

Tommy Meador / General

Stand Alone / Philippians 1:3–11

Introduction

- Picture from pastor search team when I came to Northwood - I remember my initial thoughts about North Charleston - not what I expected. But, we kept interviewing.
- Here we are 8 years later, and I can't think of anywhere I'd rather be than this church ministering along side of you.
- In 8 years, we have assembled an amazing staff that serves well together. We've seen so many people in our church rise up and serve well. We've seen so many people come to faith in Christ and publicly profess Christ in baptism. We've seen people disciplined and sent out on mission. We've grown into a family of churches.
- If you are a part of this church, you have a Northwood story. You have a story of a friend inviting you here, and now this church has become your family. Maybe you have a story of coming to faith in Christ at our church. Maybe you have a story of how people in our church helped you in a time of hardship. Maybe you're like me. A huge part of your life story is intertwined with this local church.
- God has written a wonderful story at Northwood, and He is not done writing His story.
- As we look at 2025 and the prospect of building new buildings so that we can continue to serve the Lord well in our community, I want to take a Sunday just to think about the work God is doing in our church so that you might be encouraged to continue to serve faithfully alongside of us.

- I want to look at [Philippians 1:3-11](#). The Apostle Paul had a very unique relationship with the church at Philippi, and I think what Paul writes in these verses helps us to think about what God is doing in our church. From this passage, I want to show you three reasons why God is at work in our church.

We have an unwavering partnership.

- Paul founded a church in Philippi on his second missionary journey ([Acts 16](#)). Story: Lydia, casting out a demon from a slave girl, ends up in prison, earthquake, Philippian jailer gets saved.
- **Ten years later**, Paul imprisoned in Rome. (Remember Acts series? Arrested by the Jews for teaching against law, sent to Caesarea, appealed to Rome because of citizenship, finds himself under house arrest in Rome.)
- House arrest - not in a dungeon prison like Philippi imprisonment. Paul could have guests, but chained to Roman guards all day long. Roman government did not provide him with three meals a day. Paul dependent on friends to visit him and to provide for his needs ([Acts 28:30](#)).
- Church at Philippi ministered to Paul. Sent a man named *Epaphroditus* to Philippi to take a financial gift to Paul. Remarkable: Ten years after Paul planted church at Philippi, he still had a relationship with them. Also remarkable that Philippi would financially support Paul. Think about the shame of being associated with a criminal. How many criminals do you financially support each month?
- No wonder when Paul writes this letter, he starts with such heart-felt joy... “I thank God for you every time I pray...”
- Paul often starts his letters with thanksgiving, and Paul rarely thanked God for things or material possessions. Instead, he thanked God for people. Paul realized that people were the greatest blessing in his life.

- Always praying with joy - why? Because Paul had an **unwavering partnership** with the church at Philippi.
- **partnership = koinia - a deep, abiding fellowship with each other. We're family.**
- **Why do we have an unwavering partnership?**
- **We are committed to Jesus.** We don't waver in our commitment to Christ. We're not afraid to talk about Jesus, nor are we afraid to call people to live lives surrendered to Jesus. We're not afraid to talk about what the Bible says, and we're not afraid to call people to live their lives according to Scripture. We are committed being like Jesus - we welcome people regardless of their background because we want all people to know Jesus.
- **We are committed to each other.** We're not a perfect church, but we're a family. You see the commitment we have to each other. Many of you have enduring relationships in this church, people you love and minister with on a regular basis. People you rally around with love and support.
- **We are committed to the mission.** Connecting faith to life - helping people grow to be disciple makers - the 4 Es. We stand on the shoulders of those who left a legacy. First pastor, Pastor Jack, Pastor Sunday - think about how they led our church to be on mission. Pastor Sonny - a time of great outreach that we're building on. Now, think about the legacy we're leaving. A legacy of open doors - number of people on our campus each week. A legacy of partnership - family of churches. A legacy of discipleship - how many people have been in a discipleship group. A legacy of raising up pastors - think about our family of churches. A legacy of reaching the next generation - growing number of single adults, college students, middle and high school students, and children. There will be students and children that remember the way that you invested in them for the rest of their lives. The work you are doing is not in vain.

