

TRUE GOSPEL FELLOWSHIP



SLAVES OF CHRIST JESUS ...

- BELIEVE THE GOSPEL THAT PAUL PREACHED
- REMAIN FAITHFUL TO THE GOSPEL THAT PAUL PREACHED
- HAVE TRUE GOSPEL FELLOWSHIP

1. Paul and Timothy, slaves of Christ Jesus, greet all the saints in Christ Jesus including the church leadership, 1:1-2.

- (Philippians 1:1–2 ESV) **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.

A. True partners in the gospel are slaves of Christ Jesus.

B. Only a faithful slave of Christ Jesus will stay true to Christ Jesus and his gospel.

C. Paul emphasizes his (and Timothy's) position as slaves of Christ Jesus.

Servants ... δούλος [doulos] – a slave, bondman; a person who is legally owned by someone else and whose entire livelihood and purpose was determined by their master.

D. Paul made it a point to address the leaders.

E. Being slaves of God—with Christ himself being our greatest example—is a significant theme in the letter to the Philippians.

- (Philippians 2:5–7 ESV) **Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus,** 6 who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but emptied himself, **by taking the form of a [slave] servant,** being born in the likeness of men.

F. Being joyful is a significant theme in this letter.

- (Philippians 4:4 ESV) **Rejoice** in the Lord always; again I will say, **rejoice.**

G. Paul, Timothy and the rest of us are slaves to Jesus because he has purchased us from our slavery to sin.

- (1 Corinthians 6:19–20 ESV) **Or do you not know** that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? **You are not your own,** 20 for **you were bought with a price.** So glorify God in your body.
- (1 Peter 1:18–19 ESV) **Knowing that you were ransomed** from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, 19 but **with the precious blood of Christ,** like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.

H. We are either slaves to sin or have been bought with

the price of the blood of Christ and are now slaves to righteousness.

- (1 Corinthians 7:22–23 NIV) For the one who was a slave when called to faith in the Lord is the Lord's freed person; similarly, **the one who was free when called is Christ's slave.** 23 **You were bought at a price; do not become slaves of human beings.**

I. The identity of a slave's master is revealed by whom he obeys and to whom he listens.

- (Romans 6:16–18 ESV) **Do you not know** that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, **you are slaves of the one whom you obey,** either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness? 17 **But thanks be to God,** that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed, 18 **and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness.**
- (John 10:4–5 ESV) When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them, and **the sheep follow him, for they know his voice.** 5 A stranger they will not follow, but they will flee from him, **for they do not know the voice of strangers.**
- (John 10:27 ESV) **My sheep hear my voice,** and I know them, **and they follow me.**

2. Paul prayed with joy because he had true fellowship with them in the gospel., 1:3-5.

- (Philippians 1:3–5 ESV) 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.**

- (Philippians 1:5 NKJV) For **your fellowship in the gospel** from the first day until now.

Partnership ... κοινωνία [koinonia] – participation, fellowship – the act of sharing in the activities or privileges of an intimate association or group; especially used of marriage and churches; joint participation, intercourse, intimacy.

A. Paul's joy for this fellowship was abundant—always in every prayer of mine.

B. The key component of having true gospel fellowship is believing and holding to a true gospel.

C. This is a fellowship, a partnership in the gospel, that calls us to separate from unbelievers by virtue of the

their non-existent relationship with God.

- (2 Corinthians 6:14–17 ESV) **Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers.** For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? **Or what fellowship has light with darkness?** 15 What accord has Christ with Belial? Or what portion does a believer share with an unbeliever? 16 What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; as God said, “I will make my dwelling among them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. 17 **Therefore go out from their midst,** and **be separate from them,** says the Lord, and touch no unclean thing; then I will welcome you.
- i. True fellowship means we will not be joined with those who do not believe the true gospel.
- ii. True fellowship in the gospel means we will separate ourselves from these allegiances.

The reasoning for this is that **any gospel relationship that is not based on the one true gospel is a gospel for unbelievers**—those who are lawless, in the darkness, in harmony with Belial (the devil), and share agreement with idol worship.

