

September 22, 2013 by Steve Brandon



## **Eight Words**

### **Philippians 1:1-2**

- 1. Paul**
- 2. Timothy**
- 3. Servants**
- 4. Saints**
- 5. Overseers**
- 6. Deacons**
- 7. Grace**
- 8. Peace**

If you have ever flown on a commercial airline, you have heard something like the following:

Ladies and gentlemen, the Captain has turned on the Fasten Seat Belt sign. If you haven't already done so, please stow your carry-on luggage underneath the seat in front of you or in an overhead bin. Please take your seat and fasten your seat belt. And also make sure your seat back and folding trays are in their full upright position.

If you are seated next to an emergency exit, please read carefully the special instructions card located by your seat. If you do not wish to perform the functions described in the event of an emergency, please ask a flight attendant to reseal you.

At this time, we request that all mobile phones, pagers, radios and remote controlled toys be turned off for the full duration of the flight, as these items might interfere with the navigational and communication equipment on this aircraft. We request that all other electronic devices be turned off until we fly above 10,000 feet. We will notify you when it is safe to use such devices.

We remind you that this is a non-smoking flight. Smoking is prohibited on the entire aircraft, including the lavatories. Tampering with, disabling or destroying the lavatory smoke detectors is prohibited by law.

If you have any questions about our flight today, please don't hesitate to ask one of our flight attendants. Thank you.

A short time later, you hear this, ...

Now we request your full attention as the flight attendants demonstrate the safety features of this aircraft.

When the seat belt sign illuminates, you must fasten your seat belt. Insert the metal fittings one into the other, and tighten by pulling on the loose end of the strap. To release your seat belt, lift the upper portion of the buckle. We suggest that you keep your seat belt fastened throughout the flight, as we may experience turbulence.

There are several emergency exits on this aircraft. Please take a few moments now to locate your nearest exit. In some cases, your nearest exit may be behind you. If we need to evacuate the aircraft, floor-level lighting will guide you towards the exit. Doors can be opened by moving the handle in the direction of the arrow. Each door is equipped with an inflatable slide which may also be detached and used as a life raft.

Oxygen and the air pressure are always being monitored. In the event of a decompression, an oxygen mask will automatically appear in front of you. To start the flow of oxygen, pull the mask towards you. Place it firmly over your nose and mouth, secure the elastic band behind your head, and breathe normally. Although the bag does not inflate, oxygen is flowing to the mask. If you are travelling with a child or someone who requires assistance, secure your mask on first, and then assist the other person. Keep your mask on until a uniformed crew member advises you to remove it.

In the event of an emergency, a life vest is located in a pouch under your seat or between the armrests. When instructed to do so, open the plastic pouch and remove the vest. Slip it over your head. Pass the straps around your waist and adjust at the front. To inflate the vest, pull firmly on the red cord, only when leaving the aircraft. If you need to refill the vest, blow into the mouthpieces.

You will find this and all the other safety information in the card located in the seat pocket in front of you. We strongly suggest you read it before take-off. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to ask one of our crew members. We wish you all an enjoyable flight.

When such announcements are being made, you can tell who the experienced fliers are and who the new fliers are. The novice traveler is bright-eyed and all-ears, taking it all in. While, the experienced business travelers hardly lift up their eyes from their book as these things are being communicated.

Why the difference? To some, these things are brand new to them and necessary to know. To other, this represents old news that they have heard before.

Well, this morning, as we come to our time in the Scriptures, we come to one of those passages in the Bible that are very common. If you have been a Christian for any length of time and have read your Bible with any degree of regularity, you will recognize these words. One of the most challenging things that I face as a preacher is to take the familiar truths in the Bible and present them to you in a way that engages you and stirs your heart afresh. Such is my aim this morning.

This morning we will look at the first two verses of the book of the Philippians.

Philippians 1:1-2  
Paul and Timothy, bond-servants of Christ Jesus,  
To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, including the overseers and deacons:  
Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

These are familiar words, not because they are familiar to us in Philippians, but, because similar words occur in many other books of the Bible.

To those in Ephesus, Paul writes, "Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, To the saints who are at Ephesus and who are faithful in Christ Jesus: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." (Eph 1:1-2).

To those in Colossae, Paul writes, "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ who are at Colossae: Grace to you and peace from God our Father." (Col 1:1-2).