- Why all the growth? Because we've been committed to partnering together in our commitment to Jesus, to each other, and to His mission.

We have an unchanging promise.

- Why do we continue partnering together? Because of an unchanging promise
- **God has no unfinished business.** You do. Think of all of the projects you have started that you haven't finished. God isn't like you. Everything God starts, He finishes.
- The unchanging promise of vs. 6 - **I am sure of this...**
- **Paul needed to be sure**, and so did the church. Church was rapidly expanding, and church was rapidly facing persecution. Paul in prison. Was God done with him? Was it all for nothing? Believers at Philippi: were their days numbered? Would the Roman empire eliminate the Christian movement? What about us? Is God done with us?
- What Paul needed and the church needed was assurance. **Note: this is not an individual promise. Paul's words are true for individual Christians, but these words were given to a local church.** God was not done with the church at Philippi. Yes, the days ahead would be difficult. Maybe some in the church at Philippi would lose their lives for their faith, but God was not done with Philippi, nor was He done with Paul.
- Days ahead for our church will be difficult - an increasingly secular culture, North Charleston an increasingly tough city to minister in, difficulties in your own life. However, all the challenges we will face will not mean that God is not done with us.
- As long as we have breath, there's more for us to do as a church.
- **Keep on doing what you know to do.** During my 8 years, the most consequential year of the last 8 years was 2020 - COVID 19. A year of

the unknown - What lasting impact would the virus have on our community/church. I remember well trying to make decisions when things were changing every day. But we took a step of faith - to keep doors open and to not let up in ministry. We kept doing what we knew to do - and God blessed. We were already growing, but that was the year we began to grow rapidly.

- **Keep on doing what you know to do with even more focus.** We're continuing to grow - many Sundays uncomfortably full every area of our campus. Temptation to let our foot off the gas and be satisfied with where we are. "We're too big... We don't need to reach more people." Easy to coast on past success rather than pressing forward in ministry. Yet, still work to do. There's more. More families to reach, more discipleship to take place, more students and children to disciple, more churches to replant, more pastors to train, more people to send out on the mission of God.

We have an unstoppable passion.

- Be honest. Life was terrible for Paul. Daily chained to Roman guards. No freedom to leave his home. Dependent on others to care for his needs. It was terrible, but in this letter Paul doesn't complain about his circumstances. Instead, Paul says things like, "Rejoice always" and "I have learned to be content in all things."
- Instead of complaining, Paul writes with love. As he writes, he likely thinks of Lydia: the first person he led to faith in Christ in Philippi. He thinks of that slave girl who was set free from demonic oppression by the power of God. He thinks of the Philippian jailer and his family. He thinks of that church he established in Philippi. He has them in his heart (vs. 7). He yearns for them. Just like we yearn for each other.
- Paul doesn't complain. He encourages. He wants the church to grow in Christ (vs. 9). He wants them to grow in love, knowledge, approve what

is excellent, and to be righteous. This is what we want for our church for the coming years. We're passionate about our growth in Christlikeness.

- Paul was completely other focused in prison - and later - focused on the mission while in prison. Who lives this way? **Someone consumed by Jesus.**
- **When you are consumed by Jesus passion drives you to stay committed to His people and His mission.** You see life differently - not about you, but about His mission. You know that commitment to Jesus and His mission never robs you of joy, it always gives you joy.
- What consumes you? The Christian faith is an invitation to be consumed with the joy of knowing Christ - the ONE who for the joy set before Him endured the cross for you. This morning, find the joy of being a part of the Kingdom of God.
- **When you are consumed by Jesus passion drives you to give sacrificially.** We love Jesus and His church. We love the people of our community who have yet to surrender to Jesus. Our passion drives us to give. Today, you receive a pledge card - your opportunity to give sacrificially to help us to create space for future ministry. You are NOT giving to a building as much as you are giving to a vision to see more children and students reached with the Gospel and equipped to walk with Jesus. You're giving to help families have an opportunity to raise their kids in a church that will help them disciple their children. If every family gave \$10,000 over three years we could fully fund the project. Pray about what God would have you to do. Leadership has already committed: _____.

