

BEING ONE WITH THE LORD IN HIS MOVE FOR THE UNIVERSAL SPREADING OF THE CHURCH AS THE TESTIMONY OF JESUS

Message Five

Having Fellowship unto the Furtherance of the Gospel and Preaching the Gospel in the Way of Life

Scripture Reading: Phil. 1:5-6, 19-21a, 22-25, 27; 4:22; Acts 1:8; 1 Thes. 1:3, 5; 1 Cor. 15:58

Phil. 1:5-6 For your fellowship unto *the furtherance of* the gospel from the first day until now, **6** Being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun in you a good work will complete it until the day of Christ Jesus;

Phil. 1:19-21 For I know that for me this will turn out to salvation through your petition and *the* bountiful supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, **20** According to my earnest expectation and hope that in nothing I will be put to shame, but with all boldness, as always, even now Christ will be magnified in my body, whether through life or through death. **21** For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.

Phil. 1:22-25 But if I am to live in the flesh, if this to me is fruit for *my* work, then I do not know what I will choose. **23** But I am constrained between the two, having the desire to depart and be with Christ, for *this is* far better; **24** But to remain in the flesh is more necessary for your sake. **25** And being confident of this, I know that I will remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy of the faith,

Phil. 1:27 Only, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, that whether coming and seeing you or being absent, I may hear of the things concerning you, that you stand firm in one spirit, with one soul striving together *along* with the faith of the gospel,

Phil. 4:22 All the saints greet you, and especially those of Caesar's household.

Acts 1:8 But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

1 Thes. 1:3 Remembering unceasingly your work of faith and labor of love and endurance of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, before our God and Father;

1 Thes. 1:5 For our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and in much assurance, even as you know what kind of men we were among you for your sake.

1 Cor. 15:58 Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.

I. **Day 1** God's intention is that a local church would have fellowship unto the furtherance of the gospel, not only for one period of time but continually, until the day of Christ Jesus, that is, until He comes back—Phil. 1:5-6:

Phil. 1:5-6 For your fellowship unto *the furtherance of* the gospel from the first day until now, **6** Being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun in you a good work will complete it until the day of Christ Jesus;

- A. The Christ-experiencing and -enjoying life is a life in the furtherance of the gospel, a gospel-preaching life, not individualistic but corporate; hence, there is the fellowship unto the furtherance of the gospel.
- B. The more fellowship we have in the furtherance of the gospel, the more Christ we experience and enjoy; this kills our self, ambition, preference, and choice.
- C. The move of the preaching of the gospel must be a matter in fellowship because it is a matter of the Body:
 - 1. As the branches of Christ, the true vine, we must love one another in order to express the divine life in fruit-bearing; no branch of the vine bears fruit individually—John 15:1-5, 12, 17.

John 15:1-5 I am the true vine, and My Father is the husbandman. **2** Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes it away; and every *branch* that bears fruit, He prunes it that it may bear more fruit. **3** You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. **4** Abide in Me and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither *can* you unless you abide in Me. **5** I am the vine; you are the branches. He who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit; for apart from Me you can do nothing.

John 15:12 This is My commandment, that you love one another even as I have loved you.

John 15:17 These things I command you that you may love one another.

2. When we live by Christ, in Christ, with Christ, and for Christ, Christ is expressed through us as love for one another, and this mutual love becomes a strong testimony to the people of the world that we are the disciples of Christ—13:34-35.

John 13:34-35 A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. **35** By this shall all men know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.

3. Our preaching of the gospel is by the Body life and in the Body life; how fruitful we are in our preaching depends on how much of the reality of the Body of Christ we have.
- D. **Day 2** Paul charged the saints to conduct themselves “in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ” and to “stand firm in one spirit, with one soul striving together along with the faith of the gospel”—Phil. 1:27:

Phil. 1:27 Only, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, that whether coming and seeing you or being absent, I may hear of the things concerning you, that you stand firm in one spirit, with one soul striving together *along* with the faith of the gospel,

