

Key Words in Philippians 01 the Word 'Gospel'

by David Clifford

The Gospel is the central theme of Philippians, and it is the world's need, not reformation or economic systems.

Duration: 39:12

Topics: "Gospel Message", "Salvation Plan"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ. He believes that the world's greatest need is not a new economic system, but rather the message of salvation. The speaker refers to the apostle Paul's writings in Colossians, highlighting various principles underlying the preaching of the gospel, such as stewardship, suffering, sincerity, sanctification, and united action. He encourages the listeners to personally apply the gospel to their hearts by believing in Jesus, repenting of their sins, and accepting him as their Lord and Savior. The speaker also mentions the potential for suffering and persecution when sharing the gospel, but assures that God will use such experiences for the furtherance of his kingdom.

Transcript

Hello, good morning, nice to see you again. Lovely to be back here, turning up like a bad penny once more. But we trust the Lord has some blessing for us, and sure he has these days.

It must come from the Lord, you know. From whence cometh our help, our help cometh from the Lord. I have only been here a little while, and I've made two mistakes already, I must confess.

And in the singing of that beautiful hymn, Beautiful Words of Jesus, I joined the ladies. I always like a little Christian fellowship with the sisters, you know. But I don't think they appreciated that.

So what a horrible mistake to start with. My melodious voice joining in with the ladies. So you'll have to forgive me for that.

And then, of course, you probably noticed Brother Woodhouse spoke about hanging on to that verse. No, hanging on to that word where there's an eyebrow over it with a little eye in the middle of it. And that's what I failed to do as well.

So there you are, you see. But I used to sing duets, you know, with Ernest Woodhouse years ago. You know, hundreds of years ago, when we were young evangelists.

And he gave me up after a little while. Very naughty of him, but he gave me up. He thought I wasn't good enough to sing with him, you know.

I said to him, do you think I ought to have my voice trained or cultivated? He says, yes, have it cultivated, and when you do, for pity's sake, bury it deep. Anyway, I still try to sing the Lord's praises, and although we make some mistakes, the Lord knows our heart. Now we're going to read a portion from Philippians chapter 1. And in these morning sessions, God willing, that's this morning and Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, we're going to talk together about the key words of this beautiful letter.

I'm quite sure you've had a lot of sermons and messages and addresses and lectures and things on the beautiful letter to the Philippians. But I didn't ask, but I am wondering if you've had anything on the key words, because I feel the whole of this letter can be explained and interpreted around these key words, and I'll mention now what they are. I think probably one of the first ones to be mentioned should be the word joy.

The apostle was in prison, he wasn't languishing in prison, he was rejoicing in the will of the Lord, and he was telling the Philippian Christians to rejoice in the Lord too. And then, of course, there's the word gospel, which is underlying the whole of the book, as we shall see this morning. And then there's the word all, and similar words in connection with his plea for unity.

And there's the word mind, which is an important key word in this letter too. And finally, fellowship. Now I think that makes about five altogether, and as we have five mornings, that will do nicely.

And I hope, of course, that you'll come both morning and evening, and enjoy the prophetic messages from the charts, and see about these last days and what we ought to do in them before the Lord returns for his own. Philippians chapter one. Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the faiths in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons, grace be unto you and peace from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine, for you all making request with joy, for your fellowship in the gospel, from the first day until now, being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ. Even as it is neat for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart, or as the margin says, you have me in your heart, inasmuch as both as in my bonds and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, ye all are partakers with me of grace. For God is my record, how greatly I long after you all in the compassions of Jesus Christ.

This I pray that your love may abound yet more and more, in knowledge and in all judgment, that ye may approve things that are excellent, that ye may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ, being filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God. But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which have happened unto me, have fallen out rather unto the fervorance of the gospel. You know that in Acts chapter 16, there are the details of Paul's visit to Philippi and his call, missionary call to Europe.

Now as a poor European, and that's exactly what I am, I am delighted that the Apostle Paul obeyed the call of God to go and take the gospel to Macedonia. And of course they had at first thought of going into Bithynia, this gospel team, and preaching the gospel there, because they hadn't heard the gospel in Bithynia. But the Holy Spirit said no, don't go to Bithynia.