Vision Sermon: Connecting Faith to the Future: Philippians 1:3-11

Tommy Meador / General

Stand Alone / Philippians 1:3-11

Introduction

- Picture from pastor search team when I came to Northwood - I remember my initial thoughts about North Charleston - not what I expected. But, we kept interviewing.
- Here we are 8 years later, and I can't think of anywhere I'd rather be than this church ministering along side of you.
- In 8 years, we have assembled an amazing staff that serves well together. We've seen so many people in our church rise up and serve well. We've seen so many people come to faith in Christ and publicly profess Christ in baptism. We've seen people disciplined and sent out on mission. We've grown into a family of churches.
- If you are a part of this church, you have a Northwood story. You have a story of a friend inviting you here, and now this church has become your family. Maybe you have a story of coming to faith in Christ at our church. Maybe you have a story of how people in our church helped you in a time of hardship. Maybe you're like me. A huge part of your life story is intertwined with this local church.
- God has written a wonderful story at Northwood, and He is not done writing His story.
- As we look at 2025 and the prospect of building new buildings so that we can continue to serve the Lord well in our community, I want to take a Sunday just to think about the work God is doing in our church so that you might be encouraged to continue to serve faithfully alongside of us.
- I want to look at [Philippians 1:3-11](#). The Apostle Paul had a very unique relationship with the church at Philippi, and I think what Paul writes in these verses helps us to think about what God is doing in our church. From this passage, I want to show you three reasons why God is at work in our church.

We have an unwavering partnership.

- Paul founded a church in Philippi on his second missionary journey ([Acts 16](#)). Story: Lydia, casting out a demon from a slave girl, ends up in prison, earthquake, Philippian jailer gets saved.
- **Ten years later**, Paul imprisoned in Rome. (Remember Acts series? Arrested by the Jews for teaching against law, sent to Caesarea, appealed to Rome because of citizenship, finds himself under house arrest in Rome.)
- House arrest - not in a dungeon prison like Philippi imprisonment. Paul could have guests, but chained to Roman guards all day long. Roman government did not provide him with three meals a day. Paul dependent on friends to visit him and to provide for his needs ([Acts 28:30](#)).
- Church at Philippi ministered to Paul. Sent a man named *Epaphroditus* to Philippi to take a financial gift to Paul. Remarkable: Ten years after Paul planted church at Philippi, he still had a relationship with them. Also remarkable that Philippi would financially support Paul. Think about the shame of being associated with a criminal. How many criminals do you financially support each month?
- No wonder when Paul writes this letter, he starts with such heart-felt joy... "I thank God for you every time I pray..."
- Paul often starts his letters with thanksgiving, and Paul rarely thanked God for things or material possessions. Instead, he thanked God for people. Paul realized that people were the greatest blessing in his life.
- Always praying with joy - why? Because Paul had an **unwavering partnership** with the church at Philippi.
- **partnership = koinia - a deep, abiding fellowship with each other. We're family.**
- **Why do we have an unwavering partnership?**

- **We are committed to Jesus.** We don't waver in our commitment to Christ. We're not afraid to talk about Jesus, nor are we afraid to call people to live lives surrendered to Jesus. We're not afraid to talk about what the Bible says, and we're not afraid to call people to live their lives according to Scripture. We are committed being like Jesus - we welcome people regardless of their background because we want all people to know Jesus.
- **We are committed to each other.** We're not a perfect church, but we're a family. You see the commitment we have to each other. Many of you have enduring relationships in this church, people you love and minister with on a regular basis. People you rally around with love and support.
- **We are committed to the mission.** Connecting faith to life - helping people grow to be disciple makers - the 4 Es. We stand on the shoulders of those who left a legacy. First pastor, Pastor Jack, Pastor Sunday - think about how they led our church to be on mission. Pastor Sonny - a time of great outreach that we're building on. Now, think about the legacy we're leaving. A legacy of open doors - number of people on our campus each week. A legacy of partnership - family of churches. A legacy of discipleship - how many people have been in a discipleship group. A legacy of raising up pastors - think about our family of churches. A legacy of reaching the next generation - growing number of single adults, college students, middle and high school students, and children. There will be students and children that remember the way that you invested in them for the rest of their lives. The work you are doing is not in vain.
- Why all the growth? Because we've been committed to partnering together in our commitment to Jesus, to each other, and to His mission.

