

We learn what really matters when we increase more and more in love by allowing the story of Christ's humiliation to become the driving story of our lives.

- B. Paul applied this himself (1:14-18; cmp. 2:2-3)

- C. When we apply this, it will produce a full harvest of the fruit of righteousness through Jesus Christ to the glory and praise of God.

What really matters is our becoming so closely related to the gospel that we live it.

LIVE THE STORY

The Gospel is intended to be learned and lived in community. The following questions are designed for use in our Community Groups as an aid to growth in the Gospel and Community.

- Discuss the paraphrased quote of Gorman from the Intro. What do you think he means that Paul wanted the churches “to become the gospel”?
- What is Paul's “Master Story”? Why should we make it our own “Master Story”?
- How does Paul's greeting in this letter foreshadow the heart of this letter in 2:6-11?
- How does Exodus 19:4-6 inform what it means when Paul calls the Philippians, “God's holy people”? (or, “saints”)
- The Philippians had a close relationship to the Gospel. Would you describe your relationship to the gospel as “close”? Explain.
- What does Paul pray would happen *among* the Philippians to enable them to discern what matters most? How does Paul show in the next few verses that he himself discerns what matters most?
- What might it look like in your marriage, or parenting to discern what matters most? Are there ways you can identify that you have not identified what matters most?

Slaves of Christ: The Message of Philippians (Part 1)

Discerning What Really Matters

Jerry Cisar — September 23, 2018

Text: Philippians 1:1-11

Introduction:

- A. Why Philippians?
 - i. *Philippians expresses most explicitly Paul's view of how Christians are called to live.*

 - ii. Galatians 2:20

- B. This letter is all about what it means to be *a faithful gospel witness for this generation and the next.*

Paul did not want the churches he founded merely to *believe* the gospel, but also to *become* the gospel— to faithfully embody the gospel story. (Paraphrase of Michael J. Gorman)

I. What's Your Story? (2:6-11)

- A. Philippians lays out and applies Paul's “Master Story.”

- B. “Master story” means 3 things (adapted from Gorman):
 - i. That it's the essential Gospel.
 - ii. That this is also the controlling narrative of Paul's life.
 - a) *Controlling narrative*: a story to which we submit our lives and conform to it.
 - b) 3:4-6:

- iii. That this gospel story, is *to be* the controlling narrative for all believers.
 - a) Both individually and corporately, in public and private, with believers and non-believers.
 - b) This means trading our own narratives in order to take up our cross.
- C. From beginning to end, Philippians is an application of 2:6-11; it is the heartbeat of this letter.

II. Why Slaves? (1:1-2)

- A. Paul's introductions are tied to the purpose of the letter.
 - i. Paul and Timothy
 - a) 2 Cor. 1:1
 - b) Rom. 1:1
 - ii. Christ, though pre-existent God, makes Himself a slave.
- B. Slaves of Christ – a double reference
 - i. Slaves in a Roman society
 - ii. Slaves of the Lord in the OT
 - a) That title was also chosen to communicate the upside down nature of leadership in the Kingdom.
 - b) God's leaders are called Shepherds and Slaves!
- C. “To all God's Holy People” Some translations, “saints.”
 - i. Who are these *saints*?
 - a) The first place it was applied to God's people is in Exodus 19.
 - Holy ground
 - A holy day
 - God is holy.
 - God's holy dwelling.

b) But then: A holy people! (Exodus 19:4-6)

- ii. Why is it important?
 - a) Those whom God bought out of slavery, and who now belong to Him and are to live as He calls them to live.
 - b) In a sense, then, Paul calls the church slaves too.

III. How closely are you related to the Gospel? (1:3-8)

- A. Why is Paul so joyous and thankful to God? **The Philippians partnership in the gospel.**
- B. What is this “partnership” in the gospel?
 - i. *“because of your **close relationship** to the gospel from the first day until now.”*
 - ii. We will see that the call of this letter goes much deeper than financial partnership in the gospel... but not less than.

IV. Can you discern what really matters? (1:9-11)

- A. From first to last, this letter drives home what really matters.
 - i. “what is best” – what really matters.
 - ii. What will make them able to discern what really matters?
 - iii. What is love?
 - a) This is love! 1 John 3:16
 - b) God is love. 1 John 4:8