

Phil1:7 just as it is right for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart, inasmuch as both in my chains and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, you all are partakers with me of grace.

1:8 For God is my witness, how greatly I long for you all with the affection of Jesus Christ.

1:9 And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment,

1:10 that you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ,

1:11 being filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

[From today's sermon.

Continuing from last week's passage, we read Paul's passionate address to the congregation in Philippi, who are in prison because of persecution.

He says, "For I have you all deeply in my heart, as partakers of grace together. Paul's words are moving: "How deeply I think of you all, with the ardor of Christ Jesus....

A time of suffering. But even in the midst of it all, Paul's exhortation, "I am confident of this, that he who has begun a good work in you will complete it before the day of Christ Jesus. And Paul continues to pray.

Paul continues to pray, "Let your love be multiplied in the depth of your knowledge and in the keenness of your senses, so that you may be able to discern what is important, so that you may be pure and blameless in preparation for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of the righteousness of Jesus Christ, that you may give glory and praise to God. And you will be filled with the fruit of righteousness through Jesus Christ, and you will show forth the glory and praise of God..."

To increase in love requires deep knowledge and insight, so that we may discover what is more important, so that we may be pure and honest, unclouded by conscience, and so that we may bear the fruit of righteousness. This is what Jesus does for us by His own hand, to His glory and praise. I hope that we too, through God's love, will become more and more wise and responsive to God.

Good morning, everyone.

I hope there was no damage from the typhoon.

Although it has been hot and humid, dragonflies are flying, insects are singing at night, and the mornings and evenings are turning into autumn. And today is September. Today is

September, and we have only one-third of the year left to go. I hope to enjoy the pleasant autumn season before the cold, cold season arrives.

Now, I am reading through Philippians. Paul's words in prison, thinking and praying for the people of the church in Philippi, are very moving.

1:1 Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, and to the overseers and stewards.

1:2 Grace and peace be unto you from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

1:3 And I will give thanks to my God every time I think of you; and I will give thanks to my God every time I see you; and I will give thanks to my God every time I see you,

1:4 When I pray for you all, I pray always with joy,

1:5 And I give thanks that ye have the gospel from the first day unto this day.

1:6 And I am confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will complete it before the day of Christ Jesus.

Whenever I think of you ... pray for all of you, always praying with joy,

I thank you that you have been partakers of the Gospel from the first day until now.

In the midst of difficulties, behold, I thank and pray even in prison. And to those who are anxious about me, or about their own persecution because they are in prison, or about the difficulties that will befall them, be assured, "He who has begun a good work in you will surely complete it before the day of Christ Jesus. I am confident of this. For we are thankful that you have been partakers of the gospel from the first day until this day. For God will continue to protect you as he has protected you to this day, and he who began a good work in you will continue to do it in you, very near, and in you, and will finally complete it. And he will finally complete it. Paul encouraged you to keep your eyes on God, who is leading you to progress and completion without fearing the future, and to continue to believe in Him. Paul encouraged us to keep our eyes on God, who is leading us to perfection, without fearing the future.

Then he continues with today's verse.

1:7 It is natural that I should think so for the sake of all of you. 1:7 For I have kept you all in my heart as partakers of grace, both while I was in prison and while I was pleading and proving the gospel.

How is it possible to continue to believe in God so powerfully in the midst of difficulties? It is because Paul himself has experienced the Lord's protection in the midst of difficulties. With this conviction, he always prayed for each member of the church in Philippi, and he said, "I am with you in grace, all of you, even when you are in prison, as you plead and prove the gospel," (Philippians 2:8), I have kept you all deeply in my heart".

Paul prays and asks us to share in this grace. He asks that we be partakers of this grace together, even when we are caught up in prison, even when we are pleading our case before those who are vehemently opposed to the gospel, and even when we are proving the good news of the gospel. This is not hardship or pain, but grace, he says.