To those in Thessalonica, Paul writes, "Paul and Silvanus and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace." (1 Thess. 1:1)

Several other of Paul's epistles sound the same. And it would be easy for us to simply skip these verses and get into the heart of the letter, beginning at verse 3. But, there is enough here for us to savor this morning, that I want to just take these two verses.

These verses are a bit like your favorite dinner. You sit down to a nice piece of steak. You cut it up into 20 pieces and savor each bite. You never tire of your favorite food if you come to the table hungry. Well, that's what I want to do this morning. I want to take eight bites out of this text and savor each of them.

My outline this morning has eight points. We are going to look at eight words in these verses. I want for us to savor each one of them. My hope as we do this is to give us a clearer picture of what was taking place in Philippi.

We are going to look at ...

- 1. Paul**
- 2. Timothy**
- 3. Servants**
- 4. Saints**
- 5. Overseers**
- 6. Deacons**
- 7. Grace**
- 8. Peace**

Now, if you are observant, you will notice that we are skipping over some important words. Both "Christ" and "Jesus" appear three times in these verses. And that isn't one of the words on my list. Don't fear, we will pick them up as we work through the other words.

So, let's begin with  
1. Paul

This book begins with Paul identifying himself. "Paul and Timothy, bond-servants of Christ Jesus." The letter to the Philippians is coming from Paul and Timothy. But, Paul is the author. We see this in verse 3, when Paul speaks in the first person, "I think my God in all my remembrance of you."

In fact, the entire letter is written in the first person. And it's not Timothy who is writing, because we see in chapter 2, that Paul speaks about hoping to send Timothy to the Philippians. It's not Timothy who hopes to send Paul. Paul is the author of this book.

Now, Paul's story is interesting and encouraging at the same time. Over in chapter 3, Paul gives a bit of his story. Look at chapter 3, verse 5. Paul says that he was ...

## Philippians 3:5-6

circumcised the eighth day, of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the Law, a Pharisee; as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to the righteousness which is in the Law, found blameless.

Paul points out here his Jewish lineage. Even from infancy, he was raised according to the law, and never deviated. When you would place his life against the standards of the law, Paul said that he was blameless (verse 7).

Not only was Paul a Jew. He was a Jew of Jews. He was a Hebrew of Hebrews. He was blameless in all aspects of the law. There was not one command of the entire law that you could hold up to Paul's life and accuse him of sin.

Not only that, but Paul was a Pharisee. That is, he was an expert in the law. He was "educated under Gamaliel" (Acts 22:3), an influential leader in the Sanhedrin (Acts 5:34). Not only that, but Paul was very zealous for his religion. He wasn't merely head-smart; he was heart-strong as well. The things he learned, he believed. And the things he believed, he acted upon.

He first appears in the Bible in Acts, chapter 8:1, which says, "Saul [his pre-Christian name] was in hearty agreement" with the martyrdom of Stephen, ... an enemy of the Jewish faith. Such was his zeal. He would get letters from the high priest, giving him permission to hunt down Christians and arrest them and imprison them for preaching about Jesus (Acts 9:1-2).

Yet, things changed for him when he was on the road to Damascus, to arrest Christians and have them thrown into jail for preaching about Jesus. But, the living Lord, Jesus Christ, appeared to him and said, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?" (Acts 9:4). He was struck blind and taken to Damascus. He bowed his knee to Jesus and after only a few days, he began to "proclaim Jesus in the synagogues, saying, 'He is the Son of God.'" (Acts 9:20). He changed his name to Paul, and the rest is history.

Paul's zeal for Christ and His gospel knew no end. He became one of the foremost leaders in the church. He eventually found his way to Antioch. And in Acts 13, we have the story of how he was there in Antioch with several other leaders in the church. They were "ministering to the Lord and fasting" seeking His direction as to what they should do next. And "the Holy Spirit said, 'Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them'" (Acts 13:2).

So, the leaders, "fasted and prayed and laid their hands on [Barnabas and Paul]" and "sent them away" (Acts 13:3). This was the beginning of the first missionary journey. And this is where Paul gained much of his prominence, as the Lord used him in mighty ways on his journeys.

