

Sermon Questions – 1 November 2020

1. Paul describes his and Timothy's relationship to Christ Jesus as slaves. Why might he do this, and how would you describe your relationship with Christ Jesus?
2. Whenever Paul thinks of the church at Philippi he responds with a prayer of joy to God. Is there any church that makes you think, feel and act that way?
3. Paul is sure that God (he who began a good work in you) will bring his work to its goal at the "day of the Jesus Christ." What is this day, and why does it feature as an important element in this letter? Why does Paul see this as the goal of the good work God has begun? See also verse 10.
4. When Paul says, "It is right for me to feel this way about you all," to what does "this way" refer? The following may help in understanding what Paul is getting at
 - a. The word translated "feel" is the Greek word, is translated as "exercising judgment" by Stephen E Fowl in his commentary on Philippians. He writes:
 - b. In v. 7 Paul claims to be justified in his thanks to God, in his joyful recollections of the Philippians and their participation in the gospel, in his perception of the work God has started in them, and in his confidence that God will bring that work to its appropriate completion in the day of Christ.
 - c. All these activities of recollection, perception, accounting for, and hopeful anticipation, are included in the phrase translated as "exercising judgment" in v. 7. Because the Greek word behind this translation is so crucial to the argument of Philippians, I will spend a little time here discussing it. *Φρονεῖν/phronein* is very difficult to translate neatly into English. Although not very common in the NT outside of Philippians, the verb and its noun form *φρόνησις/phronēsis* are quite common in Greek, particularly in discussions of the moral life. The verb occurs ten times in Philippians, often at crucial places. In 2:2 (where it is used twice) and in 4:2 it describes an activity which is essential for the Philippians to engage in if they are to be unified in the ways Paul wishes. In 2:5 it reflects the patterns of thinking, feeling, and acting the Philippians are to embody in conformity to Christ. In 3:15–19 *φρονεῖν/phronein* occurs 3 times, again to talk about a comprehensive pattern of judgment that involves thinking, feeling, and acting. In 4:10 it occurs twice in reference to the Philippians' disposition toward Paul, particularly their habit of sending him financial gifts.¹
5. How might our love "abound yet more and more in knowledge and all moral understanding?"²
6. Paul sees that a purpose of their love abounding more and more is so that they "may approve what is excellent" and so be "pure and blameless for the day of Christ." What do you think he means by this?

¹ Fowl, S. E. (2005). [*Philippians*](#) (p. 28). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

² Fowl, S. E. (2005). [*Philippians*](#) (p. 21). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

