

“This Gospel Must Be Preached”

By Jesse Rairdon

Sunday, August 2nd, 2015

Please remain standing as Brother Mike A. is going to come and lead us in prayer.

Mike: Dear Lord Jesus, we just praise Your Holy Name, Lord God. Thank You for all Your mighty blessings, Lord God, all Your goodness You give to us, Lord Jesus. Lord God, we thank You for forgiving us of our sins, Lord God, and for dealing with us as sons and daughters that You love, Lord God; helping us to grow to be pleasing in Your sight. And, Lord, we just pray for Jesse, as he delivers the message this morning, that You'd anoint him, and the message. In Your name we pray. Amen.

Amen. Please be seated. Morning, church. Welcome. What faces! It's so good to see so many beautiful faces. I tell you what, what a rainbow! What a rainbow of faces God has with us, worshipping this morning.

So, this month, we're going to go over the church of Philippi. Philippians. The church in Philippi. The church in Philippi was an interesting church. It almost was like—when Paul was doing his missions and doing his work—it almost was like the door wasn't really open for the places that he wanted to go, but God said, “Here is where I want you to go.” So God chose Philippi. Our verse for the month:

Philippians 1:6 *Being confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:*

I'm going to cover three areas: The first area is, “God Opens the Door and God Closes the Door.” The second point I'm going to make today is, “God Finishes What He Starts.” And, point number three: “Suffering Is Not the End.”

So, a little history of the city of Philippi:

Located in north eastern Greece (Macedonia); its beginnings can be traced back to Thracians in the 4th century BCE. In 356 BCE Phillip II of Macedon (Phillip the conqueror), father of Alexander the Great, took over the city and named it after himself. So, that's where you get the name of Philippi; Phillip the conqueror. He used it mainly as a military stronghold, but also for the gold that was there, which yielded him yearly a thousand talents. It was a very rich area. It was good for the military, and it was good for backing that military with the gold; he who has the gold makes the rules, right?

In 168 BC Philippi became part of the Roman Empire, when the Romans defeated the Persians, then Rome divided Macedonia into 4 districts, Philippi being the first of those four districts.

Philippi is also known for a few famous historical battles. In 42 BCE, Mark Antony and Octavian defeated Brutus and Cassius, those were the assassins of Julius Cesar, in the battle of Philippi.

In 31 BCE, Octavian defeated Mark Anthony—so they kind of turned on each other—then, after he defeated Mark Anthony, he assumed the name Augustus, which became Augustus Caesar. Some put this as the beginning of the Roman Empire. This same Augustus, it talks about in Luke 2:1, “And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Cæsar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed.” So, this same Caesar Augustus, that defeated everybody else, took control, and this was the time of the birth of Christ. So, you can kind of see how history comes together. People think that they win wars, and they've put people in place, but it's God that puts things in place, and puts things in order. So, when you study your history, study your Bible, too, at those times, and see how God brings it all together.

Because there's reason and purposes, like, the Romans thought they were going to conquer the world, but, really, the purpose of even Cesar being in power was for the birth of Christ to come about.

So, this is all happening in this area of Philippi, long before Paul even got there, amen?

So, let's talk a little bit about the church, the beginning of the church in Philippi:

God Opens the Door, and God Closes the Door

This is Paul, in his journeys, his missionary journeys:

Acts 16:1 *Then came he to Derbe and Lystra: and, behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timotheus, the son of a certain woman, which was a Jewess, and believed; but his father was a Greek:*

So, this is the beginning of Paul working with Timothy, and Timothy's mentioned a lot in the Bible. He's like his right hand. Paul wrote a lot of letters, and, when Paul was in prison, Timothy would carry those letters and do a lot of the work. Amen? But, before that, they had kind of a work together.

Acts 16:2-3 *Which was well reported of by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium. Him would Paul have to go forth with him; and took and circumcised him because of the Jews which were in those quarters: for they knew all that his father was a Greek.*

So, in order to not have any contention, and to work with him In the Gospel, he had to obey the Jewish law of circumcision. Amen?

