Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

Thankful Remembrances
Scripture: Philippians 1
Code: BQ112410

I thank my God in all my remembrance of you. (Philippians 1:3)

Thank is from *eucharistēo,* from which the English word "Eucharist," a name often used of the Lord's Supper, derives. In that ordinance believers give thanks to God in remembrance of Christ's substitutionary sacrifice on the cross. In this instance Paul gives thanks for his spiritual brothers and sisters in Philippi who, over the years, had brought him such abundant blessing and joy.

The phrase **my God** reflects Paul's deep intimacy and communion with the Lord, to whom he belonged and whom he served (Acts 27:23). His thankfulness for the Philippians was to **God,** emphasizing both that the Lord is the ultimate source of all joy and that it was the Philippians' relationship to Him through Christ that caused Paul to

thank . . . God. Paul expressed similar thanksgivings for the believers in Corinth (1 Cor. 1:4), in Colossae (Col. 1:3), and in Thessalonica (1 Thess. 1:2; cf. 2:13), and for his beloved coworkers Timothy (2 Tim. 1:3) and Philemon (Philem. 4).

Paul's **remembrance** of the Philippians began with his second missionary journey, when the apostle first came to Philippi. He was specifically directed by the Holy Spirit to go to Macedonia (the province in which Philippi was located) rather than Bithynia, as he and Silas had intended (Acts 16:7–10). On the Sabbath they went outside the city to the riverside, where they expected to find Jewish worshipers. (Evidently there were not enough Jewish men in Philippi to form a synagogue.) The only ones present were a group of women at prayer. One of the women, Lydia, was "a worshiper of God," that is, a Gentile proselyte to Judaism. The Lord opened her heart to Christ. When she heard the gospel, she was baptized with her newly believing household, and she prevailed on Paul and those with him to be her guests (Acts 16:13–15). Lydia and her household were the first Christian converts in Europe and became the nucleus of that continent's first church. The generosity and hospitality they exhibited characterized that congregation for years to come.

Surely in Paul's remembrance was the young demon-possessed slave girl in Philippi who brought her owners considerable wealth from her fortune-telling. She dogged the apostle and his companions for many days and "kept crying out, saying, 'These men are bond-servants of the Most High God, who are proclaiming to you the way of salvation.'" Becoming "greatly annoyed, [Paul] turned and said to the spirit, 'I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her!' And it came out at that

very moment”(Acts 16:16–18). Although Luke does not report it specifically, it seems probable that, like Lydia, she was born again and became a sister in Christ whom Paul now fondly remembered.

Paul also would have remembered the time he spent in jail in Philippi because of the slave girl’s owners, who lost a great source of income and incited the townspeople against him and Silas (Acts 16:19–23). Not only did the Lord give Paul and Silas peace and joy despite their chains and literally put songs in their hearts (Acts 16:25), but He also used their imprisonment to bring the jailer and his household to salvation (Acts 16:26–34). On the way out of the city after being released from prison, Paul and Silas went to Lydia’s house for a last time and were encouraged by the many believers there who came to see them off (Acts 16:40).

Much of Paul’s joy was based on the pleasant, loving recollections of believers who, like those in Philippi, were consistently faithful to the Lord, to their fellow believers, and to him.

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