The "witnessing of the gospel," translated literally, is the confirmation of the gospel and means to firmly root the gospel in one's life. To substantiate or bear witness to the gospel here means to first confirm that one's own gospel of Christ is one's own gospel, one's own good news, and to firmly establish it in one's own life before one shares it with others.

Before we share it with others, we must be sure that it is truly our own. You cannot communicate it with conviction before you are half-hearted and unsure of it. Just as a person on a TV shopping channel who says, "This product is so good, so convenient, and so enriching for your life," must be very knowledgeable about the product and must be fascinated by it. In evidencing the gospel, we should have a clear knowledge and emotional understanding of how good it really is for us and how much good it is for us. In this way, when we say Christ, Christ, Christ in our sleep and in our waking, in the morning and in the evening, in our dreams and in our sleep, we confirm the good news, we firmly build up the gospel in our lives, and so we prove it, and that is why we must defend and imprison the gospel even in the face of strong opposition. That is why we are able to defend the Gospel in the face of stubborn opposition and remain in gratitude even in the face of incarceration.

The author of "Chiiroba," Yasuro Enomoto, stayed one night with another pastor across the fusuma (a sliding door) from him until the end of the book, and the pastor who stayed with him thanked Enomoto in the morning. He said, "Well, thank you very much for your passionate sermon for me last night. I was so grateful that I sat up straight and listened to you throughout the night." However, Dr. Enomoto had no recollection of this. His wife also experienced this and told me that it was weird because she even prayed at the end of the sermon in her sleep, let alone the sermon.

I remember being surprised to think that this is the life of a preacher that penetrates deep into the heart, the life of a Christian who lives with the Word of God. He said that the Word in the

morning changes lives. He said that a life of praying the Word at the beginning of the day and being guided by the Word day by day changes one's life. This is very instructive.

There is another incident like this in the Bible. It is in Acts 19.

19:1 While Apollos was in Corinth, Paul came to Ephesus through the backcountry. And he met some disciples,

19:2 He asked them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you came to faith?" They answered, "No, we have never even heard that there is such a thing as the Holy Spirit.

19:3 "Then in whose name were you baptized?" he asked, and they answered, "We were baptized in John's name.

19:4 Then Paul said, "John baptized them with the baptism of repentance, but by this he exhorted them to believe in the one who was coming after him, Jesus.

19:5 When the people heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

19:6 And when Paul laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit fell on them, and then they began to speak in tongues and to prophesy.

19:7 And they were all about twelve in number.

19:8 Then Paul went into the synagogue, and for three months he boldly discussed and exhorted them concerning the kingdom of God.

19:9 But some were hardened in heart and would not believe, and they spoke against this way in the presence of the congregation; so he took his disciples with him and separated himself from them, and argued daily in the lecture hall at Turano.

19:10 And it went on for two years, and all who dwelt in Asijah, both Jews and Greeks, heard the word of the Lord.

19:11 God did one extraordinary and powerful work after another by the hand of Paul.

19:12 For example, when people took the handkerchief or apron he was wearing and put it on a sick person, the sickness was removed and the evil spirit went out.

19:13 Then the itinerant Jewish witchdoctors, invoking the name of the Lord Jesus, addressed those who were possessed with evil spirits, saying, "I command you by Jesus, whom Paul preached, go out. Get out of here.

19:14 And the seven sons of Sukhwa, the chief priest of the Jews, were also doing such things.

19:15 And the evil spirit said to them, "Jesus knows what he is doing. Paul knows it, too. But who are you?"

19:16 And the man who was possessed by the evil spirit leaped upon them, and pressed them all down and defeated them, so that they fled out of the house, wounded and naked.

It is brave to command evil spirits to go out in Jesus' name, but we say, "If it is Jesus, I know

it, and Paul knows it. Paul knows it, too. But we ask that we may be protected in our faith and thoughts firmly rooted in Jesus, and that we and our lives may be shaped by the gospel.

1:8 How deeply I think of you all, with the ardor of Christ Jesus, and God is the one who proves it.