Acts 16:4 *And as they went through the cities, they delivered them the decrees for to keep, that were ordained of the apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem.*

So, basically, they were taking the church by-laws, those that were established by the apostles and the elders at Jerusalem, and taking these by-laws, and these orders, and these laws in the church and going around to each of the places that were known, each of the ministries, and teaching and upholding these things which the apostles had set forth. Amen? Let all things be done in decency and in order. You can't have structure unless you have some sort of rules and laws, otherwise everybody just do what they want to do, live how they want to live. Right? We're human. I'm the same, too; I've got to have some sort of rules. If we didn't have a speed limit, then I can drive how I want to, right? So, this is what they were doing at that time. This was Paul's mission; he took Timothy with him. He was a young man. They were going around, just kind of doing the work of the church. Amen? Just doing what they were told to do.

But, always, Paul had in his heart to reach out to other areas during this time. He always had a desire to evangelize, to seek other souls saved. Not just to do what he was doing, or was asked to do by the church, but, also what, "God, is there any other doors open while I'm here? Are there any other places I could go?"

Acts 16:6 *Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia,*

So that door was closed. They were not allowed to go to Asia. You say, "Why? Why weren't they allowed to go into Asia? That's kind of strange." It wasn't the time for them to go into Asia. That door wasn't open. God said, "That door's closed. You cannot go there."

Acts 16:7 *After they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them not.*

So, there's another door closed. Paul's trying to just reach out to other places as he's going, but the door's closed. Sometimes I like to think we're to go somewhere and do something for God, but the door's not open. Don't try to force your way into it. If it's of God, it will come to pass. But, you've got to do things in order, amen? When God wants you to do it.

So, we see Paul and timothy travelling and working together and just doing the work of the church, setting things in order. Trying to see if some doors are open here; asking, seeking, knocking. Things weren't open.

Acts 16:9 *And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us. And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavoured to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them.*

So, here is a vision, God showing him, "Here is a door I have open for you: A man from Macedonia saying, 'Come, share with us.'" Amen.

Acts 16:11-12 *Therefore loosing from Troas, we came with a straight course to Samothracia, and the next day to Neapolis; And from thence to Philippi, which is the chief city of that part of Macedonia, and a colony...*

It's like Little Rome, they called it in them days. It was pretty populous, it was pretty important, it was pretty busy.

Acts 16:12 *...and we were in that city abiding certain days. And on the Sabbath we went out of the city by a river side, where prayer was wont to be made; and we sat down, and spake unto the women which resorted thither.*

This is also important, too. There must not have been enough men to have a synagogue there, otherwise, they would have went to the synagogue to pray. So, they had to go find someplace where they had some Jewish faith, some people. Maybe, pretty much the purification, the Jewish purification, "We'll go down by the river, maybe find some people of faith, and maybe we'll pray there." So, this is what they're doing. They're kind of going through the course of the day, saying, "We need to take some time to pray. We need to seek God."

Acts 16:14-15 *And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul. And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there. And she constrained us.*

Here we have the beginnings of the church in Philippi. One faithful woman whose heart was open to God. Her whole house got saved, and from that open door, eventually, Asia was ministered to. Other places like Thessalonica were ministered to, and churches would sprout from there. But you have to go where God says, "Go, and start." You can't just say, all of the sudden, "I'm going to go home to Minnesota and preach the Gospel." I'll be standing in a cornfield by myself, no one listening, because it's not of God.

Right? You've got to go where God opens the door and sends you. If the door's closed, it's closed; if the door's open, it's open. God will confirm. Everywhere I've went within the last five years, Virginia and back, wherever I went, God showed me in a vision specifically where He wanted me to be. And God will do the same for you. He's not going to just send you like a paper bag blowing in the wind. "Oh, I'm here; it must be the will of God. I'm blown up in the tree; it must be the will of God. Oh, I'm over there; it must be the will of God." No, God's going to give you clear purpose and direction in your life, and He's going to open those doors, and no man's going to be able to close those doors He opens. Amen? See, if you've got a heart for ministry in a specific area, and God's given you that vision, God's given you eyes to see that, be patient. God will open that door. Amen?

