



SERIES: Philippians (May / June)

SPEAKER: NAT CRAWFORD

Wednesday, May 5, 2021

Scripture: Philippians 1:7-8

TITLE: We Go Better Together

Randy Newman wrote the blockbuster hit, *You've Got a Friend in Me*. That was the theme song for *Toy Story*. The song conveyed this special affection between two friends. Newman sang,

“When the road looks rough ahead
And you're miles and miles
From your nice warm bed
You just remember what your old pal said
Boy, you've got a friend in me”

Maybe he was inspired by the Apostle Paul's letter to the Philippian church. What do I mean? Listen to Paul's words in Philippians 1:7-8 (NLT):

“So it is right that I should feel as I do about all of you, for you have a special place in my heart. You share with me the special favor of God, both in my imprisonment and in defending and confirming the truth of the Good News. ⁸ God knows how much I love you and long for you with the tender compassion of Christ Jesus.”

As we discussed this week, Paul had a special place in his heart for the Philippian church. They were kingdom investors in Paul's ministry, but beyond that, Paul says, were sharing the “special favor of God.” - a better translation is the “grace of God”. But what is the manifestation of this grace?

Paul says, it's the sharing of his imprisonment and in defending and validating the truth of the Gospel. Paul is writing this letter in chains in Rome. He's a prisoner and awaiting trial, but the Philippians have been an encouragement to Him. They bring him great joy. How? Well, Pastor John MacArthur summarizes it this way:

“The Philippians church selflessly and sacrificially stood by him to give encouragement, to help alleviate his suffering, and to meet his needs in every way they could.” (*Philippians, John MacArthur Study Guides*) They weren't distant observers. They weren't just check writers. They were spiritual and physical partners in the Gospel. They were, as Paul puts it, “sharing” or, as other translations put it, “partakers of grace” with him.

You've probably heard that there is safety in numbers; well, I suggest there is strength in Christian numbers. When we, as the people of God, surround each other with love, encouragement, and tangible assistance, we can accomplish much.

When our son was going through chemotherapy, we were so blessed by the financial and physical care by the body of Christ. We had meals provided, bills paid, and prayers for healing – even by the ministry of Back to the Bible, [which I wasn't even associated with at that time]. Our lives were strengthened by numbers - by sharing in grace. How much more so, when we are partners with each other for the sake of sharing the Gospel.

So here's my challenge for you today: Stop going it alone. I get it. It can be easier to live life independently. It can be nice to not have to answer to anyone, but that's not what God intended. We go better together. Paul knew it. He experienced it. God wants us to experience that too.

Who in the body of Christ can you invite into your life to be a partaker of grace? Both the good and the bad, it's easier to go through it with a partner. There are people here on this platform who need that extra encouragement and extra grace. Let's live this out:

So identify that person. Invite them in to share the grace. And then let's begin to move together for the expansion of the Good News.