I have a few maps here to help you see where Paul went on this journey. He began in Antioch, and went down to Seleucia, where they sailed to the island of Cyprus (Acts 13:4). They travelled west across the island, from Salamis on the east to Paphos on the west. Along the way they were "proclaiming the word of God in the synagogues" (Acts 13:5).

When they reached Paphos, they again set sail to Perga in Pamphylia (Acts 13:13) and travelled to Pisidian Antioch (Acts 13:14) (not to be confused with Antioch -- this is the Antioch in the region of Pisidia). Here they preached and saw many come to Christ.

They continued their journey to Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe. They returned again through these cities the same way that they had come, eventually sailing back to Antioch (Acts 14:21-28). Along the way, they established churches and appointed elders in every church, and "commended them to the Lord in whom they have believed" (Acts 14:23).

Now, the significance of this little trip is that Timothy is from Lystra. Surely, Paul met him on this first missionary journey that he took. But, it was on the second missionary trip that he took where he partnered with Timothy.

Let's move to my second point. I have told you a bit about Paul. Let's talk a bit about ...

## 2. Timothy

On Paul's second missionary journey, again he left from Antioch with Silas this time. His intent was to "visit the brethren in every city in which [they had] proclaimed the word of the Lord, to see how they are" (Acts 15:36). So, they headed north by land, up through Syria and Cilicia, "strengthening the churches" (Acts 15:41).

Soon on their journey, they arrived in Derbe and Lystra. And in Acts 16, we read, "And a disciple was there, named Timothy, the son of a Jewish woman who as a believer, but his father was a Greek, and he was well spoken of by the brethren who were in Lystra and Iconium" (Acts 16:1-2). Paul identified this man's giftedness and help that he would be on the journey and wanted him to join them, which he did.

Their journey continued west. Along the way, the Holy Spirit was guiding them. They tried to go into Asia, but they were "forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia" (Acts 16:6). A little while later, they tried to go into Bithynia, but "the Spirit of Jesus did not permit them" (Acts 16:7). Eventually, they landed in Troas, along the Aegean Sea.

While in Troas, Paul had a vision in the night. He saw "a man of Macedonia was standing and appealing to him, and saying, 'Come over to Macedonia and help us'" (Acts 16:9). Historically, this vision has been identified as "the Macedonian Call." Paul and Silas and Timothy went up to Macedonia, figuring that God had called them to preach the gospel to Macedonia.

They "ran a straight course to Samothrace and on the day following to Neapolis" (Acts 16:11). From there, they landed in Philippi; and thus began the church in Philippi.

I told you the story last week of how the church began in Philippi. It began at a place of prayer, down by the river, where Paul and Silas and Timothy met Lydia. As they were preaching the gospel to her, "the Lord opened her heart to the things spoken by Paul" (Acts 16:14). She

and her household believed and were baptized.

A short time later, the jailor in Philippi also believed, along with his household. They believed and were baptized. Thus formed the nucleus of the church in Philippi. This is the same Philippi to which Paul wrote the letter we are studying.

And it is significant that Timothy was along with Paul when the church began. Because, Timothy was with Paul in the writing of this letter we have before us. "Paul and Timothy, bond-servants of Christ Jesus, to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi." (Phil 1:1).

Timothy was well-known to those in Philippi. Timothy's character was well-known as well. Look in chapter 2. Paul writes, ...

Philippians 2:19-22

But I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you shortly, so that I also may be encouraged when I learn of your condition. For I have no one else of kindred spirit who will genuinely be concerned for your welfare. For they all seek after their own interests, not those of Christ Jesus. But you know of his proven worth, that he served with me in the furtherance of the gospel like a child serving his father.

Timothy was a trusted man. He had a kindred spirit with Paul. He served Paul with the devotion of a child. To send Timothy to visit those in Philippi was to send Paul, himself.

Philippians 2:23-24

Therefore I hope to send him immediately, as soon as I see how things go with me; and I trust in the Lord that I myself also will be coming shortly.

This should give you a flavor of this letter to the Philippians. It wasn't written by strangers to a far-off church. No, it was written by dearly loved people, who were writing to dearly loved people.

