

#### RELATED SCRIPTURES

1 Peter 1:8–9 | Romans 8:38–39 | John 10:27–29

#### STUDY FOR SERMON FROM 9.8.24

#### SUMMARY

Paul wrote this letter to the Philippians for two primary reasons. First, Paul was under house arrest—his home was under guard, thus preventing him from going anywhere. Nevertheless, Paul was still very interested in preaching the gospel, so he made use of his ability to send letters to preach the gospel. Even held captive, Paul wasn't content to wait for his freedom to preach again. He preached the gospel through his letters (which eventually were canonized as Scripture.) The gospel can't be imprisoned or restrained! Second, Paul wrote to the church at Philippi to encourage and reassure them that their messenger, Ephaphroditus, who subsequently became ill, was now in good health.

Paul's letter to the church begins with a word of gratitude (as was typical for Paul in his letters) as God continues to grow them in their faith. His tone is one of joy—which might be surprising considering his imprisonment—because of what he hears of the church and their zeal for spreading the gospel. Paul is overjoyed at God's work in them and offers a prayer for the church—that the love of God would continue to abound in them more and more and that their love for God would be accompanied by "knowledge and discernment." The love of God and pursuit of him through Jesus Christ *inevitably* yields a "pure and blameless" church, resulting in the "glory and praise of God." However, it's important to note that Paul's joy for the church is rooted in the work of Christ. Whatever praise Paul has for the church, though written to them, is ultimately directed at Jesus, who is faithful to his people as he notes, "he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus" (Philippians 1:6).

#### GROUP QUESTIONS

Share something that surprises, encourages, or troubles you from the sermon or your direct reading of Philippians 1:1–11.

Though Paul is in prison, he expresses overwhelming joy. How does joy overshadow Paul's circumstances? What makes this possible? How is this possible for all Christians?

What are the implications of Philippians 1:6; how does it provide reassurance? How can we practically take comfort in this gospel truth?

If there's one thing Jesus would want you to walk away believing and receiving as a result of this portion of Scripture, what is that thing?

#### CLOSE IN PRAYER

As you pray, be sure to include today's themes in what you bring before God.