New Testament scholars are uncomfortable about the idea that there were established bishops by the time of Philippians because everything else we know does not support that the office of a bishop was as established as we know today in churches like the Catholic Church and all that. But we know from someone like Irenaeus later on in the second century that we will talk about church structures, and by that time in the second century, these will become major offices that people will hold.

Up until this time, though, the office was not developed like that. It slowly became more and more developed by the time of the pastoral epistles, as we see in 1 Timothy. But by the time of Philippians, we know of churches that are mostly house churches, loose or relaxed leadership structures, where people meet and fellowship and learn and have a good time together as believers and not churches with structures of deacons and bishops.

This leads me to reflect on Paul's language in the greetings. Do you notice how he greets them in the Pauline fashion? Grace to you and peace from God our Father and Lord Jesus Christ. Grace.

I will keep reminding you anytime Paul uses this word because it is important in Pauline understanding. Grace, the word that can be translated as a gift, began to mean something different for Paul. It began to connote a favor or mercy that was shown to a remarkably stubborn individual who was swimming against the current deserving the worst of the worst, but God still showed mercy to him.

For him, grace is a theological term. Grace is not just a gift. It is mercy or favor bestowed to the undeserved.

Once, a Pharisee in his own mind doing the right things for God, persecuting the church of Lord Jesus Christ encountered someone in a miraculous way who introduced himself as I am the Christ whom you persecute. Just when he was preparing his mind to be challenged, chastised, or punished by this Christ, he showed

him mercy. On that day in the Damascus experience, Paul would later meet another follower of the Lord Jesus Christ by the name of Ananias.

He would tell him more and baptize him, and his life would change. We would be told that Paul in the book of Acts, Paul would actually start preaching the gospel in Damascus. Wow! That was his destination to go and persecute the followers of Jesus Christ.

For Paul, this is grace. He did not deserve the mercy shown him, and he would bring this language, the grace language, a theologically loaded language to characterize his understanding of what God has done to humanity, contaminated and trapped in sin. Grace it is in this spirit, Paul greets.

Grace to you. And peace, shalom, and well-being of God to you. And this peace from God, Paul wants you to know that this peace comes from God, who can be seen as our Father and the Master of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Hansen, thinking about the formula in these very just two verses in Philippians, makes this observation. The threefold repetition of the name Christ Jesus, Christ Jesus, the Lord Jesus, presents the central theme that reappears throughout the letter and unites everything around the person of Christ. F.F. Bruce, a British scholar, will go as far as to say when we think about peace in Philippians in this term, we should think about peace in this way.

Peace, according to Bruce, is the sum total of all blessings, temporal and spiritual. And grace is the source from which they come. So, Paul offers peace, and not peace alone, but grace and peace of God our Father and the Lord Jesus to his friends at Philippi.

It is on this note that he can begin and best in gratitude and give thanks for what God has been doing. He writes from verse three of chapter one, I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you, all making my prayers with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. I am sure that he who has begun good work in you will bring it to completion on the day of Christ Jesus.

It is right for me to feel this way about you all because I hold you in my heart, for you are all partakers with me of grace. Both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, for God is my witness, how I yearn for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus. And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more with knowledge and discernment so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ.

Fill with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Christ to the glory and praise of God. Let's just pause quickly and look at Paul's prayer and thanksgiving a little bit closer. Here we see in Paul's prayer and thanksgiving, you may observe that actually, unlike the English language, if you are looking at the Greek, my look at the English translation that I'm reading right now from ESV doesn't carry that at all.

Actually, verses 3 to 8 is one sentence in Greek. I call some of those Paul lines breathless invocations or breathless expressions of thanksgiving. Just imagine you are asked to read this letter to a large number of people or a group of people in a church, and you are to read verses 3 to 8, and it's one sentence.

How would you go about it? How fast would you go about it? In Paul's complex Greek constructions, how would you pronounce words? Sometimes I imagine Paul being so excited and full of joy that he comes in and just writes, and anytime I see him writing these long sentences, he has all these wonderful things to say, as you will see not only in Philippians but also see when we get to Ephesians 1 where you have as long as from chapter 1 verse 3 to I think verse 13 being one sentence and how excited he is to just pour things out. Think about this as we think about Paul's thanksgiving. Look at the main emphasis of this thanksgiving.

