

Sermon Title: The Power Of Partnership

Sermon Text: Philippians 1:3-6

Introduction

Bob Richards the olympic pole vaulter of years ago loved to tell the story of the goof-off who played around with football. If there was any mischief to be done this kid was doing it.

Everything was casual, no big deal and he added very little to the team.

He practiced, but wasn't committed. He showed up to play but never with enthusiasm; he liked to hear the cheers but not to charge the line.

He liked to wear the suit but not to practice. One day the players were doing 50 laps and this showpiece was doing his usual five. The coach came over and said, "Hey kid, here is a telegram for you." The kid said, "Read it for me coach."

He was so lazy he wouldn't take time to read the letter. The coach opened it and read it, "Dear son, your father is dead. Come home immediately."

The coach swallowed hard and said, "Kid take the rest of the week off."

Well, Friday night at game time the teams came running onto the field and lo and behold the last one out was the goof-off.

No sooner were they on the sideline when the kid started saying, "Coach can I play tonight? Can I play? The coach thought, "Kid your not playing tonight. This is homecoming. This is the big game.

We need every real guy we have and you are not one of them." Yet every time the coach turned around there was this kid, "Coach can I play. Please let me play. Coach I have to play."

The first half ended with the score lopsided against the coach and his team and when the second half started thing would get worse. The coach did not know what too do when suddenly the kid came up and said, "Coach let me play."

The coach looked at the scoreboard and said, "All right get in there kid. You can't hurt anything now." No sooner did the kid hit the field than he exploded. He ran, blocked, and talked like an star. The score evened up.

In the closing seconds of the game, this kid intercepted the pass and ran all the way for the winning touchdown. The stands broke loose. The kid was everyone hero. Such cheering you never heard.

After the game the coach came over and said, "Kid, I never saw anything like that. What in the world happened to you out there." He said, "Coach, you know my dad died last week." Yes I read you the telegram."

Well coach, my dad was blind and today was the first day he would never see me play. Writing his journal Paul the jailbird reminds us that our heavenly father is watching us.

Therefore we should play every down of the christian life, "unto the glory and praise of God." A popular test for depression rates people on an scale

of 1-10. The higher the score, the more severe the depression. If the apostle Paul had taken such a test, he doubtless would have scored a zero, because his joy was complete and yet the circumstance at the time he wrote this letter was dreadful and discouraging.

He was imprisoned in Rome, possibly facing execution. Instead, he was released from prison and placed under house arrest and chained to a Roman soldier to prevent any possibility of escape.

Paul languished there, unable to do the work he loved while other, taking advantage of his situation, preached the gospel out of contention and strife. Nevertheless, his heart overflowed with joy.

If anything, those horrendous circumstances made Paul's joy all the greater, because he trusted the sovereign purpose of his Lord and relied even more upon His strength during his time of doom and gloom. In other words, Paul knew that all things work together for the good to them that love God, to them that are called according to His purpose.

Paul was constantly near to God. For that reason, he experienced inexpressible peace (4:7) and contentment (4:11) provided by the Holy Spirit deep in his heart and soul because he had a conscience that was clear and clean before God.

The Philippian church was not perfect. But in contrast to most of the other churches which Paul was associated, they had no major moral or spiritual problems.

He urged them to conduct themselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or remain absent, I will hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind, striving together for the faith of the gospel (1:27).

A few verses later he exhorted the Philippians, "Make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose and do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than

yourself and do not merely look out for your own personal interest, but also for the interest of others (2:2-4)

Paul's desire?

The church serve with harmony not hostility!

Paul wanted the church to know that together they could do more but for that to happen they would have to come together as one body and one spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called, one lord, one faith, one baptism, one god and father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all (Ephesians 4:4-6).

Paul was an hillbilly preacher.

Notice how many times he said, "You all"

The purpose of my message this morning is to talk about the power of partnership. In this specific case paul need the church and the church need paul both were an asset to each other and whether you want to hear this

or not you need your pastor and your pastor needs you and paul communicates that here in our text and this morning I want to ask and answer the question why does the church need the church too accomplish the kingdom agenda, but first let's notice the things we have in common.

1. We Have An Common Devotion: 3-5

A. Paul Was Devoted To People: 3

(v.3) I 'thank' my god upon every 'remembrance' of you.

Thank: The greek word eucharistero from which we get the english word eucharist an name that's often used for the lord's supper. In that ordinance believers give thank unto God in remembrance of Christ's substitutionary sacrifice on the cross.

In this instance Paul gives thanks for his spiritual brothers and sisters in Philippi who, over the years, had brought him such abundant blessing and

joy. They were good and gracious unto the apostle Paul when he needed someone the most but notice who the apostle would thank

My God: The phrase reflects Paul's deep intimacy and communion with the Lord to whom he belonged and whom he served. His thankfulness for the Philippians was to God, emphasizing that the Lord is the ultimate source of all joy and the Philippians' relationship to Him through Christ was what caused him to thank the Lord.

