

Friday, June 26, 2020

Dear Members, Friends, and Guests of Desert Hills Lutheran Church,

As I mentioned a few days ago, I'm taking an online course on the book of Philippians from N.T. Wright. I thought for today I'd mention Philippians 1:9-10. Paul is in prison. We are not sure in which city, but the church at Philippi helped Paul with money. If you were in prison in Paul's day, you had to have friends for they would bring food and clothes. Paul has a very tender place in his heart for this small church that had shown their love through money and gifts. 1:3-5 "I thank my God every time I remember you, constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you, because of your sharing in the gospel from the first day until now."

Let's move to 1:9-10. "And this is my prayer, that your love may overflow more and more with knowledge and full insight to help you to determine what is best, so that in the day of Christ you may be pure and blameless."

Paul is praying that their love and our love may overflow with knowledge and full insight. This means that Paul wants followers of Jesus to know the difference between right and wrong (what is best). For Paul it was never enough to just have warm and fuzzy feelings, rather it means that love is conscious, and action-filled. Paul wants all of us to be holy and blameless if we happen to be alive when God wraps this whole creation up on the day of Christ.

A note on the day of the Lord. Paul believed that the Kingdom of God was totally revealed in the life, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus, but also that we must work diligently until that last day when God wraps it up, and fulfills all prophecy about Israel and us. That is why Paul said this in verse 6: "I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ."

What might be our take-away today from all of this? Paul believes that we are an unfinished work, that we are called to be holy and to know right from wrong. If we say we love, for Paul there would need to be some action connected to that. Finally, I think Paul would want us to seek to be loving but never to be naive about life. There is a final moment coming; God is in charge, but our work is cut out for us, and we are to make a difference in love.

Have a wonderful Friday and weekend. Let me close with Paul's words, "I thank my God every time I remember you, constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you, because of your sharing in the gospel from the first day until now."

Blessings,

Pastor Martin

P.S. To free up space, a decision was made to find a new home for a couple stacks of our old, rarely used blue chairs. Joe Mazur on staff took the task and decided to contact

one of the organizations we support: Gospel Rescue Mission. They found a small Spanish church which would make good use of the chairs. I love when we make a difference.