Partnership. Fellowship. He talks about being partakers.

He goes on when he talks about his memory of these people; he expresses confidence and says verse 5 because of your partnership in the gospel from the very first day until now. Verse 7. It is right for me to feel this way about you all because I hold you in my heart, and for you are all partakers with me of grace. You go on to say verse 8. For God is my witness how I yearn for you with affection in Christ Jesus.

You are probably thinking Paul is getting emotional. Men don't do that. Well, no, men do that.

When men are excited, it is okay to express partnership, fellowship, affection, and desire to be together with friends. For Paul, in his prayer and thanksgiving, you see what Witherington identifies as an exordium where he intends to evoke an emotional reaction. As people read about Paul, we see that he holds us in his heart.

Really, oh, I could just imagine some of the teenagers going, oh, that is Paul. We love him. Paul is not, and he does not hold back from how much he cares about this particular congregation.

And so, if he employs exordium, yes, so be it. He wants to evoke a reaction. He knows this rhetorical strategy.

And yet, it is not a rhetorical strategy intended just for the sake of rhetoric but intended to convey his truest intent and desire to the people. He deeply cares about them. In verse 5, you see the allusion to the financial support that the church had been giving to Paul.

Because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, if they had partnered with Paul in significant ways, perhaps they have done so in no better way than their financial contribution. For that, Paul is grateful. Looking at the thanksgiving, let me just highlight a few things that Paul is giving thanks for here.

I thank my God, he writes, in all my remembrance for you. Wow, memory is a good thing. It's one of the things I'm not an Old Testament scholar, but it's one of the things that I like and enjoy about the Old Testament.

Sometimes, reading and going across the words remember. If you only remember the relationships, the experience with God, and all that was in the past, they should affect how you look at things. For Paul, he truly takes time to remember these people because they are dear to him.

He expressed that with no hesitation in his thanksgiving. In his thanksgiving, he actually shows that he prays with joy. And in fact, he thanks God for such a great partnership that continues to exist between him and this particular church.

They have been great partners. That is a great thing to thank God for. And this partnership shows up in different ways.

Because of this partnership, he could then express assurance of God's good work among them. I find it very interesting that Paul can make some bold statements like verse 6. And I am sure of this, that he who has begun a good work in you would bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ. Let me just pause and ask, why? Why is Paul expressing all these big thanks? Well, let me just give you one or two things to think about.

I have already highlighted some things. But they have a special place in his heart. If we have not seen that of Paul elsewhere, that is why we should think about his relationship with these people.

For Paul, true partnership really matters. And it is because of that he can say God is his witness that he has deep yearning for the church at Philippi. Deep yearning, as you will hear me saying a few times in this lecture series, Paul is quick to give thanks to God, encourage a heart of gratitude, and pray.

I think prayer in Paul is one of the themes under-emphasized in all of Pauline's studies. This is a man who likes to talk about prayer and begins with letters with

prayer and all that. Look at how he prays and expresses his prayer from verse 9. And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, that your love may increase.

For Paul, he will go on to express the nature of this love. It is not only an emotional connection that he has with them, but it is one that is expressed with wisdom and all discernment. Paul, in his prayer for the petition, will go on to ask that as he prays, their love may increase with all wisdom and discernment, he prays so that they may approve what is excellent, and so be pure, morally, and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ.

To the glory and praise. Remember, I mentioned how he used praise and blame to the praise of God. Paul prays for moral excellence, and he talks about the fruit of righteousness.

In Galatians, which is not part of our test, Paul uses the same metaphor to talk about the fruit of the spirit. Fruit is born out of natural growth. Righteousness for the believer is not something that is imposed.

For those who are growing in Christ, this moral purity becomes the natural outcome of their growth. And he prays that this becomes real among the believers of faith. Praying for moral aspirations for the church, he actually prays that this will become so real until or in the day of Christ, in the eschatological time frame.

I like Paul, and I like how he brings these things out. And for me, perhaps I should pause here and show you some of the themes that he's highlighting in his prayer so that you may think through this yourself. Whether you are driving or you are studying this topic together, just think about it.

If you are in front of a desk, then I would suggest that you actually open your Bible and begin to look at these themes in the prayer. Joy, rejoicing, fellowship or partnership, the mention of the gospel so far, love and affection, the day of Christ, the generosity of the church. Look at how these themes move from the very beginning up to this time and begin to understand what is going on in terms of Paul's relationship with this church.

