

I Have You In My Heart

Phil. 1:3-11

Introduction:

1. Our prayers are deeply reflective of who we are. Such is no less the case in this text.
2. This text reveals something of Paul's concern for the gospel.
3. It reveals something of his expectation of the actual coming of Christ.
4. And it reveals something of his worldview and his purpose in life.
5. But it also reveals something about Paul's relationship to the Christians in Philippi, of whom he says in verse 7, "I have you in my heart."
6. What does it mean to have people in your heart? How do they get there and what are the implications of it?

Discussion:

- I. In the ancient world the heart was used in much the same way as it is used in our day.
 - A. Literally it is the chief organ of physical life and thus to have a heart attack is a threat to life itself.
 - B. As such it is natural that the heart came to stand for man's entire mental, moral, rational and emotional make up.
 - C. To have someone in your heart suggests a very valuable emotional connection. It would seem that that is what Paul means when he says to the Philippians, "I have you in my heart."
- II. How did they get to this place in his heart?
 - A. We can read about Paul's first experiences with the Philippians in Acts 16:11ff.
 1. It began at a riverside prayer meeting and some women who had assembled.
 2. Lydia was there and she and her household were the first to be baptized in Philippi.
 3. Things did not go so well after that.
 - a. Paul cast a demon out of a slave girl and this resulted in Paul and Silas being dragged before the authorities.
 - b. They were beaten and thrown into jail.
 - c. During an earthquake the doors of the prison were opened and their chains were unfastened.
 - d. Out of this setting they were able to teach the jail and his household and they were baptized.
 - B. If we date the Book of Philippians about 56-63 A.D. and the events of Acts 16 are dated about 49-52 A.D. the congregation is probably less than 15 years old.
 1. If they were like us many changes happen in 15 years.
 2. But perhaps some of the early converts are still there.
 3. Acts 20:6 mentions a visit there. And there are evidences of ongoing contact with them (Acts 18:5; 19:22; 2 Cor. 11:9; Phil. 2:25; 3:1; 4:15ff).

- a. Silas and Timothy visited Macedonian. Philippi was in Macedonia.
 - b. Timothy and Erastus were sent to Macedonia.
 - c. Brethren from Macedonia helped Paul while he was in Corinth.
 - d. Paul had send Epaphroditus to them.
 - e. He had written to them previously.
 - f. They had sent to him after he left Macedonia and even in Thessalonica.
4. It is evident that ongoing cultivation of relationship is natural to having people “in your heart.” Distance and lack of cultivation suggest the opposite of having someone in your heart.
- a. Sometimes we are too wrapped up in ourselves.
 - b. One elder made it a practice to visit individuals the congregation supported while they were on vacation.
 - c. Paul and the Philippians had connection.
 - d. Reports of those we support are on our website. Do you know their names? Have any communication with them? Would they say we are in their hearts? Would they say we had them in our hearts?
 - e. But it goes beyond those we support financially. Christians encouraging Christians involves relationship. We want others to support us. Ex. Meetings. Do we support them? I know of an individual who did not assemble on Sunday evenings. When a young man began making presentations on Sunday evening she decided she would come to support him. Good move!!! What about the others who assembled? How about supporting them too?? Who does not need your encouragement?
- C. What brought Paul and the Philippians together? The foundation of their relationship was the gospel (v. 5), their relationship to Christ.
- 1. They had participated with him.
 - 2. 4:15ff indicates something of how they had done this.
 - 3. They were partakers of grace with Paul.
 - 4. They had both received the grace of God and were sharing it—supporting Paul and trying to influence others with it.
 - 5. There is something special about such fellowship.
 - 6. Note that there was continuity in doing this—“from the first day until now.” They had not forgotten him, nor the work.
 - 7. God was at work in them (6).

III. Paul’s response to having them in his heart.

- A. He thanked God in all his remembrance of them.
- B. He prayed for them.
 - 1. That their love abound more and more.
 - 2. That they might approve the things excellent.
- C. He longed for them (18).
- D. He acknowledged that they were filled with the fruit of righteousness.

IV. There is another N.T. passage where Paul refers to Christians whom he has in his heart (2 Cor. 7:1-4).

- A. Some things that are hindrances to having people in our hearts are identified in verse 2.
 - 1. "We wronged no one."
 - 2. "We corrupted no one."
 - 3. "We took advantage of no one."
 - 4. "We do not speak to condemn you."
- B. Things that promote having people in our hearts.
 - 1. Confidence.
 - 2. Boasting on their behalf.
 - 3. Willing to die or to live together.
- C. Results of him having them in his heart.
 - 1. He is comforted (4).
 - 2. He is overflowing with joy even though afflicted (4).
 - 3. Some fail to experience the fullness of such blessings because they neglect their relationships with other Christians.
- D. But having people in your heart can also be costly.
 - 1. It hurts when they experience pain.
 - 2. There are responsibilities. The Philippians made financial sacrifices. There are time sacrifices. It is not always easy to have people in your heart. Paul wrote to the Corinthians to correct problems.

Conclusion:

- 1. Who is it that is "in your heart?"
- 2. Sometimes we focus our attention on others having us in their hearts. We are like the little boy in Bible class. They had been studying about doing things to help others. He prayed that he might be one of the others. Sometimes we are looking to receive, not looking to give.
- 3. When we look to give people our hearts anything that we receive will be as a by-product.