

Encouraging Words for Challenging Times
Source of Encouragement
Philippians 1:1-18

Bedrock of Encouragement

1:1-11

The Gospel provides encouragement

1-5

Your participation (Grk "fellowship") could refer to Paul rejoicing because of the Philippian converts' "fellowship" in the gospel along with him, but it is more likely that this refers to their active "participation" with him in the gospel by means of the financial support they sent to Paul on more than one occasion, discussed later in this letter (4:10-19, esp. 4:15-16).

The NET Bible

It must have brought great joy to the Philippians' hearts as they read how the apostle often thanked God for them. Here was a letter of commendation from one who was in Roman chains some 800 miles away. About 10 years had passed since Paul had first worked among them. But the passing of time had not diminished his love or his interest in them. Every time Paul thought of them he thanked God for them.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary

Paul mentioned the gospel nine times in Philippians. His other epistles reveal that he conceived of the gospel as a message of salvation based on historical, theological, and experiential evidence.

Philippians, Colossians, Philemon

The Gospel allows for growth

6-8

First, Paul was confident that what God began God would complete, and his words came from a deep conviction that God worked in them. Second, Paul saw the manifestations of their right relationship with God. Their gift evidenced their Christian maturity. Since God worked in them and they responded, Paul's confidence was justified.

Philippians, Colossians, Philemon

The Gospel motivates growth

9-11

Gospel sharpens perspective

12-14

Paul's incarceration had another effect: it encouraged those who had been reluctant about speaking for Christ (v. 14). Large numbers of believers became bold for Christ when they saw how God was spreading the gospel through Paul. The positive response Paul received in the face of opposition caused others to speak **more courageously and fearlessly** for Christ. Paul's confinement was doing what his circumstances outside of prison could never do.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary

Paul did not specifically mention his imprisonment. The Greek text says simply "the things to me" (*ta kat' emē*). Most likely he included all the events from his imprisonment at Jerusalem through his imprisonment at Rome. These were the riot, the two-year imprisonment at Caesarea, the appeal to Caesar, the threat on his life, the trip to Rome with its shipwreck, his house-arrest and restricted freedom, and the impending trial.

Philippians, Colossians, Philemon

Gospel sharpens focus

15-18

Applying the Gospel provides a bedrock of encouragement.

- Q1. What is discouraging to me today? What ingredients have come together to make me discouraged?

- Q2. In what way does the Gospel speak to my discouragement? Are there areas I need to confess? Are there promises I need to trust?