The Holy Spirit said no, just like that. And Paul knew exactly this was the Spirit of God talking to him and saying no. Just like you know, when you are beginning to step out of the will of God and go do something or go somewhere, which is not in His will, and He shouts to you, that is, if you are walking in the light with God, so loudly in your inner ear, no, that's not the way.

Then they thought of going further, deeper into Asia Minor, and again the Holy Spirit said no. And that night there was the vision, and a man from Macedonia came and stood over Paul and said come over into Macedonia and help us. Now the plea was to go to Europe because Macedonia was the first district in Europe that Paul ever went to in Europe.

The call was to help them. But notice how Paul interprets that. He knew what his ministry was.

He said we got up in the morning and went straight off in a straight course. We didn't beat about the bush. As we say in England, go all round the reek into Wellington.

Immediately they went by a straight course. The next morning, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us to preach the gospel unto them. God had called Paul to do two things, to preach, not to give a cosy little talk, or to read a lecture, but to preach in the New Testament sense of preaching.

Declaring as a herald from the King of kings his unsearchable riches, and to preach the gospel. And that is our subject this morning because this is one of the important key words of this letter. So here he emphasizes the gospel all the way through.

The fellowship that he speaks about is simply fellowship in the gospel. The unity that he appeals for is really unity for the faith, for the gospel. And the furtherance of the work that he is speaking about was called the furtherance of the gospel.

Now Paul himself in Romans chapter 1 verse 1 says that he was separated unto the gospel of God. Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, separated unto the gospel, separated unto the gospel. And there is quite a bit in that verse which we are not going into now, but the point was this, his life was the proclamation of the gospel.

You not only have the master and the slave, Paul, a bondman of Jesus Christ, and the office and its calling, apostleship, called to be an apostle, but the work and its obligation, separated unto the gospel of God. You see, we must be separated unto the gospel if the gospel through our lives is going to be effective. Actually the gospel is not the gospel until it is preached and until it is told for.

Good news is not good news until it is proclaimed. And the apostle knew that God had called him to go to Philippi to preach the gospel. And so the gospel must be preached and the preacher must be separated unto the gospel of God.

Many years ago I gave myself, by the grace of God in his will I know, to a life of separation to the gospel of God. And I've had the best life in all of what you've had. All my kids today are preaching the gospel and I'm preaching it still and I'm making a program now for the next 35 years to preach the gospel around the world.

No kidding. And I think we must weigh things in the proper balance because what the world needs today is not reformation and a new economic international method and system. What the world needs is the gospel.

As the hymn writer puts it so beautifully what the world needs is Jesus. Just a glimpse of Him. We must declare Christ.

Because you see the gospel is the gospel of God concerning His Son. Paul talks about it as my gospel. And you notice in Colossians chapter 1 when the apostle is talking about the glories of the person of Christ and the wonders of the work of Christ and the inevitable preeminence of Christ in that chapter he says at the end now there's the gospel of which I am a minister, a servant.

But at the end he says something like this which I think really is great. He said not what we preach but whom we preach. And Christ of course is the center of our gospel message.

And if your gospel is talking about politics or social issues and Christ is not the center then your gospel is not God's gospel at all. So he says moreover I declare unto you the gospel how that Christ died for our sins. Think of our sins.

He was buried. He rose again. The third day according to the scriptures.

The scriptures declare that He was seen by over 500 men at one time on one occasion. And all that believe in Him are justified from all things from which they could not be justified by the law of Moses. You can through the gospel message and applying it to your own heart be vindicated and cleared and justified before a holy God although you're a guilty sinner because Christ died and rose again to make it possible for you.

He had you in His mind when He came to this earth. He had you in His mind in His high priestly prayer. He had you in His mind when He went to the cross and He was raised again for your justification.

And today He is praying for you. What a wonderful message the gospel is. And this is why Paul, quite an old man himself by this time maintained the spirit of the evangelist till his last moments and he said to Timothy his son in the faith whatever you do, whatever else you do do this, preach the gospel, do the work of an evangelist.

Now we're not going to get through this this morning but we'll get as far as we can and we will close at... What a promise! I say it with fear and trembling lest the Holy Spirit intervenes and who could say nay to the Spirit. Now in chapter 1 and verse 5 it is fellowship in the gospel and there is the principle of stewardship underlying that. And then in chapter 1 and verse 12 there's the furtherance of the gospel and the principle of suffering underlying that idea.