1. When all the members in the church are “in one spirit, with one soul,” this oneness will be convincing, subduing, and attractive to others for their salvation; if there is no harmony among us, this will kill the saving Spirit.
2. The word together has the sense of “as one man, shoulder to shoulder in absolute cooperation” and the sense of “contending as a team of athletes do, in perfect co-operation with one another” (Wuest).
3. **Day 3** The phrase striving together indicates that the gospel is a matter of labor and endurance; the vital groups should press on according to Paul’s prayer in 1 Thessalonians 1:3 concerning the work of faith, labor of love, and endurance of hope:

1 Thes. 1:3 Remembering unceasingly your work of faith and labor of love and endurance of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, before our God and Father;

- a. The work of faith is the foundation of our Christian life and service, the labor of love is the key of the fruitfulness of our work of faith, and the endurance of hope is the long life of our work of faith.
- b. The endurance of hope subdues all kinds of disappointments, discouragements, and impossibilities and overcomes all kinds of oppositions, obstacles, and frustrations—1 Cor. 15:58; 2 Thes. 3:5.

1 Cor. 15:58 Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.

2 Thes. 3:5 And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the endurance of Christ.

II. **Day 4** The genuine preaching of the gospel is in the way of life; the gospel is not only the preaching of the word but also a life of enjoying the supply of the Body, the bountiful supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, to live and magnify Christ—Phil. 1:19-21a; Acts 5:20:

Phil. 1:19-21 For I know that for me this will turn out to salvation through your petition and *the* bountiful supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, **20** According to my earnest expectation and hope that in nothing I will be put to shame, but with all boldness, as always, even now Christ will be magnified in my body, whether through life or through death. **21** For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.

Acts 5:20 Go and stand in the temple and speak to the people all the words of this life.

- A. The preaching of the gospel is the expression of Christ, and bearing fruit is the outworking of the inner experience of life—John 15:5; Acts 16:23-25, 30.

John 15:5 I am the vine; you are the branches. He who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit; for apart from Me you can do nothing.

Acts 16:23-25 And when they had laid many stripes upon them, they threw *them* into prison, charging the jailer to keep them securely, **24** Who, having received such a charge, threw them into the inner prison and secured their feet in the stocks. **25** And about midnight Paul and Silas, while praying, sang hymns of praise to God; and the prisoners were listening to them.

Acts 16:30 And leading them outside, he said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved?

- B. When Paul wrote to the Philippians, he was living in prison and not outwardly working; his speaking of “fruit for my work” indicates that his work was actually his living—1:22:

Acts 1:22 Beginning from the baptism of John until the day on which He was taken up from us, one of these should become a witness of His resurrection with us.

1. The fruit for Paul’s work was Christ being lived out, magnified, ministered, and transfused into others through him.
2. Paul’s living work was to minister Christ to others and to transfuse the Christ whom he magnified into them; through Paul’s magnification of Christ, even some in Caesar’s household were saved—4:22.

Acts 4:22 For the man on whom this sign of healing had occurred was more than forty years old.

3. Paul told the Philippians that his imprisonment would also work to the advancement of the gospel—1:12, 18.

Phil. 1:12 Now I want you to know, brothers, that the things concerning me have turned out rather to the advancement of the gospel,

Phil. 1:18 What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truthfulness, Christ is announced; and in this I rejoice; yes, and I will rejoice;

- C. Paul fed his spiritual children with his own living of Christ; the best way to shepherd people is to give them a proper pattern—1 Thes. 2:1-12:

1 Thes. 2:1-12 For you yourselves know, brothers, our entrance toward you, that it has not been in vain. **2** But having suffered previously and having been outrageously treated, even as you know, in Philippi, we were bold in our God to speak to you the gospel of God in much struggle. **3** For our exhortation is not out of deception nor out of uncleanness nor in guile; **4** But even as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, so we speak, not as pleasing men but God, who proves our hearts. **5** For neither were we found at any time with flattering speech, even as you know, nor with a pretext for covetousness; God is witness. **6** Nor did we seek glory from men, neither from you nor from others, though we could have stood on our authority as apostles of Christ. **7** But we were gentle in your midst, as a nursing mother would cherish her own children. **8** Yearning in this way over you, we were well pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God but also our own souls, because you became beloved to us. **9** For you remember, brothers, our labor and travail: While working night and day so as not to be burdensome to any of you, we proclaimed to you the gospel of God. **10** You are witnesses, as well as God, how in a holy and righteous and blameless manner we conducted ourselves toward you who believe, **11** Just as you know how *we were* to each one of you, as a father to his own children, exhorting you and consoling *you* and testifying, **12** So that you might walk in a manner worthy of God, who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.