We have an unchanging promise.

- Why do we continue partnering together? Because of an unchanging promise
- **God has no unfinished business.** You do. Think of all of the projects you have started that you haven't finished. God isn't like you. Everything God starts, He finishes.
- The unchanging promise of vs. 6 - **I am sure of this...**
- **Paul needed to be sure**, and so did the church. Church was rapidly expanding, and church was rapidly facing persecution. Paul in prison. Was God done with him? Was it all for nothing? Believers at Philippi: were their days numbered? Would the Roman empire eliminate the Christian movement? What about us? Is God done with us?
- What Paul needed and the church needed was assurance. **Note: this is not an individual promise. Paul's words are true for individual Christians, but these words were given to a local church.** God was not done with the church at Philippi. Yes, the days ahead would be difficult. Maybe some in the church at Philippi would lose their lives for their faith, but God was not done with Philippi, nor was He done with Paul.
- Days ahead for our church will be difficult - an increasingly secular culture, North Charleston an increasingly tough city to minister in, difficulties in your own life. However, all the challenges we will face will not mean that God is not done with us.
- As long as we have breath, there's more for us to do as a church.
- **Keep on doing what you know to do.** During my 8 years, the most consequential year of the last 8 years was 2020 - COVID 19. A year of the unknown - What lasting impact would the virus have on our community/church. I remember well trying to make decisions when

things were changing every day. But we took a step of faith - to keep doors open and to not let up in ministry. We kept doing what we knew to do - and God blessed. We were already growing, but that was the year we began to grow rapidly.

- **Keep on doing what you know to do with even more focus.** We're continuing to grow - many Sundays uncomfortably full every area of our campus. Temptation to let our foot off the gas and be satisfied with where we are. "We're too big... We don't need to reach more people." Easy to coast on past success rather than pressing forward in ministry. Yet, still work to do. There's more. More families to reach, more discipleship to take place, more students and children to disciple, more churches to replant, more pastors to train, more people to send out on the mission of God.

We have an unstoppable passion.

- Be honest. Life was terrible for Paul. Daily chained to Roman guards. No freedom to leave his home. Dependent on others to care for his needs. It was terrible, but in this letter Paul doesn't complain about his circumstances. Instead, Paul says things like, "Rejoice always" and "I have learned to be content in all things."
- Instead of complaining, Paul writes with love. As he writes, he likely thinks of Lydia: the first person he led to faith in Christ in Philippi. He thinks of that slave girl who was set free from demonic oppression by the power of God. He thinks of the Philippian jailer and his family. He thinks of that church he established in Philippi. He has them in his heart (vs. 7). He yearns for them. Just like we yearn for each other.
- Paul doesn't complain. He encourages. He wants the church to grow in Christ (vs. 9). He wants them to grow in love, knowledge, approve what is excellent, and to be righteous. This is what we want for our church for the coming years. We're passionate about our growth in Christlikeness.

- Paul was completely other focused in prison - and later - focused on the mission while in prison. Who lives this way? **Someone consumed by Jesus.**
- **When you are consumed by Jesus passion drives you to stay committed to His people and His mission.** You see life differently - not about you, but about His mission. You know that commitment to Jesus and His mission never robs you of joy, it always gives you joy.
- What consumes you? The Christian faith is an invitation to be consumed with the joy of knowing Christ - the ONE who for the joy set before Him endured the cross for you. This morning, find the joy of being a part of the Kingdom of God.
- **When you are consumed by Jesus passion drives you to give sacrificially.** We love Jesus and His church. We love the people of our community who have yet to surrender to Jesus. Our passion drives us to give. Today, you receive a pledge card - your opportunity to give sacrificially to help us to create space for future ministry. You are NOT giving to a building as much as you are giving to a vision to see more children and students reached with the Gospel and equipped to walk with Jesus. You're giving to help families have an opportunity to raise their kids in a church that will help them disciple their children. If every family gave \$10,000 over three years we could fully fund the project. Pray about what God would have you to do. Leadership has already committed: _____.