

THE EPITAPH

Philippians 1:1-11 Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus,

To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are at Philippi, with the overseers and deacons:

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

Thanksgiving and Prayer

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. 9 And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, 10 so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, 11 filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

Introduction

I remember going to my grandparents' house in Hartville, MO as a young boy. My grandpa would take me with him to tend the cemetery. He was the caretaker of Hartville's only cemetery for many years. I remember every time we would visit from Denver; we would go to the cemetery and I would be introduced to my heritage on my mother's side. We would walk and stop at tombstones or markers and I would get a quick briefing of who was buried there and my relationship to them. I never feared going there, instead, I found it interesting that a big part of my heritage was centered in a small town in southern Missouri.

In 1979, I was stationed at Elizabeth City, NC. My job was to teach mechanic's how-to mechanic. We taught everything from simple electrical circuits to turbine engine overhaul. I remember one evening when I got home an incident that would bring back all those memories. My oldest son came to me with a few pencil-rubbings. He was very excited and as I looked at his "masterpieces," I noticed that it was of several gravestones. One was of a man who had died, many years before. I cannot remember exactly what was written on this man's headstone, but I know the words were profound to him. I will always be thankful for that teacher who went "out of the box" to teach children the importance of history, of those that have gone before. My son, Sean, went on to get straight "A's" in that class because she had sparked an interest in my son that became very important.

The opening of the Apostle Paul's epistle to the church at Philippi is filled with pride for the work of the church there.

PAUL'S GREETING

Philippians 1:1-11 Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus,

To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are at Philippi, with the overseers and deacons:

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

WHAT MAKES UP A DYNAMIC AND NOURISHING CHURCH

1. A Healthy Church is Remembered (v.3).

3 I thank my God in all my remembrance of you,

2. A Dynamic and Nourishing Church Is a Church Devoted to Prayer (v.4).

4 always in every prayer of mine for you all

3. A Dynamic and Nourishing Church Has Joy (v.4).

making my prayer with joy,

4. A Dynamic and Nourishing Church Understands the Importance of Missions (v.5).

5 because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now.

5. A Dynamic and Nourishing Church is Secure in the Salvation of the Lord (v.6).

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.

6. A Dynamic and Nourishing Church Understands the Importance of Partnership in the Ministry(v.7-8).

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.

7. A Dynamic and Nourishing Church is a Great Commission Church (v.9-10).

9 And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, 10 so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ,

8. A Dynamic and Nourishing Church is a Church Showing the Fruit of Righteousness (v.11).

11 filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

Conclusion

A church is not just an organized body of believers. A church is an organized body of believers dedicated to the Great Commission of Jesus Christ.

It is a church with a purpose of expanding the Kingdom of Christ.

Perusing Philippians Sermon Series

Are we that church?

What would be written about this church? What would our epitaph read?