Paul was so thankful for the family of God and the family of God was so thankful for Paul and I believe that is the key to having joy among the brethren. We need to be thankful for one another.

Having said that when was the last time you were thankful for the people who are in your life? When was the last time you were thankful for your brother and sister in Christ because that's the key to having heavenly joy within the house of the Lord.

You must be thankful for one another.

You must be grateful for one another.

I am so thankful that the lord sent me to wolf creek free will baptist church and I believe it was the sovereign hand of god that brought me here. One evening while I sat down with one deacon in our church he told me how another deacon came and visited wanting too know what they were going to do about the next pastor and during the conversation the phone rang but they did not answer because it was an out of state phone number

However I'd left an message and when they listened to the message it was this city slicker calling and asking about the pastor position that was vacant and they called back and asked me when I could come and preach and the rest is history

I'm so thankful and grateful that the lord sent me and my family here. I have never been apart of such an loving and caring church. I have never been apart of an church that values family and friendship and faith the

way your value it. You are blessed beyond measure and I hope and pray you never take what you have here for granted because it is rare in our day and time to have a church like the one you have this morning. God has been good to you and you ought to thank him for his goodness and his grace.

(V.3) I thank my god upon "every remembrance" of you.

How often did paul thank the lord for the church? Every time he thought about them! Listen to me when I tell you that there is not an day that goes by that I do not think about each and every one of you.

I have only been here six months but I want you to know that I love you more than you know. I want to be apart of you lives I want you to be apart of mine.

I call you because I want to make sure you are having a good week and I visit you because I want you to know you mean more too me than an

number on Sunday. I promise you that your name will always be more important than your number and so I thank god upon every remembrance of you and there is not an week that goes by that I do not come to this church and pray and ask the lord to use you and heal you and bless you.

Why? Because I am your pastor and true pastor cares about his people.

Paul Was Devoted To People!!!

B. Paul Was Devoted To Prayer: 4

(V.4) always in "every prayer" of mine for you all

Paul was an prayer warrior and while he was in jail he spent his time interceding before god on behalf of others. In other words, there was never an moment when the apostle was not praying for the people and when you study and search the scripture you discover theres power in intercessory prayer.

1. Abraham Intercedes For Lot

Gen. 18:23-33: Abraham drew near and said wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked? Peradventure there be 50 righteous within the city; wilt thou also destroy and not spare the place for the 50 righteous that are therein? And the lord said, If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare all the place for their sakes and abraham answered and said, behold now I have taken upon me to speak unto the lord which am but dust and ashes: Peradventure there shall lack 5 of the fifty righteous: wilt thou destroy all the city for lack of five and he said, If I find there forty and five, I will not destroy it and he spake unto me yet again and said peradventure there shall be forty found there and he said I will not do it for forty sake and he said oh let not the lord be angry and I will speak. Peradventure there shall thirty be found there and he said I will not do it If I find thirty there and he said behold now I have taken upon me to speak unto the lord peradventure there shall be twenty found there and he said I will not destroy it for twenty sake and he said oh let not the lord be angry and I will speak yet but this once: peradventure

ten shall be found there and he said I will not destroy it for tens sake and the lord went his way.

Did the lord keep his promise? You read in chapter nineteen where the lord rescued and redeemed lot and his family except his wife because she look back and became an pillar of salt.

The lord destroyed the city but spared the family from the wrath which was too come because abraham believed in the power of intercessory prayer.

2. Moses Intercedes For The Nation Of Israel.

The nation had been rescued and redeemed from bondage but when moises was receiving the law of the lord they along with aaron had built an golden calf and the informs moises that because they had sinned against the holy one he was going to pour out his wrath among them.

Therefore Moses comes before the Lord and pleads with him not to turn from his fierce wrath and repent from the evil against thy people and the Lord repented of the evil that he thought to do unto his people and when Moses saw what the people had done, he returned unto the Lord and said, Oh, this people have sinned a great sin and have made gods of gold.

Yet now, If though wilt forgive their sin and if not blot me I pray thee out of the book which though hast written and the Lord said unto Moses, whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book.

Moses pleaded and prayed that the nation would be saved and spared from the wrath which was to come and even though they were saved and spared they were plagued because they had made the golden calf but once again the Lord would spare the wicked because someone believed in the power of intercessory prayer

However my personal favorite intercessory prayer was the one made on Calvary Hill when the Lord prayed for the soldiers who were gambling with

his garments. The scripture says while the lord was hanging on the cross, the soldiers were gambling with his garments and when the lord looked down and saw what they were doing he looked up and prayed, father forgive them for they know not what they are doing.

