



Sunday, September 25, 2011: Partnership in the Gospel

Scripture: Philippians 1:1-11; **Speaker:** Joe Boot

Sermon Notes:

1. In this chapter, Paul is offering a prayer of thanks for the Philippian church and their partnership in the gospel.
2. Paul addresses the “saints.” There is a called-out community, a covenant people. We are a royal priesthood, a holy nation (1 Peter 2:9). Through Christ, this is our identity as much as it was that of Israel.
3. Paul highlights four things that the church is to be mindful of: 1) the centrality of gospel; 2) their partnership in the gospel; 3) the defense and confirmation of the gospel; and 4) the fruit of the gospel which in the end brings glory to God.
4. God is our Father, Christ is our Lord. Paul's salutation emphasizes the centrality of the gospel.
5. “Grace to you” was a common greeting of that time. “Peace” (shalom) was the Jewish greeting. Paul combines these two together and puts a gospel meaning on them.
6. Christ's lordship is the reason that we can have confidence in the effectiveness of the gospel when we make it known.
7. The apostles preached the Lordship of Christ over that of Caesar.
8. You must either cast your lot with God or with idols. We are a gospel-centered people in an idolatrous age.
9. The church at Philippi helped Paul by supporting his ministry, and even sent him gifts to meet his needs when he was in prison.
10. True partnership in the gospel is not about having a function within the church building or serving the institution as pastor, deacon, etc.
11. The chief craftsman, Bezalel, who was responsible for the building of the tabernacle, was filled with wisdom (skill) and with the Spirit (Ex 31)
12. Whatever area of life and service you are in, the wisdom and skills you have are given by God for the furtherance of His Kingdom.
13. We are all Christ's ministers. We are partners in the work of the gospel in all our daily tasks.
14. The egalitarianism of our culture doesn't recognize the beauty of God-created differences in skills and vocations.

15. Paul was called to this by God. His ministry existed for the defense and confirmation of the gospel.
16. Paul defends the gospel against the Epicureans and the Stoics.
17. We too are confronted by ancient pagan philosophy, which was revived in the Renaissance and has become prominent in our day.
18. Peter Singer, chair of bioethics at Princeton, advocates infanticide and bestiality. Recently, a judge in Western Canada justified infanticide on the basis that there is no abortion law.
19. We are close to the pagan ethics of Rome.
20. The greatest challenge from the world confronting us today is the resurgence of paganism.
21. In the church, the challenge facing us is abstract theology. Characteristics (e.g. love, justice, grace) are separated from objects and persons in order to create a theoretical ideal. Everything is simplified by leaving out the concrete details.
22. Sin, law, justice, judgment, and inequality are considered not worthy of God. Alienation no longer refers to sin but is changed to mean 'economic inequality'; 'justice' and the kingdom of God is then realized through state-enforced wealth redistribution.
23. Abstract theologians envision an egalitarian society that will bring about the kingdom of God through the arm of the state.
24. Paul, however, defines “love” as the fulfillment of the law (Rom 13:10)
25. We have to be governed by and be faithful to the Word of God, not develop our own abstract ideas.
26. Theology is not a subset of philosophy. It is taken from God's Word.
27. Psalm 1. The stream is life, it's Christ, and if we are planted in Him we will bear fruit.
28. All of this is to the praise of the glory of God: the partnership, the defense and confirmation, etc.
29. Everything we do is to God's praise. As a church, we are called to this. We are to bring Him glory by our faithfulness to the gospel.

Application Questions

1. What does it mean to be a “partner in the gospel”?
2. Is there such a thing as a “secular” vocation? Can the skill of making children's toys or farming vegetables be God-given?
3. How does a purely abstract theology conflict with what the Bible says? Provide references to support your answer.
4. How would you answer the question 'what is love'? What is Paul's answer to that question? (See Romans 13:8-10). How should Paul's answer impact our thinking and way of life as Christians?
5. How do we build our theology?
6. What is King Jesus calling us as the Church to do? How am I called to serve my Lord, Master, and King?