1. Paul and his co-workers were a pattern of the gospel that they spread—“you know what kind of men we were among you for your sake”—1:5b.

1 Thes. 1:5 For our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and in much assurance, even as you know what kind of men we were among you for your sake.

2. The apostle Paul stressed repeatedly their entrance toward the believers; this shows that the apostles’ manner of life played a great role in infusing the gospel into the new converts—vv. 5, 9; 2:1, 11a.

1 Thes. 1:5 For our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and in much assurance, even as you know what kind of men we were among you for your sake.

1 Thes. 1:9 For they themselves report concerning us what kind of entrance we had toward you and how you turned to God from the idols to serve a living and true God

1 Thes. 2:1 For you yourselves know, brothers, our entrance toward you, that it has not been in vain.

1 Thes. 2:11 Just as you know how *we were* to each one of you, as a father to his own children, exhorting you and consoling *you* and testifying,

- D. **Day 5** Acts tells us that the preachers of the gospel are the Lord’s witnesses, His martyrs; this means that we testify to others at a

cost, even at the sacrifice of our life—1:8:

Acts 1:8 But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

1. To live a clean and upright life (1 Thes. 2:3-6, 10) and to love the new converts, even by giving our own souls to them (vv. 7-9, 11), are the prerequisites for infusing them with the salvation conveyed in the gospel that we preach.

1 Thes. 2:3-6 For our exhortation is not out of deception nor out of uncleanness nor in guile; **4** But even as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, so we speak, not as pleasing men but God, who proves our hearts. **5** For neither were we found at any time with flattering speech, even as you know, nor with a pretext for covetousness; God is witness. **6** Nor did we seek glory from men, neither from you nor from others, though we could have stood on our authority as apostles of Christ.

1 Thes. 2:10 You are witnesses, as well as God, how in a holy and righteous and blameless manner we conducted ourselves toward you who believe,

1 Thes. 2:7-9 But we were gentle in your midst, as a nursing mother would cherish her own children. **8** Yearning in this way over you, we were well pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God but also our own souls, because you became beloved to us. **9** For you remember, brothers, our labor and travail: While working night and day so as not to be burdensome to any of you, we proclaimed to you the gospel of God.

1 Thes. 2:11 Just as you know how *we were* to each one of you, as a father to his own children, exhorting you and consoling *you* and testifying,

2. Paul was willing to spend not only what he had but also himself, his very being, on behalf of the saints—2 Cor. 12:15.

2 Cor. 12:15 But I, I will most gladly spend and be utterly spent on behalf of your souls. If I love you more abundantly, am I loved less?

- E. **Day 6** Because of Paul the churches could have the growth in life and could be filled with the enjoyment of Christ; this should also be true of us today—Phil. 1:25:

Phil. 1:25 And being confident of this, I know that I will remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy of the faith,

1. Because Paul lived and magnified Christ to the uttermost, he could transfuse Christ into the saints and minister Christ to all the churches.
2. Paul's consideration to either depart and be with Christ or remain in the flesh was not selfish but was for the saints' sake; he was absolutely occupied by the Lord and the church—vv. 23-24:

Phil. 1:23-24 But I am constrained between the two, having the desire to depart and be with Christ, for *this is* far better; **24** But to remain in the flesh is more necessary for your sake.

- a. It should matter to the church whether we remain in the flesh or go to be with the Lord, but this depends on our living Christ, magnifying Christ, ministering Christ, and transfusing Christ from the depths of our being into that of the saints.
- b. In the Body life there is the urgent need for the Lord to gain us to be channels of supply for the furtherance of the gospel.