

14.1 The Letter to the Philippians

Purpose

We can approach the purpose of all of Paul's letters by considering specific hints from the book (matters of circumstance, what he prays for on behalf of the recipients, his exhortations, and the flow of content). By combining these hints with the broad concerns that He has as an apostle of the gospel of God's grace in Christ (to build up the body of Christ), we can formulate a purpose statement.

Note some details of pastoral concern that prompted the letter

Help and sickness of Epaphroditus

Support of Paul

Prayer

By Paul for the Philippians

By the Philippians for Paul

The Sending of Timothy

False teachers

Unity

Contents

1A. Opening Greeting, 1.1-2

2A. Prayer for the Philippians, 1.3-11

3A. Perspective on Paul's imprisonment, 1.12-26

4A. Exhortation to walk worthy of the gospel, 1.27-2.18

1B. Stand firm in one spirit striving for the faith together despite suffering, 1.27-2.2

2B. Be humble after the pattern of Christ, 2.3-11

3B. Work out your salvation with fear, 2.12-18

5A. Perspective on the coming of Timothy, 2.19-24

6A. Perspective on the coming of Epaphroditus, 2.25-3.1

7A. Warning about enemies of the cross, 3.2-4.1

8A. Final exhortations, 4.2-9

9A. Thanksgiving, doxology, and final greetings, 4.10-23

Qs for discussion

1) What subject comes up in the greeting that we have seen very little of in our study of the NT so far? How can we put it into perspective?

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 (1.1-2).

2) What is at the core of Paul's prayer for the Philippians (1.9-11)?

3) What perspective can we get on Christian unity from a) 1.27a, say, regarding its importance, and b) from the rest of 1.27 as to some of the "how to"?

4) How does Paul advance the exhortation to unity (by striving/dialoguing, 1.27) in 4.1-9?

Therefore, my brothers, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm thus in the Lord, my beloved.

² I entreat Euodia and I entreat Syntyche to agree in the Lord. ³ Yes, I ask you also, true companion, help these women, who have labored side by side with me in the gospel together with Clement and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life. ⁴ Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. ⁵ Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; ⁶ do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. ⁸ Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. ⁹ What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me- practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.