

Reflection Questions: Philippians 1:3-8

For the message, "The Fellowship of the Gospel" given by Pastor John Ferguson at Mercy Hill Church in Bryan/College Station, Texas, on October 9 2022

These reflection questions are designed to help you apply the message from the Scriptures by helping you think through application to your personal life, your church life, and your city's life. You can use these by yourself for reflection, or with your family or small group for discussion. To review the message, go to MercyHillBCS.org/resources/messages.

INTRODUCTION

Pray. Take a moment to pray asking God to guide you in reflecting upon the Scripture text.

Read the Scripture text: Philippians 1:3-8

3 I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, **4** always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, **5** because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. **6** And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ. **7** It is right for me to feel this way about you all, because I hold you in my heart, for you are all partakers with me of grace, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel. **8** For God is my witness, how I yearn for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus.

Summary of the message:

- The fellowship of / partnership in the gospel (1) creates bonds of affection among believers, and (2) creates partnerships that promote the gospel of Christ to the world.
-

Let's get started...

- Quietly read through this passage again. What initially grabs your attention?

QUESTIONS

1. Let's think about how this text applies to our lives as individuals.

- In the midst of giving thanks to God for the partnership in the gospel that he has with the Philippians, Paul confidently tells them, "I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ."
 - As you think about this promise, how does it encourage you? How should it encourage you?
- Compare that with these words of Jesus, "I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of my Father's hand" (John 10:28-29).
 - Do you find this easy to believe, that "God's got you"? What makes it easy for you to believe it? What makes it difficult?

2. Let's think about how this text applies to us as a community of Jesus' followers.

- Paul the Apostle was not simply a great servant of Jesus, but he was also a man who loved deeply. Note what he said in this passage:
 - Every time I think of you, I pray with joy to God
 - It's right for me to feel this way about you, because I hold you in my heart
 - I yearn for you all with the affection of Jesus Christ
- These bonds of affection were created by the gospel, which is another way of saying they were created by the Lord Jesus. How does this give you a picture of what God desires among the followers of Jesus?
- What do you think it might look like for the gospel to work this kind of love and affection for one another? How could we grow in this kind of love and affection for one another?
- What is the cost if we do not follow Paul's example of love and affection for other followers of Jesus? In other words, what is lost if we ignore the message? What do our "fellowships" become?

3. Let's think about how this text applies to our city.

- In verse 5, Paul gives thanks for their "partnership" (koinonia) in the gospel, and in verse 7 he speaks about them being "partakers" (sun-koinonia - essentially the same word as "partnership) of or in grace, in the defense and establishment of the gospel.
- How does this help us to understand that the Gospel of Jesus creates communities of Jesus that cannot simply exist for themselves but for his mission? What happens when we forget these truths?
- In the message on this passage, the pastor quoted from John Dickson's book, *The Best Kept Secret of Christian Mission*. "The best kept secret of Christian mission is that the Bible lists a whole range of activities that promote Christ to the world and draw others to Him." And then he list the following:
 - Prayer
 - Financial partnerships
 - Adorning the gospel by the way we live
 - Daily conversations with people in our spheres of influence
 - Answering questions that people might ask about what we believe
 - Our public worship together
- Which of these is most interesting to you? Which of these do you find most challenging?

CONCLUSION QUESTION

What is the one thing you want to take away from this study to remember or to make a change in your life?