And then in chapter 1 17 as well as chapter 1 7 fighting for the gospel and the principle of sincerity. And in chapter 1 27 it is fidelity to the gospel and the principle of sanctification underlying that idea. And in chapter 1 27 again the faith of the gospel and the principle of united action striving together there.

And in chapter 2 22 there are the father and the son in the gospel and the principle of service for the young. And in chapter 4 and verse 3 there is the there are fellow labourers in the gospel and the principle of sister's service. That's interesting.

Fellow labourers in the gospel and the principle of sister's service. Sorry sisters we'll never get that far. And 4 15 chapter 4 and verse 15 the first days of the gospel and the principle of surrender for him and the principle of sacrificial giving for them.

Now I said in chapter 1 and verse 5 he speaks about fellowship in the gospel. And he speaks about it fellowship from the first day and again now. What was the fellowship in the gospel the first day would you think? Well you see when Paul went to Macedonia with his team they found some ladies having a prayer meeting by the riverside.

There being no synagogue in Philippi these Jewesses or maybe they had become Jewesses were having a prayer meeting together and Paul joined them. No doubt he preached unto them Jesus as well as prayed with them. And the first one to open her heart to the Lord well it literally says the Lord opened the heart of Libya.

It was Libya. And then later on of course there was the girl with the spirit of divination she seemed to be the second convert as far as we can tell. And then they were thrown in jail were the servants of the Lord and they were still rejoicing in jail.

And it was there that the jailer and his wife and family believed in the Lord Jesus and were baptized and became Christians. So the church was founded. Now Paul was there for some time led most of them to Christ and he loved them dearly and they loved him.

A crude outline of mine for the first chapter is this. Paul in the heart of the Philippians the Philippians in the heart of Paul and Christ in the hearts of both. I think you probably see that that sums up the whole chapter.

So this letter really is a love letter. Again he is expressing his love for them and he knew that they were devoted to him. But of course it was an appeal for unity as well.

He took the opportunity of appealing to them to show real Christian unity in their service for Christ. And also there were warnings against Judaizers. Paul was always concerned about those who would bring in bondage into the church of God by propagating the old time Judaism and referring back to the works of the law to be accepted by God.

But this letter I suppose in the first place was meant to be an acknowledgement for the gift that they had sent to him. Now Paul was in prison this was AD 62 in Rome.

The Philippians this was some years after he was with them had heard that he was there and they took up a special love offering for him I presume and they chose, the elders in the church chose a noble young man to take this gift down to Paul in prison probably about 650 miles quite an undertaking he was very willing to do it and at the end of chapter 2 Paul commends this young man Epaphroditus for this and as a matter of fact he asked the brethren at Philippi to honour this young man and I presume that he was asking them to honour him publicly and I believe elders should do that when a young man puts himself at God's disposal to do a work for God he should be prayed with and he should be honoured in the name of the Lord Jesus not too much patting on the back lest he fall flat on his face

but a little bit of encouragement in a public way is a great health and strength to any young brother doing a service for God like that or like this well you see when he said I thank God for your fellowship in the gospel on the first day what do you think he was referring to how did they have fellowship with him in the gospel on the first day that he came to Philippi when Lydia said to him Paul if you and your team of men really believe that I am a true Christian now I want you if you will to come into my home and accept my Christian hospitality and they did and that hospitality was according to Paul fellowship in the gospel I've had loads of it all round the world and what these Christians have done in showing they've been having God's given

you a home use your home for God as a matter

of fact nothing that you've got is your own is it you're a Christian aren't you you're bought with the blood of Christ and all is His and if we keep for ourselves any blessing that God has given to us it will corrupt us it must corrupt us God fills the soul that it may pour its fullness on another blessing this has been tonight you know we've had missionaries and lecturers and teachers from all parts of the world at our college my wife said we're not going to stick them in the guest room in the college we're going to have them in our home for 22 years we had hundreds of them in our home and when they came to a meal in our home as well as staying in our home we didn't put the kids in the kitchen and put them in the dining room we were all together and the children got into conversation