In fact, Paul and Timothy visited this church on a number of occasions. After planting the church in Philippi, he went on to Thessalonica, Berea, Athens, Corinth, Ephesus, and on home, via Jerusalem (Acts 17-18). This took a couple of years. During his third missionary journey, he visited Philippi on two occasions. He made a bee-line to Ephesus (Acts 19). And then, on to Macedonia, where he visited the churches and came back again. Acts 20:4 says that Timothy was with him in Philippi.

That helps to explain a bit about the tone of the letter. It's a very relationally-rich letter. Timothy was a loved brother.

Let's move on to my third point. Our third word, ...

### 3. Servants

This is how Paul describes himself and Timothy. Philippians 1:1 says, "Paul and Timothy, bond-servants of Christ Jesus."

Now, this term, "bond-servants" is a loaded term. In most other translations, this is simply translated, "servants." I think that the New American Standard version attached the "bond" to the servants to show that it's a servant that is bound to their master. Their master, in this case, is the Lord, Jesus Christ.

The Greek word used here is a word is the word, *douloV* (*doulos*) which can easily be translated, "slave." English translators rightly shy away from this word, because of the many evil connotations of the word in our society today. The history of our nation includes many years of ships being sent to Africa, and people being bound and captured against their will and brought to America, where they were treated like dogs. This is a shameful portion of our history. It has caused many problems in our society, and still does. Racial tensions are alive and well in America.

And so, it only makes sense that English translators want to avoid the word, "slave." When the ESV translators were debating how to translate this word, Wayne Grudem made a great point. He said, ...

When we as scholars use word, 'slave,' we have the in mind something of the study of the background of slavery as it existed in the time of the Old Testament, slavery as it existed in the time of the New Testament, and we can understand nuances of it. But for the average English reader, the word, 'slave,' has irredeemably negative associations and connotations. In people's minds, it's a permanent condition, whereas in the Old Testament and certainly in the time of the New Testament, it is temporary, it leads to freedom, and it was often voluntary, at least in the first century. Number two, slavery in the Old Testament and in the New Testament was not primarily racial, it was economic. And third, it was often a situation that had status and carried considerable legal protection. And so, for those reasons, I think, we are importing highly inaccurate understandings of the meaning of the term. [\[1\]](#)

And yet, rightly understood, "slave" is probably the most accurate translation of the word here in Philippians 1:1, ...

Philippians 1:1

Paul and Timothy, slaves of Christ Jesus.

It is the most accurate translation, if we understand what slavery meant in the culture of the day. In many ways, Biblical slavery is much like our military service. When people enter the military, it is often voluntary. You choose to put yourself into the service of your country. And

when you do, you lose your rights. You do what they tell you to do. You go where they tell you to go. You sleep when they tell you to sleep. You wake when they tell you to wake. And in many ways, it is very undesirable and akin to slavery.

Yet, it comes with some benefits as well. It comes with housing benefits. They supply your food and your clothes. So, why do people enter military service? Many times, it is a benefit financially. When you get out, you have some educational benefits.

This is why we can read in the Old Testament of slaves that are bought by a master, but chose to stay. They say, "I love my master, my wife and my children; I will not go out as a free man" (Exodus 21:5). Then, they are willingly made slaves for life, even though they were granted freedom if they wanted it.

So, why would they stay? Why would anyone stay in the military until requirement? The benefits inside are better than the life outside.

Now, certainly, not all slavery was like our military service. There was certainly slavery in the times of the New Testament that were every bit as horrible as the slavery in our country was. But, still, "slave" is the better translation here (if properly understood). Slavery implies that you are owned by your master, not merely being employed by your master. And this word brings the connotations of ownership.

This is very appropriate for any Christian to say: "I am owned by my master, the Lord, Jesus Christ." John MacArthur writes, ...

The New Testament ... commands believers to submit to Christ completely, and not just as hired servants or spiritual employees--but as those who belong wholly to Him. We are told to obey him without question and follow Him without complaint. Jesus Christ is our Master--a fact we acknowledge every time we call him "Lord." We are His slaves, called to humbly and whole-heartedly obey and honor Him.

