

Philippians: Rejoice in the Gospel of Jesus Christ

Session 2: Greetings and Gratitude in the Gospel, Philippians 1:1-11

Dr. Matthew S. Harmon

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Abstract

Dr. Matthew S. Harmon's lecture on Philippians 1:1-11 explores how the gospel establishes a shared identity that redefines leadership and congregational relationships in the church. He emphasizes how the term 'servants' humbles the leaders while the term 'saints' elevates believers as those set apart for God's holy work. The session also highlights Paul's confidence in God's ongoing work of transformation and outlines the progression of intercessory prayer rooted in discerning love. Ultimately, the study encourages believers to foster a deep sense of gospel-centered gratitude and live out their God-given identity to display His glory.

Outline

I. Introduction to Session 2 (Philippians 1:1-11)

- A. Title of Session: Greetings and Gratitude in the Gospel
- B. Text Range: Philippians 1:1-11
- C. Big Idea: The gospel unites believers to display the glory of God
 - 1. Determines identity
 - 2. Deepens gratitude

II. Section 1: Greetings in the Gospel (Philippians 1:1-2)

- A. The Senders: Paul and Timothy
 - 1. Described as "servants" (doulos) of Christ Jesus
 - 2. Old Testament Background: Honorific title for key figures in God's redemptive plan (e.g., Moses, Joshua, David, Isaiah's servant)
 - 3. Greco-Roman Background: Denotes a slave lacking rights, highlighting total submission and devotion to Christ as Master
 - 4. Implications for Leadership: Rejection of power-seeking; leadership through humility and servanthood (previews Philippians 2)
 - 5. Authorial Dynamics: Paul is the primary writer, using first-person singular pronouns; Timothy assisted in writing
- B. The Recipients: All the Saints in Christ Jesus at Philippi

1. "Saints" (Holy Ones): Positional status of being set apart for God's special purposes (rooted in Exodus 19:6 and Leviticus 11:44)
2. Ethical Dimensions: Holiness as moral purity reflecting God's character
3. Focus on Leadership Roles: Specifically singles out "overseers and deacons"
 - a. Overseers (synonymous with Elders): Shepherd and preach with authority
 - b. Deacons: Set apart to serve the tangible/physical needs of the church (e.g., Acts 6)
 - c. Reason for Mention: Anticipates unity issues and acknowledges their role in organizing the financial gift sent via Epaphroditus

C. The Salutation: Grace and Peace

1. Grace (charis): A summary of God's unmerited, generous work in Christ
2. Peace (shalom): Summary of the full restoration and proper ordering of God's creation
3. Theological Dynamic: "Already-not-yet" reality where believers experience grace and peace now, but await final completion

III. Section 2: Gratitude in the Gospel (Philippians 1:3-8)

A. Features of Paul's Prayer

1. Emphasis on Unity: Frequent use of "all" and "every" to address the entire congregation
2. Joyful Thanksgiving: Making prayers with joy based on their partnership (koinonia)
3. Meaning of Koinonia: Shared participation and experience of God's grace, transcending mere financial giving

B. Ground for Confidence (Philippians 1:6)

1. Spiritual security: He who began a good work at conversion will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ
2. Absolute comfort amidst the highs and lows of Christian growth

C. Deep Affection

1. Holding them in his heart as partakers of grace
2. Yearning with the affection of Christ Jesus; believers as conduits of Christ's love to one another

IV. Section 3: Intercessory Prayer for Spiritual Growth (Philippians 1:9-11)

A. Central Request: Love abounding in knowledge and all discernment

1. Discernment: Practical wisdom to distinguish good from better, and better from best

B. Purpose: To approve what is excellent and essential

C. Results: Progressive growth in Christlikeness

1. Being pure and blameless for the day of Christ
2. Filled with the fruit of righteousness through Jesus Christ

D. Ultimate Goal: The glory and praise of God

E. Application Model: Jump-starting stagnant prayer lives by praying these biblical petitions

V. Summary and Application

A. Big Idea: The gospel unites us to display the glory of God

B. Dr. Harmon's Four Questions of Application

1. Think/Understand: All we are and have is a gift from God; gratitude should fuel our thoughts

2. Belief: Trust that God determines our identity

3. Desire/Feel: Cultivate a deep longing for a life marked by gratitude to God and others

4. Action: Intentionally express gratitude (e.g., notes, emails, starting prayers with thanksgiving)