

# Jesus Is Lord: Gospel Partnerships

## Philippians 1:3-7

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Scripture → Philippians 1:3-11

Prayer

**Big Idea: Because of Christ we become partakers of and partners in the gospel.**

**New Series: Jesus is Lord** Today we begin a new series called Jesus is Lord: a study in the book of Philippians. Philippians is what I **call a coffee mug book**, it is a powerful book with clear gospel truths you would likely find on a coffee cup: to live is Christ and to die gain (1:21), forgetting what is behind and reaching forward to what is ahead (3:13), and I can do all things... (4:13).

However, the goal of this letter was not coffee mug heroism. The book was written by a man named Paul, a missionary around the world, on his second missionary journey to a town called Philippi (named after Philip the father of Alexander the great).

More than any other letter from the hand of Paul, this church and this writing evidences a great love and joy the missionary had for this particular church. At the time of this writing, Paul was imprisoned and knew that his time was short. Paul himself was facing a possible death sentence; the church was tensed up, ready for the assault of a menacing world and for the insidious encroachment of false doctrine (Motyer).

**Paul, this mighty church father, facing death leaves this local congregation of Christ followers with this core truth: Jesus is Lord.**

How important is it that Jesus is Lord? 15 times in Philippians the author uses the word Lord. Lordship is vital to your relationship with the Father. So much, that the Word declares, **“If you confess with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved** (Romans 10:9). You cannot embrace Jesus as Savior and deny his Lordship in his life. The deity, lordship, and atonement of Christ are all or nothing propositions. You cannot say I made Jesus Savior and later accepted Him as Lord. No Lord, no savior, no savior, no salvation. **What is the Lordship of Jesus (summary by John Motyer)?**

**Lordship: The relationship in which the Christian lives (in Christ Jesus, 1:1).** To be in Christ, is to possess what is often spoken of as **full salvation**: everything necessary to our past, present, future and eternal welfare has been secured for us by the action of God in Christ! That we can now boldly declare and sing: **In Christ alone my hope is found He is my light, my strength, my song.** If Christ is Lord, He is the relationship in which you now live.

**Lordship: The Lord whom the Christian serves (servants of Christ, 1:1).** Responsive obedience characterizes us, for the saint in Christ Jesus is necessarily also a servant of Christ Jesus. No Christian can evade this responsibility. Dietrich Bonhoeffer famously said, “Unless he obeys, a man cannot

believe.” None can partake of grace and fight shy of service. If Jesus is Lord, you serve Him faithfully. Not only do you serve the master, you serve his bride, the church. **There are numerous places to serve at Bethel, find your place today.**

**Lordship: The Giver from whom the Christian receives (grace and peace from God, 1:3).** All the divine greatness of God and the Lord, all the divine love and saving efficacy of the Father and Jesus Christ come together in divine unanimity to pour out upon the saints whatever they **need** for their days on earth.

**It is either all of Christ or none of Christ! I believe we need to preach again a whole Christ to the world – a Christ who does not need our apologies, a Christ who will not be divided, a Christ who will either be Lord of all or will not be Lord at all! A. W. Tozer**

**The embrace and surrender of Jesus as Lord ushers in new life, un-surpassing joy, grace, peace, and eternal gospel partnerships.**

**In Christ, you participate in the Gospel (Christ working In you, 1:6)**

**You are not a bridge to nowhere.** Spanning 3,100 feet more than 165 feet in the air, the Veteran’s Memorial Bridge in Gramercy, Louisiana affectionately acquired the name the “bridge to nowhere.” Opened in 1995 the bridge connected the east and west sides of the MS river. The bridge was a necessity due to the dangerous use of ferries (one tragedy in 1976 claimed 78 lives). For 13 years the bridge was not connected with the main highway. **Update**—As of June 17, 2008, the ‘Bridge To Nowhere’ is finally connected on both ends. The power company took months to run power lines one mile down the road to a railroad crossing. Without the railroad crossing being completed, the road could not be opened to highway traffic.

Often this is how we feel spiritually. We know that Jesus made a way and connected us to the Father but we feel like we get nowhere. Maybe your hoping that when you get to heaven one day the “bridge” will be connected.

**When Christ is Lord you participate in the gospel because Christ is working in you.** The word started **Started. (enarchomai)**, means to inaugurate and the tense employed points to a decisive and deliberate act. Here was something planned and executed to perfection. **God planned for your salvation, he prepared your salvation, and the plan was executed to perfection. Jesus was the plan all along!**

**Thank the Lord that God took the imitative for our sakes!** Salvation would be a wretchedly unsure thing if it had no other foundation than my having chosen Christ. The human will blows hot and cold, is firm and unstable by fits and starts; it offers no security of tenure (Alec Motyer).