We don't hear about that concept much in churches today. In contemporary Christianity the language is anything but slave terminology. It is about success, health, wealth, prosperity, and the pursuit of happiness. We often hear that God loves people unconditionally and wants them to be all they want to be. He wants to fulfill every desire, hope, and dream. Personal ambition, personal fulfillment, personal gratification -- these have all become part of the language of evangelical Christianity -- and part of what it means to have a "personal relationship with Jesus Christ." Instead of teaching the New Testament gospel -- where sinners are called to submit to Christ -- the contemporary message is exactly the opposite: Jesus is here to fulfill all your wishes. Likening Him to a personal assistant or personal trainer, many churchgoers speak of a personal Savior who is eager to do their bidding and help them in their quest for self-satisfaction or individual accomplishment.

The New Testament understanding of the believer's relationship to Christ could not be more opposite. He is the Master and Owner. We are His possession. He is the King, the Lord, and the Son of God. We are His subjects and His subordinates.

In a word, we are His slaves. [\[2\]](#)

When you realize what a kind master our Lord is, you realize how wonderful our submission to Him can be. Of Him, we say, "I love my master, ... I will not go out as a free man." (Exodus 21:5).

He has loved us (Revelation 1:6) and has given His life for us (Eph. 5:25). He has purchased us with His blood (Revelation 5:9). In fact, Jesus has purchased us from another form of slavery.

In Romans 6:20-23, Paul says it better than I ever could. He writes, ...

Romans 6:20-23

For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. Therefore what benefit were you then deriving from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the outcome of those things is death. But now having been freed from sin and enslaved to God, you derive your benefit, resulting in sanctification, and the outcome, eternal life. For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

When Jesus bought us, He bought us from slavery to sin. But, when Jesus bought us, we became enslaved to God, which is the best thing for us. It brings sanctification. It brings eternal life. And we delight to submit ourselves to Jesus, our kind King.

There is a difference between a servant and a slave. "Servants are hired; slaves are owned". [\[3\]](#)

First Corinthians 6:20 says, "You have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body." We who believe in Jesus are owned by Jesus. It is appropriate for Paul and Timothy to consider themselves, "slaves of Jesus Christ." Jesus Christ died for them. Jesus Christ has purchased them with His blood. He is their Lord. They were fully engaged in His service until their dying day.

It is appropriate for any Christian to consider themselves, "slaves of Jesus Christ." This is the essence of Christianity. Jesus is "Lord of all" (Acts 10:36). Jesus is "head over all rule and authority" (Col. 2:9-10). He has been seated at "the right hand of the power of God" (Luke 22:69, NKJV). All things have been put "in subjection under His feet" (Eph. 1:22). "His kingdom will have no end" (Luke 1:33). [\[4\]](#)

When we call Jesus our "Lord," we acknowledge all of these things and willingly submit ourselves at His feet for service to Him. Are you a slave of God?

Well, not only are we Slaves; we are also, ...

#### 4. Saints

Philippians 1:1

Paul and Timothy, bond-servants of Christ Jesus, To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, including the overseers and deacons:

Just as there is cultural confusion over the word, "slave." So also is there cultural confusion over the word, "saint."

Often, when people think of "saints," they think of those especially holy people in the church. The Roman Catholic Church has a long list of "saints." According to Catholic.org, there are something like 10,000 saints in the church. The Roman Catholic Church has a process by which someone can be declared a saint. The process by which someone comes to be known as a saint is long and complex, which can take years and decades and generations. In some way, it is a bit like our athletic Hall of Fame process.

For instance, to get into the Pro Football Hall of Fame, you must have made some great contribution to the game of football. You must have been retired for five years in order to create some historical perspective on your career. Fans may nominate any player, but the Selection Committee has a complex voting procedure for any who enter. Each year, through several votes, they dwindle down the list of potential Hall of Famers to 17 nominees. Then to be elected into the Hall of Fame, 80% of the Selection Committee must agree that you are worthy of the Hall of Fame. Finally, you are inducted into the Hall of Fame at the induction ceremony, an honor that can never be revoked.

To be officially recognized as a "saint" in the Roman Catholic Church, the process is similar. First of all, you must have lived a life worthy of the title of "saint." Second, the process must start many years after your death, so as to obtain some historical perspective on your life. Third, a local bishop investigates your life and brings an evaluation to the Vatican, at which point, you are identified as a "servant of God." Fourth, the theologians at the Vatican evaluate the candidate's life. If they determine that the servant of God has lived a life of heroic virtue, they are identified as "venerable." After the church establishes that a miracle was done at the hand of the "venerable," then the "venerable" is worthy of being called, "blessed." When a second miracle is confirmed, then the pope can consider the merits of the claim of sainthood and officially recognize the individual as a "saint." [\[5\]](#)

The process, according to the Roman Catholic Church, is "infallible and irrevocable." In other words, "Once a saint, always a saint."