So, at the time that Philip originally conquered that, he knew that it was going to be an important trade route to Asia; so God knew, even before he was born, that that was going to be an important route for the Gospel to spread. It was going to go through there, and into Thessalonica, and then into Asia. We wouldn't have the churches in Revelation, the churches in Asia, if we didn't have a start where the Gospel needed to start, and those end routes. Amen?

So, let's go to Philippians.

God Finishes What He Starts

Philippians 1:1 *Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons:*

So, it's a letter to the church which they had started from that vision of the man in Macedonia. This is a letter, many years later. In fact, they put this time around A.D. 62, which is about the time that Paul would have been in prison in Rome, and it wasn't looking good for Paul at this time. Really, the emperor that was in power was Nero, and he killed a lot of Christians, and Paul was a leader of the Christians. So, his head was on the chopping block, so to speak. But, there's a reason for that, because the Gospel must be preached.

Philippians 1:2-5 *Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy, For your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now;*

From the first day. You were there when I shared with Lydia, until now. This was important ministry for Paul. He loved these people. He fellowshiped with them. Like Brent says, you go and share that love, and you fellowship with one another. You share food, you share time, and be encouraged by one another. Paul had that, he sensed that from them. That's why he put that in his letter. He was thanking God upon remembrance of these things, these times. "Think about those times. Remember those times, and do what God allows us to do together." Amen?

Philippians 1:6 *Being confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:*

Some may have thought the ministry was done. Paul's in prison. The person who started this work can't come visit and set things in order. But God finishes what he starts. God finishes what He starts.

Philippians 1:7 *Even as it is meet for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart; inasmuch as both in my bonds, and in the defence and confirmation of the gospel, ye all are partakers of my grace.*

We're all in this together.

Philippians 1:8-9 *For God is my record, how greatly I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ. And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment;*

“Leave those knowledge and judgment things out, Jesse; just give me love.” I tell you what, your love is not going to abound unless you have some knowledge and judgment in church. You've got to do things right. You've got to do things God's way; not Jesse's way or Any's way, or Parrish's way, or Pastor Paine's way, or even Pastor Davis's way; you'd better do things God's way. Amen?

Verse number ten; this is the reason:

Philippians 1:10 *That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ;*

Because you don't want to offend God; we want to be sincere, we want to be right.

Philippians 1:11 *Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.*

God finishes what He starts.

Suffering Is Not the End

Sometimes we think, “The situation that I'm in, this time in my life, this is it. I'm done with ministry. Maybe for the young people... Whatever I've had, what I'm going to, this is going to take me out. I'm done. My life is done. Everything's passed me.” Suffering is not the end.

Philippians 1:12 *But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel;*

This Gospel must be preached. So, Paul's in prison, and Paul's suffering was because this Gospel must be preached.

Philippians 1:13 *So that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace, and in all other places;*

Even to Rome, itself.

Philippians 1:14-19 *And many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear. Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some also of good will: The one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds: But the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defence of the gospel. What then? notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretence, or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice. For I know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ,*

So, sometimes, people take advantage of a situation, and they preach the Gospel for their own needs. But, the Gospel is still being preached. People are still being saved. So, Paul's saying thank God people are still being saved, people are still being reached, even if people are taking what God meant for good, and trying to do it for their own needs. And, trying to add affliction to Paul at the same time, the person who started that ministry. That's a bad place to be, when you get to judgment, if you do it for the wrong reasons, because God will keep using you, even if you're doing it for the wrong reasons, so as to see souls saved. Then you get to judgement, and He says, "Sorry, you can't enter in; what you did was your own righteousness." But, the Gospel's still getting preached, amen?