I would like to just close that discussion from verse 1 to 11 with a quotation from Ben Witherington, another quotation from Ben Witherington. You've heard me refer to him a lot because he's one of the people who has recently published a commentary on Philippians. I want to take advantage of his thoughts on this subject matter.

Ben Witherington writes, The emphasis on thinking and mental reflection makes Philippians stand out from other Pauline documents with some ten uses of the Greek word *phroneo*, which means to think, to process mentally and its cognates in

Philippians compared to only 11 in all other undisputed Pauline letters. Paul is going to challenge the church in their way of thinking. So far you have seen how relationship and spirituality is being developed here.

And he will go on to highlight a few things. Let me just proceed to point a few things out to you. The narrative we are following here is classified by Ben Witherington as clearly Paul adopting ancient rhetoric and then going on with Nareshu in his rhetorical framework.

It is for this reason that Witherington, whose commentary is actually entitled to that effect, will go on to say, The narration sets the stage for what follows by telling the audience what difficulties Paul and his gospels were facing to allay their fears about Paul and to provide them with an example on how to behave in the face of adversities and possible adversaries. So, Witherington will just go on to try to say, Hey, you know what? Paul knows, you know, Paul knows that actually, these people are not suffering necessarily, but because he's suffering, he can take advantage to actually show them to be a good model to them, knowing very well that he has earned their trust and they are going to be on his side. In verses 12 to 26, we just look at a few areas of this.

Some of the observations, general observations you will make here before I come to unpack it in a later lecture. You will see the audience here is privy to a few things, and perhaps I should read the text. I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel so that it has become known throughout the whole imperial guard or some translations have the praetorium and to all the rest that my imprisonment is for Christ.

And most of the brothers, having become confident in the Lord by my imprisonment, are much more bold in speaking the word without fear. Some indeed preach from envy and rivalry, but from others, goodwill. The latter do it out of love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel.

The former proclaims Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely, but thinking to afflict me in my imprisonment. What then? Only in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, is Christ proclaimed, and in that I rejoice. I'll be coming back to be able to tease out and to show you some of the features of this passage.

But I also want to leave you keeping in mind a few things so far covered in Philippians. Paul greeted a church, but Paul came back to something that is not so emphasized in today's Christian or scholarly discussions on the book that I want to draw your attention to, for Paul, relationship matters, human relationship matters, and we've seen that so far in these few verses.

Fellowship, partnership, and friendship are part of the conversation and are all over in the way he introduces people and couches the framework of his discourse. Two, a relationship with God matters. To the extent that he will give thanks to God in the very beginning of the letter to show he understands that life in the Lord Jesus Christ is lived literally under the mastery of God.

I also want to emphasize the fact that prayer is important to Paul. You don't perhaps hear a lot about it. I'm here to tell you that Paul understands that.

Even in writing his letter, he wanted, he needed the church to know that prayer counts, and he sought God's help on their behalf and asks for God's help so that they may also make that part of their life. Inserting the framework for the rest of the discussion, Paul is going to show us that as true friends, they need to know what is happening, that he's aware that though he has great friends, some are taking advantage of his imprisonment and they are preaching the gospel out of selfish ambition, but he's going to stay on course. They want God to be glorified.

He wants unity and decency to be part of the body of Christ. He will spell out models that need to be followed so that the church becomes the men and women God wants them to be in a Roman colony called Philippi, where the surrounding community may be pagan, may be performing magic, may be living in all kinds of ways, but Christians are living up to the standard of Christ. I hope that at the very beginning of this discussion of Philippians chapter 1, we are just about halfway through this, that you are beginning to understand what Paul is trying to convey, and I would ask that as you go through this learning process, you internalize it, you reflect on this and maybe you ask yourself, to what extent may I learn or bring some of this into my personal walk with Christ Jesus? If you find something useful with friendship, partnership, prayer, and thanksgiving, I think you may have had a very good start, and I hope that in the course of learning together, we will continue to grow and become faithful followers of Christ Jesus.

Thank you for joining our biblical studies learning process here on Prison Epistles. I hope you come back and continue this learning with us.

This is Dr. Dan Darko in his lecture series on the Prison Epistles. This is session 9, Philippians 1.