He did not have to pray for their forgiveness. In fact the scripture says the father could have sent twelve legions of angels (78,000) who would have exercise vengeance upon the wicked but instead he prayed for their forgiveness.

Theres power in prayer!

Things happen when God's people pray

Paul knew that

Paul knew there was power in intercessory prayer and thats the reason he prayed for the church constantly and continually because he knew things happened when the people of god come together and prayer.

Having said that when was the last time you earnestly and eagerly prayed; when was the last time you grabbed the horns of the altar and prayed.

I'm not talking about bedtime prayers.

I'm talking about battlefield prayers.

The scripture says theres an roaring lion walking about seeking whom he may devour and hear me when I tell you he would want nothing more than to defeat and devour you.

Therefore we need too pray, we need too pray for one another, because the enemy would want nothing more than too destroy both the church and the christian and he will, if we do not pray.

During the last supper, the lord told the disciples there was one at the table who would deny him but when peter heard this he told the lord the rest may deny you but I'll never deny you but the lord responded and said verily I say unto thee that this night before the cock crow thou shalt deny

me thrice but peter responded and said unto him: I will die with thee but I will not deny thee. After supper, the lord took them to the garden of gethsemane and the scripture says he took peter and the sons of zebedee with him while he went and prayed and when he returned he found his disciples sleeping and not praying and the lord said unto peter what could you not watch one hour, watch and pray that you enter not into temptation: the spirit is indeed willing however the flesh is weak.

The lord went and prayed two more times and each time he returned he found the disciples sleeping and not praying and he said unto them sleep on now the hour has now come. Notice the difference between the lord and his disciples.

During an time of darkness, one prayed and the other didn't and yet the lord, because he prayed was able to overcome the wicked one, but the disciples, who did not pray did not, especially peter.

Maybe if Peter would have prayed the story would have been different but he didn't and we know the rest of the story he would deny the Lord 3 times and when the cock crew he went and wept bitterly.

We need to pray because we are the prey!

I need to pray for you and you need to pray for me.

And when you pray make your request with joy!

C. Paul Was Devoted To Partnership: 5

(V.5) For your fellowship in the gospel

Partnership is commonly rendered communion or fellowship. It has the root meaning of sharing something in common. It is used in several places of sharing money and possessions which is something the early church did.

In the broadest sense, Paul rejoiced that the Philippians were saved and thus partners with him in the spread of the gospel. By far the most

important thing believers share is their spiritual oneness, their participation in the gospel of Jesus Christ. **God is faithful, Paul explained, through whom you were called into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord (1 Cor. 1:9).**

Fellowship includes cooperation in the preaching of the good news of salvation to those whom have never heard it so the spiritual fellowship might be enlarged and bring greater glory to God.

In other word god wants our family to enlarge and expand however that will not happen unless we become partners in the ministry. The phrase in the gospel refer to the whole enterprise of gospel ministry, especially that of evangelism.

There no greater joy than serving the lord and we as the local church have been commanded to promote the gospel around the world but that will not happen until we come together as one church, serving one lord with one goal, sharing and spreading the gospel around the world.

Together We Can Do More

There's a story that's told about a horse pull that took place in Canada; one horse pulled 9,000 pounds and the other 8,000; together you would expect them to pull 17,000 pounds however when teamed together they pulled they pulled 30,000 pounds.

In other words, more can be done when we come together and the same principal was taught by our Lord during the mission of the seventy. The scripture says the Lord appointed seventy and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself would come.

Therefore he said unto them, the harvest is great but the laborers are few, pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth laborers into his harvest.

Why did he send them out? To:

- *Preach The Gospel*

▪ *Raise The Dead*

▪ *Heal The Sick*

▪ *Cleanse The Leper*

▪ *Cast The Demons Out*

Why did he send them out two by two?

Because together they could achieve more!

Because together they could accomplish more!

And so can we, together we can do more!

Conclusion

There once was a preacher who told a story about a young man who entered into Sunday school one morning and the preacher noticed the young man was missing an arm and the preacher was afraid that one of the children would say something that would embarrass him.

There was no opportunity to caution them, so she proceeded as carefully as possible. As the class time came to a close he began to relax and then

the worst thing that could ever happened, happened. He asked the class to join him in their closing ceremony "Lets make our churches" he said. Here's the church and here's the steeple, open the doors and there's the people." The very thing he had feared the children would do, he had done.

As he stood there speechless, the little girl who was sitting next to him reached over with her left hand and placed it up to his right hand and said, "Let's build the church together."

Wolf Creek Free Will Baptist Church will never become what the lord wants us to become until we come together as one church:

- Loving one another
- Serving one another
- Forgiving one another
- Forbearing one another
- Encouraging one another
- Comforting one another

- *Strengthening one another*

It is my prayer:

We come together and build the church together Why?

Because together we can do more!