with the servants of the Lord tremendous blessing to them to have an open Christian home for the young people for the Lord's service fellowship in the gospel now God never forgot what Lydia did He put it down here by His Spirit Paul never forgot what Lydia did He reminds them of it here and Lydia never forgot them coming into her home and accepting her Christian hospitality don't misunderstand me this is not a hint I get too much of it but if you can find somebody to whom you can be a blessing in your home a neighbour of somebody and this is real Christian stewardship I think it's good for us to have an understanding with the Lord that He can take anything that we have or use anything that we have in His service so that we ourselves can have fellowship in the gospel you know the first

thing that Matthew did don't you, when he met the Lord I think it was either the same day or the very next day he opened his home for the Lord he went down the street to all his friends who weren't a very specially interesting crowd they were publicans and sinners and tax gatherers under the pay of the occupying powers they were quite a lot really but he said come and have a coffee with me in my home I want to introduce you to a friend of mine and they met the Saviour in his home the first thing that Lydia did was to open her home to the Lord's service and he said for your fellowship in the gospel which is a thank God also for the fellowship in the gospel that you had with me now what was the fellowship now? well of course it was this special gift that they had sent to him in his need

while he was in prison and the Lord always knows where his servants are and what their special need is and his Holy Spirit can remind this one or that group or that assembly to give in a special way to a special need because God is faithful and God's servants do not look to men they look to God mind you on the other hand it's quite wrong for brethren who send out into the Lord's work commend to God's service young men for them to expect every one of them to have a very special gift of faith like George Mueller had if they've got a gift of evangelism well thank God for that don't expect them to have all the other gifts as well and you're commending them not because they've got a gift of faith but because they have got the gift of the evangelist all right well then the fervence of the

gospel and the principle of suffering now this is in chapter 1 and verse 12 and it's quite evident that the Apostle Paul was accepting this suffering in prison as from the Lord it's good to take anything that you get as from the Lord and I was called only a couple of days ago to a certain man a young fellow who in his works had been held up with a gun and he almost got shot to death and he got no peace in his soul at the moment and something else is happening in his domestic life as well and he poured it all out to me and I said well now brother there's one thing you must do is go and have a word with the Lord and say now Lord you've allowed this what is it for? now I couldn't make a guess what it's for you haven't been witnessing for the Lord lately have you? you haven't been having

fellowship with God's people have you? very little lately you haven't been walking in the light with God I could guess what it's for you have a word with the Lord let Him tell you why He has allowed this and when things come either blessings or problems say Lord what's it all for? is this blessing so that I can be a blessing to someone else? and is this problem so that I can be cast more upon you? you take it all from the Lord my son Ian was in France for some time quite a while in northern France there were no Christians we were on a long way he had no car on a Sunday morning he used to have his own meeting with the Lord walking up and down the beach in northern France for an hour he would walk up and down talking to the Lord and reading His word and he had no Christian fellowship at all

for ever such a long time and it really made him spiritually because he wrote home and he said I'm taking this isolation and lack of Christian fellowship as from the Lord and the Lord is doing something for me and he certainly did so it was the apostle here was in prison he was taking it from the Lord you see he accepted the imprisonment from God and as a result the gospel flourished he said what has happened to me has turned out rather for the purpose of the gospel well it did in many ways I can tell you a few in passing not to enlarge upon them one was there in prison he was able to preach the gospel to people in prison Caesar's guards and courtiers and even slaves and Onesimus was one that was saved at that time another blessing was this that while he was there in prison he wrote some

of his prison letters he wrote his prison letters four of them have come down to us probably there were others and what a blessing that has been furtherance of the gospel blessing to you and to me and then of course while he was in prison there were other people who started to preach who wouldn't do a thing when Paul was around you know sometimes God has to take his servant aside put him in prison put him on a sick bed take him to another district or call him home to heaven before some of the other brethren will exercise the gift that God has given them and had some real practical fellowship in the gospel and some of these were preaching the gospel now sincerely and they'd never done a thing before there were some who were insincere but you see the furtherance of the gospel is associated

with suffering or vice versa for you it is given on the behalf of Christ not only to believe on him but also to suffer for his sake this is what he means it's part of the bargain if you believe in Christ and have eternal security you must be prepared to enter into the sufferings of Christ share his rejection witness as you should and maybe suffer for it but God is no man's debtor this is why the apostle Paul gloried in tribulation because the more the suffering the more the blessing every time the things that have happened unto me have turned out rather for the furtherance of the gospel the end of Acts chapter 13 the disciples were persecuted you know what happened? they were filled with the Holy Ghost and with joy you know what happened after that in the next verse? chapter 14 verse 1

