

**Word notes Sunday 27/05/2012 Tony Hodge**  
**Philippians 1**

**Summary** (read this bit out to remind cell members what was said on Sunday)

**Key Text: Philippians chapter 1**

Paul writes to the church he and others planted in Philippi, a Roman colony on the Egnatian Way, half way between Byzantium in the East to Appolonia and Dyrrachium in the west to encourage them and give them news of his work. His letter addresses unity, humility and the error of legalistic religion, specifically reliance on “the flesh” and the need for circumcision. Above all Paul urges the Christians to be Christ-like.

Even though he is in jail and his freedom restricted he has not stopped in his purpose of preaching the good news so that all the palace guard and everybody else knows he is there because of Christ. This has emboldened others not in jail but in their everyday lives to speak out yet some do so for selfish ambition or to cause trouble for Paul. Paul’s attitude to this is not what ours might be – he rejoices so long as Christ is preached.

After his opening greetings and prayer for the saints at Philippi, Paul shares his experiences as an example of how to deal with opposition – both direct, such as imprisonment, and indirect, like those who seek to “steal his thunder”.

Paul knows that the Philippian church is also suffering for the gospel (v 29) and his encouragement is to see that “to live is Christ, to die is gain” (v21). This is the “bigger picture” that Paul has seen and wants his friends to see too. It doesn’t matter if others seem to get the glory or steal our thunder so long as Christ is preached.

Paul’s purpose in this chapter is clear from his prayer (vv9-11) and instruction (vv27,28), his heart for them is that they would grow in love, knowledge and insight so they can discern what is best and be filled with a fruit of righteousness and that they would conduct themselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ – no rivalry but standing firm in one spirit.

**Application** (this is the bit where cell members get to participate. Lead discussions around these points)

Tony shared about his misgivings (decades ago – he has matured since!) on hearing a new work was to be planted into his town. Have you ever thought the same way about another ministry or church that came to or was in your area? What were your worries or concerns?

How do we get the balance right between working to see our fellowship grow and yet not keeping everything to ourselves? How can we be “pure and blameless” in these things?

How can “seeing the big picture” help us deal with opposition?

Do you “contend as one man” for the gospel? What does this mean to you and how can we “spur one another on towards love and good deeds (Heb 10:24)? What does that mean across the town, across the nation, into the world?

(NB - If anyone has been convicted by the Spirit of any “selfish ambition” in the advance of the Kingdom and feels able to share and pray then do so that they might confess and repent.)

**Witness** (this is the bit where the cell talks and prays about how to share the Good News)

Keep your eyes and ears open to what’s happening next week on the youth mission. Be ready to respond to requests for help and be praying.