

“Servants of Jesus Christ”

March 4 & 5, 2017

Philippians 1:1-2

The Four groups of people in Philippians 1:1

❖ Paul and Timothy

- Paul and Timothy were to some extent cowriters of this letter, there was a strong relationship between the apostle Paul and Timothy as mentor and disciple.

☞ They were ... *Servants of Jesus Christ!*

❖ The saints in Christ Jesus who are at Philippi

- These were the body of Christ in Philippi that were set apart and called to holiness by the work of redemption in Jesus.

☞ They were ... *Servants of Jesus Christ!*

❖ Overseers

- The Greek word “Episkopos” refers to those appointed to watch over, guide and protect the church. This is the term the Bible uses for elders or leaders of a congregation.

☞ They were ... *Servants of Jesus Christ!*

❖ Deacons

- The Greek word “Diakonos” describes helpers who carried out ministry work.

☞ They were ... *Servants of Jesus Christ!*

Servants of God

- ❖ Paul and Timothy identified themselves to the church in Philippi as servants, which describes them in total submission to the call of Christ, equal co-laborers among themselves, as well as equal with the saints in the church and the overseers and deacons that were serving at Philippi.

- ❖ While Paul refers to himself as an apostle in some letters, here he identifies himself with Timothy as a *doulos*, literally a “slave” of Christ.

Romans 1:1 “Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God,”

Titus 1:1 “Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, for the sake of the faith of God's elect and their knowledge of the truth, which accords with godliness,”

Doúlos: (Bond-slave)

“properly, someone who belongs to another; a *bond-slave*, without *any ownership rights* of their own. Ironically, ... *doúlos* (“bond-slave”) is used with the *highest dignity* in the NT – namely, of believers who *willingly* live under Christ's authority as His devoted followers.”¹

The Identity of a Servant

- ❖ We were created to believe, to worship, to serve and to follow “something or someone.”
- ❖ The identity of a servant of sin

Romans 6:16 "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? 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,"

- ◆ The moment we were rescued by Christ, we were freed and delivered from the bondage that controlled our lives.
- ◆ The Bible says that before we were Christians, we were walking and following the course of this world, Satan himself. *Ephesians 2:1-4*
 - We can be enslaved to the glory of men. *John 12:43; Matthew 6:1,5*
 - We can be enslaved to wealth. *Matthew 6:24; 2 Timothy 3:2*
 - We can be enslaved to the world. *1 John 2:15-17*
 - ☞ In our day, the people in the world who claim to be the most free and autonomous are, according to these verses, slaves of sin.
 - We can be enslaved to pleasures.
- ❖ The identity of a servant of righteousness.
 - ◆ For the believer, it is vital to know our identity in Jesus Christ.

Galatians 2:20 "I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me."

Philippians 1:20b-21 "...Christ will be honored in my body, whether by life or by death. For to me to live is Christ and to die is gain."
 - ◆ The greatest example of service came from Christ Himself, and He served perfectly for He knew His identity.

Philippians 2:5-8 "Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though He was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross."

Galatians 1:4 "Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for our sins to deliver us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father,"

 - Jesus is the truth and He came so that we could be set free.
 - ◆ The Bible says that without the freedom of Christ we are all slaves to Sin.

Romans 6:18 "and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness."

Romans 6:22 "But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the fruit you get leads to sanctification and its end, eternal life."

 - The life of a Christian is not marked by bondage to sin.
 - ◆ Our identity originates in the freedom that Jesus Christ provides for us.

John 8:31-32 "So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed Him, 'If you abide in My word, you are truly My disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.'"

John 8:34-36 "Jesus answered them, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin. The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son remains forever. So if the Son set you free, you will be free indeed.'"

- The things of this world offer temporary pleasure and permanent captivity, but Jesus offers freedom from sin.

The Purpose of a Servant

❖ Identity gives purpose.

- ◆ Paul was a servant to the church, a servant to people, a servant to Jews and gentiles, a servant for the glory of Jesus Christ.

Acts 20:24 "But I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God."

2 Timothy 1:8-12 "Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, nor of me His prisoner, but share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God, who saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because His own purpose and grace, which He gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began, and which now has been manifested through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel, for which I was appointed a preacher and apostle and teacher, which is why I suffer as I do. But I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed, and I am convicted that He is able to guard until that day what has been entrusted to me."

❖ Our purpose as servants of Christ is to glorify God in everything we do.

John 17:3-4 "And this is eternal life, that they know You the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. I glorified You on earth, having accomplished the work that You gave Me to do."

- If we are glorifying God, our purpose is greater than ourselves and our legacy is transcendent and eternal.

The Joy of a Servant

❖ Pleasing God is our joy, knowing that our Master is perfect.

- It is our joy to do His will.

John 8:28-29 "So Jesus said to them, 'When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He, and that I do nothing on My own authority, but speak just as the Father taught Me. and He who sent Me is with Me, He has not let Me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to Him.'"

Hebrews 12:2 "looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God."

Endnotes:

¹ "HELPS Word-studies: 1401 doulos" *Helps Ministries, Inc.* © 1987, 2011 by Helps Ministries, Inc.

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