All that to say this: This whole concept of "saints" has tainted what we think of when we hear the word. Here in Philippians 1:1, Paul uses the word much like it is used throughout the Bible, "To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi."

"Saints" is another name for "Christian." Notice here that the leaders of the church -- the overseers and deacons -- are among those identified as "saints." The leaders of the church -- the overseers and deacons -- aren't the only saints in the congregation. The "saints" are describing the congregation. The "saints" are describing the people of the church. This is not what people normally think of when they hear the word, "saint." They think of some special class of devoted people.

Years ago, when in the secular work force, I remember talking with a gentleman I was discipling at work. We would have lunch together several times each week and talk about the Bible. I made some sort of off-hand comment about the weekend. I said something like, "I just love spending time with the saints."

He was all confused. It took some time to go to passages like Philippians 1:1 to explain what I meant. It's not difficult. Just go to the beginning of Paul's letters.

Ephesians 1:1-2

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, To the saints who are at Ephesus and who are faithful in Christ Jesus: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Colossians 1:1-2

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ who are at Colossae: Grace to you and peace from God our Father.

The word, "saint" technically means, "holy one" -- one who is set apart for service, one who is sanctified.

Here's the fact that we need to embrace: Every Christian is a holy, having been sanctified by the blood of Jesus, having been set apart by the Lord to do His will. That's what we see here in Philippians 1:1. We are saints because we are "in Christ Jesus." In Jesus Christ we receive our holiness. The is the gospel. It's not that we are especially holy in and of ourselves. Rather, it's that Jesus comes and sanctifies us through faith in Him. He makes us holy by imputing His righteousness to us.

This is the why we "Rejoice in the gospel." We, who are sinners, have been made holy by through faith in Jesus Christ.

Before moving on to our fifth word, I just need to make a comment about the writer and recipients of this letter. It's opposite of what you might think. You might think of the mighty apostle Paul as the holy sage who has his profound counsel to give to the lowly church members. But, here it is the opposite: the slaves are writing to the saints.

We naturally think that the holy ones, who know God and His ways, should be the ones writing to the lowly church members. But here we see

the opposite: the lowly ones serve and help the holy ones. Such is God's economy. Such is the humility to which God calls us all.

There is no pontificating in the church. It doesn't come from the top down. It comes from the bottom up. But, we will deal more with that when we come to chapter 2.

Let's move on to our fifth word. In fact, I want to take our fifth and sixth word together.

## **5. Overseers**

## **6. Deacons**

Verse 1 again, ...

Philippians 1:1

To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, including the overseers and deacons.

I love this statement, because it shows how simple leadership in the church is. There two offices of leadership given in the Bible for the local church. Overseers and Deacons. The Greek word for "overseer" sounds like "Episcopal," like the "Episcopal Church." It is made up of two Greek words, meaning "upon" and, "looking." Literally, it means, "looking upon."

The best picture of this is of a shepherd, seated upon the hill, looking over his flock, seeking their welfare, scanning back and forth to make sure that all is well with the sheep. He is watching out for danger, watching out for the predators, like lions and bears, watching out for the dangerous cliffs or the poisonous plants.

This is the role of a pastor. He "shepherds" the church. He "oversees" the church. In fact, this is the role of an elder. He cares for the church. He oversees the church.

In fact, these are all synonymous terms. When Paul speaks in 1 Timothy of leaders in the church, he speaks of the "office of overseer" (1 Timothy 3:1). When Paul speaks in Titus of the same office, he calls them elders (Titus 1:5). When Paul spoke to the elders at Ephesus, he said, "Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood" (Acts 20:28). "Elders, God has made you overseers to pastor the church."

Peter also used the words in a similar way. In 1 Peter 5:1-2, Peter exhorted the elders to "shepherd the flock of God" by "exercising oversight." In other words, the elders of the church were to pastor the church by doing the work of an overseer. Here's the best way that I can say it: Overseers are elders are pastors. They all refer to the same office in the church. Their function is to oversee the church. But, there is a second office given to the church

## **6. Deacons**

Deacons are the ones who come along-side the elders to help them in their work. The Greek word for "deacon" is best translated, "servant." Jesus used the word in Mark 10.