multitudes turned to the Lord that's how God works if you are prepared to accept the suffering for God's sake as part of your calling God will really use you in a mighty way and we'll be blessed he says an open door is before me but there are many adversaries the verse I was quoting really is in chapter 1 and verse 29 for you it is given on the behalf of Christ not only to believe on him but to suffer for his sake and then there is in chapter 1 verse 7 and verse 17 the same word is used the defence of the gospel fighting for the gospel I put the heading and the principle of sincerity which is seen in verse 16 some people are not sincere but I want you to know by the grace of God that I am perfectly sincere I'm set here in this prison for the defence of the gospel it's for God's glory in

the extension of his work and word and of course there needed to be defence in those days just as there needs to be today you say well we don't defend the gospel we just preach the gospel and it will defend

itself I suppose that is true in a way you can't imagine a young fellow coming with a whip to torment a lion and then the lion tamer comes and stands between the lion and the young man with a whip you can't imagine that can you of course the tamer just let the lion out and you know what the result would be but the apostle here is speaking I'm quite sure about a real sincere defence of the truth as God had revealed it to him there were Judaizers you see as I'd mentioned before and his message was stand fast in the liberty where Christ has made you free but never take turn that liberty

into niceness and there was defence against Greek philosophers there was a lot of Greek philosophising in those days America and Britain and other countries are just full of young people who sit for hours and philosophise human reasoning apart from divine revelation but the apostles the apostles word about that was when he emphasised the simplicity that is in Christ Jesus not only Judaizers and Greek philosophers but Roman agnosticism because gnosticism wasn't around in these days and agnosticism was and he said I speak the truth in Christ I lie not so there were some who were insincere but he was fighting for the gospel and underlying the idea is the principle of sincerity and in chapter 1 verse 27 fidelity to the gospel and the principle of sanctification and the word says let your

manner of life be as it becometh the gospel of Christ let it be in accordance with the gospel that you are proclaiming the gospel that I proclaim will be powerless and useless unless I myself am living the gospel in my personal life and experience I must have a sanctified set apart life to God and to his service if my ministry in the gospel is going to be effective it must conform my life must always conform to my message in the village where I used to live just outside Birmingham Sturtley, Birmingham we had a doctor called Dr.

Brown he had a doctor who a doctor brother who was a preacher one was an MD the other was a DV and they lived together and you knocked at the door and the maid used to come to the door and you'd say please can I see Dr. Brown she'd say which doctor do you want to see the doctor who preaches or the doctor who practices we must do both the one is void without the other a holy life means a powerful gospel and a holy life means an effective gospel I've already quoted the last verse or two of Acts chapter 13 they were filled with the Holy Ghost and multitude turned to the Lord as a matter of fact you can make a study of that all the way through the Bible all the way through the Acts of the Apostles and you'll find that when they were filled with the Holy Spirit and they knew sanctification experientially in their lives every time they had the blessings they needed at the time and they had blessings from God in multitudes of souls turning to the Lord every time and so Paul here emphasizes the glorious gospel and he speaks about Christ who is the center of the gospel whom we preach think of him just for one moment the one who was truly man and yet truly God he walked as a poor man but he taught as the authoritative God his words were oracles and his works were miracles of man he was the perfect specimen of God he was the perfect expression his was a full-aubed humanity and he was crowned with the fullest deity as a man in him there was no trace of iniquity as God they beheld his majesty as man he was the offspring of David as God he was the root of David eke homo behold the man eke his behold thy God whom we preach glad to have you with us this morning in fellowship with the gospel make sure the gospel of God about his glorious son is applied to your heart you believe in the savior who died and rose again and the living Christ you make today as your own lord and savior believing the facts of the gospel repenting of your sins welcoming the living Christ oh lord how we worship thee for the lord Jesus and all that he is in himself and all that he became for us as the gospel story records to bring us back to thee became flesh became poor became a curse became dead indeed he became a man that he might become dead to give his life a ransom for many we worship thee for him give us grace now to trust him and to walk in his ways until we see his face and to propagate his glorious gospel in one way or another that he might be glorified so may the grace of this loving savior

be with us all today and always until we see his face Amen

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