

God Will Enable Us to Obey Philippians 1:1-8

What is Paul's purpose in writing this letter?

When we read this letter we see two main themes – a call to unity with each other, and a call for boldness in evangelism. You can see both of these in Philippians 1:27-28.

How does Paul begin this letter? (1:1-2)

Paul has a standard way he begins his letters. But there are three ways this opening is unusual.

He puts himself and Timothy on the same level, which paves the way for his call for them to put each other before themselves.

He says this letter is written to ALL the saints in Philippi, which would have helped them see why they should not be divided into factions, but should be united in love.

He mentions the overseers (elders) and deacons, maybe because he wants them to take the lead in helping the Philippians grow in unity and boldness.

What does Paul emphasize as he describes his thanksgiving to God for them? (1:3-8)

He thanks God for how they have been advancing the gospel (1:3-5). This shows it is God himself who has enabled them to do this

He says he is certain that God will complete the good work he has started in them (1:6). This shows that it is God who will enable them to continue obey.

He says he is sure they have been saved, because he feels Christ-centered affection for them (1:7-8). This supports the above two sections.

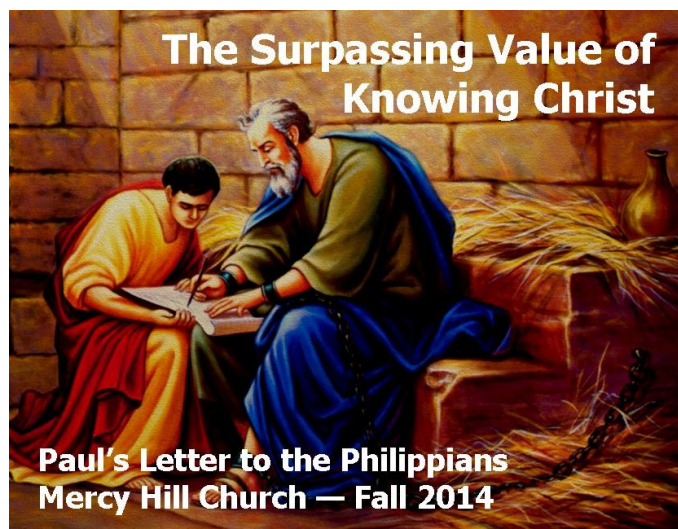
So Paul's main point is to assure them that God himself will enable them to obey

Why is this truth so important?

It's because Paul gives them some very challenging commands – commands which would feel impossible.

We, too, can hear these commands as impossible.

That's why we need to hear that God himself will enable us to obey. Because as we turn to Christ, trust him to change us, pray for the Spirit's power, and meditate on strategic Scriptures – God will change our hearts, motivate us, and enable us to obey.



HOME GROUP DISCUSSION OF SUNDAY'S TEACHING

(Sometimes in our home groups we talk about Sunday's teaching, so we can work together on responding to God's Word — asking questions, sharing insights, talking together.)

Are there any commands that you think are impossible for you to obey? Which ones? And why do you think they are impossible?

Does it make sense that since Paul thanks *God* for how they have advanced the gospel, that shows it is ultimately God who enabled them to obey in this way? Why or why not

What does verse 6 say about whether or not someone can be saved at one moment, and then end up losing that salvation?

In what way did God begin the good work of salvation in you? Why is it important to understand that it was God himself who gave us faith in Christ?

What does God do to bring his good work in us to completion? How, specifically, does he do this? How have you experienced this?

Does it make sense that since it is God who brings his good work in us to completion, therefore it is God himself who will enable us to obey him? Why or why not?

If it is God himself who enables us to obey, then shouldn't we passively wait for him to make us want to obey? Shouldn't we passively wait for him to make us start obeying? Why or why not?

Share about any areas of obedience that you have thought are impossible. What is God saying to you about them from this passage? What can you do this week in obedience to this truth?

