



Study 6: Affection of Christ

Philippians 1:7-11

Fellowship in the Spirit Phil. 2:1

When you hear the word “love”, what song lyrics come to mind?

Encouragement in Christ Phil. 2:1

We invite you to be still, give thanks, write a prayer, or release any concerns to Jesus.

"You must allow me to tell you how ardently I admire and love you." - Mr. Darcy
Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*

The Jesus given to us in the Gospels is not simply one who loves, but one who is love; merciful affections stream from his innermost heart as rays from the sun.

Dane Ortlund, *Gentle and Lowly*

Holding Firm to the Word of Life Phil. 2:16

Philippians 1:1-11

Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus:

To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, including the overseers and deacons.

² Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

³ I give thanks to my God for every remembrance of you, ⁴ always praying with joy for all of you in my every prayer, ⁵ because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. ⁶ I am sure of this, that he who started a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus. ⁷ Indeed, it is right for me to think this way about all of you, because I have you in my heart, and you are all partners with me in grace, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel. ⁸ For God is my witness, how deeply I miss all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus. ⁹ And I pray this: that your love will keep on growing in knowledge and every kind of discernment, ¹⁰ so that you may approve the things that are superior and may be pure and blameless in the day of Christ, ¹¹ filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ to the glory and praise of God.

Growing in Knowledge Phil.1:8

Last week Paul assured the believers of the work of God in them. Paul is confident God will “carry [His work] on to completion!” This week, we dive deeper into the heart of Paul for the Philippians. Paul will vulnerably share his need for the Philippian believers, inviting them into authentic and intimate relationships with him (and one another). As you talk together, notice the language Paul uses – “I hold you in my heart...I yearn for you with affection” – these phrases seem softer than we often consider Paul. What if Paul *needs* these people as much as they need him? Let these verses become strange and new to you, hearing them as if for the first time.

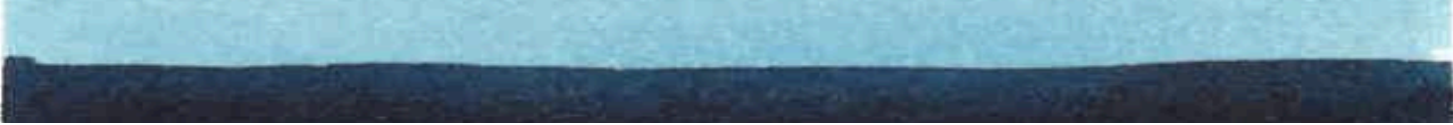
Dwell on These Things Phil. 4:8

If there is anything praiseworthy—dwell on these things...

And the God of peace will be with you. Philippians 4:8-9

1. As you read the opening paragraphs of this letter in verses 1-11, how would you describe Paul's tone? What words or phrases stand out to you?
2. In verses 3-5, Paul expressed his thanks for and joy over the Philippians. In verse 7, he explains why it is "right" for him to think this way about them. Why is it "right" for him to feel this way?
 - a. In verse 7, the word for "partners" comes from *koinōnia* which is the same word, "partnership" found in verse 5 (see Study 4). Why do you think Paul repeats this word *koinōnia* twice in such close proximity?
3. In verse 7, Paul notes two ways the Philippians have partnered with him. What are they?
 - a. How did the Philippians partner with Paul in his imprisonment, do you think?
 - b. Paul uses the phrase "in the defense and confirmation of the gospel." That is a heady phrase! What do you think it means to defend the gospel? What do you think it means to confirm the gospel?
 - c. Tell us a way in which God has used you to partner with another person. How did that experience impact you personally?
4. Paul says he "deeply misses" the Philippians. Who is someone you deeply miss?

- a. Paul says he misses them “with the affection of Christ.” The Greek word for “affection” is *spagchnon* and literally translates to the word “bowels.” The Hebrews regarded the bowels as the seat of the tenderer affections, especially kindness, benevolence, compassion. This word is used by Jesus in Matthew 9:36: **When he saw the crowds, he felt *compassion* for them, because they were distressed and dejected, like sheep without a shepherd.** How do you think Paul came to have this kind of deep affection for the Philippians?
 - b. Paul is reminding us that Jesus has this deep affection for his followers. How aware are you of Jesus’ affection for you? Share together.
 - c. Has someone ever spoken words of deep affection over you? What was it like to receive those words?
 - d. Paul speaks with much gratitude and affection for the Philippians. How has community been central to your growth and flourishing in Christ? Are there ways God is calling you to participate further in your community?
5. Paul prays for the Philippians in verses 9-11. What do you notice about his prayer? List some of the primary things Paul is asking for on their behalf.
- a. What is your response to Paul praying for the Philippians that their ‘**love will keep on growing**’?
 - b. How do you think knowledge and discernment impact love?
 - c. Where do you need your love to grow in your own relationships?
 - d. Do you feel your own need for knowledge and discernment in relationships? How so?



Praying with Joy Phil.1:4

Please join us in praying together Philippians 4:4-7 in **BOLD**.

Use the pause after each prayer to pray silently, even writing your prayers.

Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your graciousness be known to everyone. The Lord is near.

Practice Rejoicing! The Lord is near you right now.

Don't worry about anything, but in everything, through prayer and petition with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.

Practice presenting your requests to God. What are they?

Practice thanking God. For what?

And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

You are guarded and safe in God's peace! You can rest in it.

Let the glory of the Lord endure forever

Let the Lord be glad in His works.

I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live;

I will sing praise to my God while I have my being.

Finally brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable—if there is any moral excellence and if there is anything praiseworthy—dwell on these things. Do what you have learned and received and heard from me, and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you. *Amen.* Philippians 4:8-9