So, suffering's not the end. Jesus said:

Matthew 24:14 *And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.*

So, the preaching of the Gospel, when it reaches the whole world, that's when the end's going to come. So, that suffering, that thing that you're going through, that thing that's got you thinking that maybe it's the end of your life, or the end of what you have to do for God, that's not the end. When the Gospel is preached to all the world, that's the end. See, to God, this is all part of a bigger picture. God sees everything; we just see what we see, a small part of it. So don't get discouraged, whatever you're going through. God sees the big picture. Why would people turn to God, if things were so easy for us as Christians? If life as like, "Oh, I'm a Christian; I never have any problems in the world. Got all the money, I always have a job, a place to live. It's great! I never get in any trouble with the law. This is great! You should be a Christian, too!" "Why?" But, when you suffer, for the righteousness sake, for the will of God, then they're going to see something that they can say, "You know what? There's something about him or her that I can say, 'You know, I want that. I want that.'"

Philippians 1:22-23 *But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labour: yet what I shall choose I wot not. For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better:*

Of course. Rather be down here, or up in Heaven? I'd rather be in Heaven.

Philippians 1:24 *Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you.*

Remember, this is the church that he birthed. These are the people that he saw come to the Gospel. He sees the need for him to be there yet.

Philippians 1:26 *And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide and continue with you all for your furtherance and joy of faith; That your rejoicing may be more abundant in Jesus Christ for me by my coming to you again.*

So, he's trying to encourage them, "Hey, I plan to come there again. I plan to come to see you again. I plan to come encourage you again." The Scripture doesn't really say whether he made it or not. I know that he was killed for the defense of the Gospel. But his desire for them, was to be there with them. But the Gospel must be preached. So, Paul was torn between going home to Christ or staying there with them. Being there, for them, was much better.

Philippians 1:27 *Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs...*

Your testimony's important. Your testimony's important to everyone. Not just here, in what we have in our ministry here, but worldwide; our testimony's important. Amen?

Philippians 1:27-30 ...that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel; And in nothing terrified by your adversaries: which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God. For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake; Having the same conflict which ye saw in me, and now hear to be in me.

God's going to put us in those uncomfortable situations, but that's not the end. That's not the end. Maybe you don't get your healing; maybe you're faithful to death. Someone gets saved in the hospital because you were faithful. Remember Stephen, as he was being stoned? The very same man that shared with the Philippians was there, holding the coats, judging Stephen as he was being stoned. Later he became the apostle who traveled the globe and shared the Gospel with people. You never know who's around, or who's watching while you're suffering, so, be faithful until the end. No matter what you've got to go through, because suffering is not the end. The Gospel must be preached, amen?

Let's go to Thessalonians, this is my closing scripture. It's not a very long message today. First, let's go to First Peter. We'll talk a little bit more about suffering; then we'll go to Thessalonians. We'll talk a little bit more about suffering. Now, this is Peter, the apostle, the one that Jesus told, "Hey, you're going to be the rock; upon you I'm going to build this church." This was the man left in charge.

1 Peter 3:8-15 Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous: Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing. For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile: Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it. For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil. And who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good? But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled; But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:

This is the reason we suffer. If you get nothing else today, from the suffering part, you have a hope within you. When you are suffering, you get a chance to share that hope. That's how it works; it comes through suffering. What? we're better than Jesus? He suffered. He gave that to us *through* suffering. Amen?

1 Peter 3:16-17 Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ. For it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing, than for evil doing.

So, if you sin, you're going to suffer, too, but it's better to suffer for the right reasons. Amen? It's better to suffer for the right reasons, and it better be for the Gospel, amen? Not for your own selfish motivation; your own selfish reasons. There's persecution, and there's stupidition, where you get yourself in trouble. Amen?

So, let's go over a little bit about what we preached: So, this Gospel must be preached, and God will open a door, and no man can close it. So, God opens the door, and God closes the door. God finishes what He starts. Sometimes people look at Christian Fellowship and say, "It's over. It's done. They're a

fraction of what they used to have.” I’m here to tell you today, God finishes what He starts. God put a vision in Pastor Davis’ heart and mind, and sent him to the streets for a reason. And we’re all here for a reason. Maybe you haven’t been back here for a while, but you’re back here for a reason. You’re a part of that vision. You’re a part of that ministry, that work that had been started, many years ago. God finishes what He starts, amen? And suffering is not the end. Preaching the Gospel is the end. Give the Lord a praise. As Brother Andy comes and closes up.