Mark 10:42-45

"You know that those who are recognized as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them; and their great men exercise authority over them. But it is not this way among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant; and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."

The word for "servant" and "serve" is the same word translated here in Philippians 1, as "deacon." A deacon is a servant.

The best picture of the deacon comes in Acts 6. The church was facing some difficulties, because the apostles were being over-burdened. Not only were the apostles preaching the word to the masses, but they were also engaged in the work of serving the tables of the widows -- I'm sure a work that they loved doing. But, they weren't doing it very well. Some of the widows were being neglected (Acts 6:1).

It was simply too much. They were neglecting the word of God to serve tables (Acts 6:2). But, even then, they weren't serving tables very well (Acts 6:1). And so, they selected "seven men of good reputation, full of the Spirit and of wisdom" to put in charge of the worthy work (Acts 6:3).

And seven men came along side of them to labor to help the apostles in their primary work, devoting themselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word (Acts 6:4). Such is the role of deacons. These are the ones who come along-side the elders -- to help them in their work.

The elders devote their attention to the spiritual matters of the church, prayer and the word, preaching and shepherding and caring for the flock. The deacons devote their attention to the physical matters of the church, serving and helping.

These, by the way, are the only two offices that God has given to the church. They are simple, but they work.

I mentioned last week of the time-frame of this letter. The church was planted somewhere about 50 A. D. This letter was written somewhere around 60 A. D. And in the ten years of the church's existence, the church had some established leadership, fully in place and functioning to

lead and to guide the church.

At Rock Valley Bible Church, we are under the same time-frame. We were planted about 10 years ago. And we currently have overseers and deacons in place. We currently have three overseers and one deacon. I'm an overseer. Darryn Wiebe is an overseer. Phil Guske is an overseer. Ray Hook is our deacon.

Let me say that I love these men. They are some of the most faithful men I know. They are some of the most humble men I know. They have hearts to serve all of you. I feel blessed to serve along side of them. I'm thankful to the Lord for them. I couldn't be more blessed.

Very quickly, let us look at the last two words. Again, I want to take them together.

## **7. Grace**

## **8. Peace**

Verse 2 reads thus, ...

Philippians 1:2

Grace to you and Peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

These words are words of greeting. These words are words of blessing. These words combine the cultures to whom Paul is writing.

Various cultures have various ways of greeting people. In America, we say, "Hello," and shake hands. In Mexico, they say, "Hola." In Hawaii, they say "Aloha." In Nepal, they say, "Namaste" and fold their hands in a posture of prayer. In Russia, after your greeting, you are liable to get a kiss on the lips! In Nepal, Christians greet each other with, "Jaimasi!"

In the days of the New Testament, the Greeks would say, "Charein," which can be translated, "Grace." In the days of the New Testament, the Jews would say, "Shalom," which can be translated, "Peace." In verse 2, Paul combines these two to say, "Grace and Peace." But, Paul adds a bit of depth to each of these words, by saying "from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ."

I attended the NIU football game last night and met up with an old-time friend. I brought Stephanie to speak with that friend and told Stephanie of the story. "Stephanie, we have known Darryn and his wife, Deborah for more than 20 years. We told Deborah about Jesus. She came to know the Lord!" I told my friend to, "Tell Deborah hello for me."

This is a bit like Paul saying, "Grace to you and Peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." Paul must have known God to send this greeting to others.

We see Grace and Peace in the cross of Christ. The cross is Grace! The cross brings Peace!

This sermon was delivered to Rock Valley Bible Church on September 22, 2013 by Steve Brandon.

For more information see [www.rvbc.cc](http://www.rvbc.cc).

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[1] You can watch his insightful comments here: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mx06mtApu8k>

[2] John MacArthur, *Slave*, pp. 14-15.

[3] *Ibid*, pp. 16-17

[4] *Ibid*, pp. 85-86.

[5] <http://www.catholic.org/saints/faq.php>; <http://www.dummies.com/how-to/content/how-to-become-a-saint-in-the-catholic-church.html>