**Not only does the power of the cross begin your participation with the Father, it continues your transformation.**

Got not only guarantees the outcome (eternal life), he guarantees that each day, and in each experience the Lord Jesus is putting on the finishing touches building in you an eternal glory. God does not create any bridges to no-where.

**The Lord will carry you to completion.** The outcome is guaranteed. God is working to a schedule, and the day of Jesus Christ is fixed in the Father's diary (Motyer, 45).

**Christianity is not a passive spectator sport. The gospel is active, living, and calls you to participate in the glorious resurrection of King Jesus. Christ is working in you!**

## **Jesus saves you to partner for the Gospel (Christ working among you, 1:5,7)**

Because of the cross and the resurrection, Paul is now eternally joined in partnership with the people of God in Philippi. Who are these people? We have a glimpse of Paul's second missionary journey in Acts 16. Here we meet Lydia, a fortune teller, and a jailor.

**Lydia (Acts 16:11)**, was most likely the first European convert in history. Lydia was wealthy, driven, intellectual and a God fearer who opened her heart to respond to what Paul was saying (Acts 16:15) and she became a leader in the church. She was a partner in the Gospel.

**Fortune-teller (Acts 16:16)**. Next, we meet an unnamed slave girl who made an enormous profit for her owners. She was economically enslaved and stood in stark contrast to the wealthy Lydia. She followed Paul around and annoyed him. Eventually he turned around and denounced the evil spirit in her. This made her owners mad and landed Paul in jail. This slave girl was a partner in the Gospel.

**Jailer (Acts 16:25)**. A blue collar, ex military man, who took pride in his job. He valued work ethic and at all cost accomplished his mission. This man was a hard man and took it upon himself to torture Paul above and beyond what was necessary. After an impromptu worship service, divine earthquake, and escape, he determined he would rather commit suicide than face the ridicule of having his prisoner escape. After hearing the gospel he and his entire household believed. **This jailer is a partner in the gospel.**

What do this rich entrepreneur, disadvantaged slave girl, and ex-military jailer have in common? Not much other than the gospel. Jesus breaks down barriers. **The proclamation of the gospel has the transforming power to create a community (koinonia) of believers in Christ** **Gospel partnership transcends all cultural barriers.**

The word partnership (*κοινωνία/ koinōnia*) means fellowship, partnership, and communion. And shortly, when each who knows Jesus is invited to the communion table we partner/eat lay down our labels and tribes and join as one body in Jesus Christ.

**Gospel partnership necessitates that you share the gospel.** "Those who possess the gospel will propagate it" (Alec Motyer). Church, listen to the power of Christ working in you for the salvation of others: Roger (friends/family) Dewitt and Mary (friend), Johnny (Bible), Anna and Andrew (family/church), Evan (Bible study), Mary (family), Melody (worship), Haley (Worship), Delancy (two people investing), Natalie (family) Zoey (ministry). **Share the gospel and watch the Holy Spirit work.** Use any open door that the Lord gives you.

**Gospel partnership means that Jesus works through you.** The good work that God began was the formation of a corporate entity the partnership in the gospel. God's people do not work, worship, and grow alone. Isolationism is not the gospel.

In Paul's world this word was the normal vernacular for a business partnership, in which all those involved would share in doing the work on the one hand and in the financial responsibilities on the other. God has saved you to serve and give for the gospel. The Philippians, then, are partners in the gospel (v.5), partners in grace (v.7), they are in the gospel business, the grace business, along with Paul and their gift proves it.

**Jesus saves you to partner for the gospel by working among you as he works through you.**

## **Call**

**Has the Lord begun his work in you? What is keeping you from trusting Jesus today?**

**Is He Lord?** What competes in your life for lordship? What will you not do for Jesus? Serve? Give?

**The Lord will carry you to completion.** The outcome is guaranteed. God is working to a schedule, and the day of Jesus Christ is fixed in the Father's diary (Motyer, 45).

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- Philip II of Macedon seized valuable mining territory and named location after himself in 400 BCE
  - In 42 BCE site of battle between Octavian and Antony who defeated Brutus and Cassius
  - 1<sup>st</sup> city visited on 2<sup>nd</sup> missionary journey (Acts 16:12)
    - Attended prayer meeting on banks of river (Acts 16:12)
  - No synagogue (only needed 10 Jews)
  - Heavy roman and pagan character (Acts 16:21)
  
  - Appears to be last of Prison Epistles
    - Long period of imprisonment had elapsed
    - Abandonment by friends
    - Length of time required for journeys by friends
    - Expectation of release
  - Philippian church sent Epaphroditus to Paul with a gift (2:25-30)
  - Paul wanted to ease worries about his imprisonment (1:15-18)
  - Addressed disunity in the church (2:1-11)

Overview: Philippians is a joyful letter, but its undercurrent is a sober realization that time is running out. Paul himself was facing a possible death sentence; the church was tensed up, ready for the assault of a menacing world and for the insidious encroachment of false doctrine (Motyer).