- iii. Negatively stated: God does not dwell with them, God does not walk among them, God is not their God and they are not his people.

3. The Philippians joyful fellowship with Paul was based solely on their belief in the gospel that Paul preached—the one true gospel.

- (1 Corinthians 15:1–2 ESV) Now I would remind you, brothers, **of the gospel I preached to you,** which you received, in which you stand, 2 and by which you are being saved, **if you hold fast to the word I preached to you—unless you believed in vain.**

A. To have partnership with Paul in the gospel they had to believe in the same gospel.

B. Paul had warned that anyone preaching a contrary gospel would be cursed.

- (Galatians 1:8–9 ESV) But even if we or an angel from heaven **should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed.** 9 As we have said before, so now I say again: **if anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to the one you received, let him be accursed.**

C. Why accursed? Why such harsh, drastic language?

- i. A claim to a relationship with God based on the profession of a gospel that is not the gospel ... Could there be a greater act of arrogance and blasphemy and irreverence?

Blasphemy is the act of insulting, showing contempt, or expressing a lack of reverence for God and involves slandering the divine and defying God's authority.

- ii. A claim to a relationship with God based on a gospel that has been revised to accommodate the desires and demands of humans—is this not also blasphemy?

4. The gospel that Paul preached must be seen as unique—separate, distinct and in opposition to all other gospels.

Unique means being the only one of its kind; without equal or parallel; absolutely one-of-a-kind; being the only existing one of its type.

- (Acts 4:12 ESV) And there is **salvation in no one else,** for there is **no other name** under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.

So WHAT IS THIS GOSPEL?

A. This would be the gospel of Christ where people astonishingly turn away from him and turn to a different, distorted version of his gospel.

- (Galatians 1:6–7 ESV) **I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him** who called you in the grace of Christ **and are turning to a different gospel—** 7 **not that there is another one,** but there are some who trouble you and want to distort the gospel of Christ.

We must take note of the significance of this common tendency to quickly desert Christ and his gospel for a distorted version of his gospel.

B. This would be the gospel that can only be preached by a slave of Christ Jesus who is neither seeking the approval of humans nor trying to please humans.

- (Galatians 1:10 ESV) For **am I now seeking the approval of man,** or of God? Or am I **trying to please man?** **If I were still trying to please man, I would not be a servant [slave] of Christ.**

C. The gospel Paul that preached was not of human origin but revealed to Paul by the Lord himself.

- (Galatians 1:11–12 ESV) For I would

have you know, brothers, that the gospel that was preached by me is not man's gospel. 12 For I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ.

D. This would be the gospel for which by grace Paul was set apart before he was born.

- (Galatians 1:15–16 ESV) But when he who had set me apart before I was born, and who called me by his grace, 16 was pleased to reveal his Son to me, in order that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately consult with anyone.

E. This would be the gospel for which Paul would not give in to false believers for even a moment.

- (Galatians 2:4–5 NIV) This matter arose because some false believers had infiltrated our ranks to spy on the freedom we have in Christ Jesus and to make us slaves. 5 We did not give in to them for a moment, so that the truth of the gospel might be preserved for you.

F. This would be the gospel with which Paul would intentionally and passionately undermine deceitful workmen who claimed to operate on the same terms as he did.

- (2 Corinthians 11:12–15 ESV) And what I am doing I will continue to do, in order to undermine the claim of those who would like to claim that in their boasted mission they work on the same terms as we do. 13 For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. 14 And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. 15 So it is no surprise if his servants, also, disguise themselves as servants of righteousness. Their end will correspond to their deeds.

G. This would be the gospel by which you will make enemies of people by telling them the truth.

- (Galatians 4:16 ESV) Have I then become your enemy by telling you the truth?

CONCLUSION: Questions we should ask ourselves ...

Am I a slave of Christ Jesus?

Am I a faithful slave of Christ Jesus?

Do I possibly need to learn more of what it means to be a faithful slave of Christ Jesus?

Am I vigilant as a faithful slave of Christ Jesus?

Do I fight for the only gospel which saves and brings joy and fellowship forever?