Christ Jesus is the One with the deepest passion. He came down from heaven, became a man, and took upon Himself the place of sin for all the sins of mankind, even though He is God Himself, and took upon Himself the cross, the seat of death to which a felon should have been crucified. What can we call this without calling it infatuation?

Paul was also a man of passion. In Philippians 2, he says, "And I know that I am not a man of sin, but I am a man of love.

2:17 And if I sprinkle my blood on the altar of your faith offerings, I will rejoice. I will rejoice with you all.

He was also a man of zeal. Why? Because he lived in Christ Jesus. He was inseparable from Christ Jesus. He was transformed by Christ's passionate love for him and became a man of passion.

By Christ's passion for him, he lived, prayed, and did works of love that are unmistakable. This is what will never go away. Faith, hope and love. It is love that is the best of all. He loved the church in Philippi and the people there from the bottom of his heart. He said that it is God who proves it. He said it openly and proudly in front of God with his fervent love. With his overflowing love, he encouraged his beloved Philippian church members with this prayer.

1:9 I pray that your love may be deepened by the knowledge that you have of me, and that you may know me with all your heart. 1:9 I pray that your love may be multiplied in the depth of your knowledge and in the keenness of your senses,

1:10 That ye may be able to discern what is important, and that ye may be pure and blameless unto the day of Christ,

1:11 That you may be filled with the fruit of the righteousness of Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

After all, he valued love.

He is also concerned with love, which is increased by deep knowledge, by keen senses and insight. What knowledge or insight is Jesus Christ, as verse 11 says? To know Christ is to know

God and to know love. It is love that is cultivated in this way. If you know Christ and do not grow in love, you are barren. It is a contradiction and a deception. When we are filled with knowledge and insight into Christ Jesus, our love is multiplied. It enables us to discern what is important to us, who judge everything by the love of Christ. What matters in Christ is whether we have love or not.

Galatians 5:5 We have a strong hope of being justified by faith through the help of the Spirit.

5:6 For in Christ Jesus it does not matter whether you are circumcised or not. 5:6 For in Christ Jesus it does not matter whether you are circumcised or uncircumcised; the only thing that is precious is faith working through love.

5:7 You have run well, but who has hindered you and turned you away from the truth?

1:10 That ye may discern what is of importance, that ye may be pure and without blame, ready for the day of Christ,

1:11 That you may be filled with the fruit of the righteousness of Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

To know and discern what is important and precious through the love of Christ, and to grow like Him, is the way to be pure and blameless. And we are to produce the fruit of righteousness only through Jesus Christ. No matter how hard we try, we cannot bear fruit on our own, because we were separated from God by sin. But now we have been joined to Christ as a branch to God's trunk, bearing fruit in abundance (John 15). Since the meaning of righteousness also implies what God desires and what He determines to be righteous, this is not something that can be reached eternally only from the human side. The word righteousness is not a concept or definition of righteousness that can be defined by man, but rather it means to be in a right relationship with God.

Ephesians 4:13 That we all may attain to the unity of the faith in the Son of God, and of the knowledge of him, and to the perfect man, and finally to the fullness of the virtues of Christ.

The day of Christ. It is the day of the Lord's return, the day of judgment. Toward that day, we are encouraged by Paul's fervent prayer that our love may be increased in deep knowledge and in keen sense, so that you may be able to discern what is important, that you may be pure

and blameless, filled with the fruit of the righteousness of Jesus Christ, and that you may be filled with the glory of God and the knowledge of the truth of his ways, so that you may be able to walk in the ways of God. And that you may be filled with the fruit of the righteousness of Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank you for today's worship. Thank you for teaching us that God protects and guides us through loving prayer, that the love of Christ gives us wisdom and insight, that we discover what is important, that we are cleansed and blameless, and that in you we produce fruit that is natural, glorious, joyful, and full of praise. Please guide all sufferers into God's salvation and peace. Bless our families and the people in our community. We pray in the name of the Lord Jesus. Amen.