**Philippi** was in fact ‘Rome in miniature.’ (Motyer). As a colony, its newly minted roman citizens enjoyed freedom from scourging and arrests and the right of ‘appeal to Caesar.’ The coins of Philippi bore Latin inscriptions (Motyer).

Thus a city with a famous past and a privileged and proud present was about to hear the good news of a status conferred not by man but by God, proclaimed by a man who had come to see all human and inherited dignities as so much rubbish in contrast with the surpassing worth of knowing the Lord Jesus Christ (Motyer).

Out of all the churches Paul founded the people of Philippi were the ones who gave him most joy (Wright, 84).

### **Jesus is Lord**

15 times in Philippians, Paul uses the word Lord. What does this mean? In Christ, a servant of Christ, and grace and peace from the Lord

**The relationship in which the Christian lives.** To be in Christ, then, is to possess what is often spoken of as full salvation: everything necessary to our past, present, future and eternal welfare has been secured for us by the action of God in Christ (Motyer, 27)

**The Lord whom the Christian serves.** Responsive obedience characterizes us, for the saint in Christ Jesus is necessarily also a servant of Christ Jesus (Motyer). No Christian can evade this responsibility. None can partake of grace and fight shy of service.

**The Giver from whom the Christian receives.** All the divine greatness of God and the Lord, all the divine love and saving efficacy of the Father and Jesus Christ come together in divine unanimity to pour out upon the saints whatever they need for their days on earth (Motyer, 29).

**Phil. 1:3** I give thanks to my God for every remembrance of you, <sup>4</sup> always praying with joy for all of you in my every prayer, <sup>5</sup> because of your **partnership** in the gospel from the first day until now.

**Who are the you?**

### **Partnerships**

The church was quite literally born in the place of prayer, which following the initial visit, apparently became the daily focal point of the mission (Motyer, 15).

Lydia, a wealthy, driven, intellectual was a God fearer who opened her heart to respond to what Paul was saying (Acts 16:15) and she became a leader in the church.

As they were on their way in prayer, a slave girl followed and spoke “these men who are proclaiming to you the way of salvation, are the servants of the Most High God.” (Acts 16:17)

Philippian jailor, who stopped from suicide, proclaimed, “what must I do to be saved?” (Acts 16:30)

**Partnership.** In Paul’s world this word was the normal vernacular for a business partnership, in which all those involved would share in doing the work on the one hand and in the financial responsibilities on the other. The Philippians, then, are partners in the gospel (v.5), partners in grace (v.7), they are in the gospel business, the grace business, along with Paul and their gift proves it (Wright, 85).

Literally the physical provision of food and money help sustain Paul during his difficult imprisonment.

### **Partnership**

κοινωνία *koinōnia* 19x

*fellowship, partnership, Acts 2:42; 2 Cor. 6:14; 13:13; Gal. 2:9; Phil. 3:10; 1 Jn. 1:3; participation,*

*communion, 1 Cor. 10:16; aid, relief, Heb. 13:16; contribution in aid, Rom. 15:26 → communion;*

*fellowship; participation; sharing.*

*When you join with others in celebration the death and resurrection in the Lord’s supper, you are partnering through communion in the gospel.*

The proclamation of the gospel had the transforming power to create a community (koinonia) of believers in Christ (Pillar, 48).

**6** I am sure of this, that he who started a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

**Started.** (enarchomai), means to inaugurate and the tense employed points to a decisive and deliberate act. Here was something planned and executed to perfection (Motyer, 43).

Salvation would be a wretchedly unsure thing if it had no other foundation than my having chosen Christ. The human will blows hot and cold, is firm and unstable by fits and starts; it offers no security of tenure (Motyer, 44).

### **God never gives up.**

The assurance God gives us not only guarantees the outcome; it guarantees too every experience of every day, for in all things God is putting the finishing touches.”

The notion that the work is not yet complete shows that it involves a progressive transformation of the lives of believers (Thielman, 38).

### **Day of Christ Jesus**

The outcome is guaranteed. God is working to a schedule, and the day of Jesus Christ is fixed in the Father’s diary (Motyer, 45).

The good work that God began was the formation of a corporate entity the partnership in the gospel. Their koinonia as friends is also a koinonia as partners in the work of proclaiming the gospel (Pillar, 50).

**7** Indeed, it is right for me to think this way about all of you, because I have you in my heart, and you are all **partners** with me in grace, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel. **8** For God is my witness, how deeply I miss all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus. Those who possess the gospel will propagate it (Motyer, 47).

**9** And I pray this: that your love will keep on growing in knowledge and every kind of discernment, **10** so that you may approve the things that are superior and may be pure and blameless in the day of Christ, **11** filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ to the glory and praise of God.

position conveyed by the unique word komamiyyut “in an upright position.” (JPS, 184).

# Illustrations

# Application

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How does the Gospel change our lives?