01: Introduction and 1:1-4

https://www.youtube.com/embed/MQngvl_EPus?si=Ellke7vhIDECzssj

Introduction

- St Paul
  - From a wealthy family in Tarsus
    - His father bought Roman Citizenship
  - Doesn't live in Palestine (far from the 12 and the apostles, etc.)
  - He was sent to learn under Gamaliel and reached a high level of Pharisee and was very talented, zealous, etc.
  - He studied in Athens (Greece) some Philosophy and his Greek (language) was very good
  - He always had a good conscience (always sought to do what God wanted) - even before he was Christian, although he was ignorant of what God wanted
  - Because of his good intention, his good conscience, and his zeal and his ability, the Lord chose him
  - The beginning of his ministry, he was preaching to Jews in Jerusalem, Damascus, and he was not accepted. After a year of preaching, the Holy Spirit said "separate to Me Paul and Barnabas" and he started to preach to the Gentiles in Asia Minor
  - First Missionary Journey
    - St Paul hears that some Pharisees have become Christians but understood Christianity wrong - as a sect of Judaism - they want people to be circumcised, follow the Law of Moses, etc. But this was not going to work with the Gentiles that St Paul is preaching to.
    - So Paul and Barnabas take the matter to the Apostles in Jerusalem (i.e. James) - Council of Jerusalem
    - The response of the Council is that Christians do not have to first become Jews
  - Second Missionary Journey
    - Paul took Silas and wanted to go and visit the churches he established in Asia Minor
    - "The Holy Spirit prevented us" - he saw a dream of a man from Macedonia who said "Come to us and help us" - so he was assured of God's plan and he went into Europe (Macedonia) starting with the city of Philippi.
    - St Paul will spend MUCH time in Greece (Thessalonica, Corinth, Philippi, Athens) and that all started with Philippi
  - Philippi
    - The service in Greece was going to be very different (and more difficult) from in Asia Minor. The Gentiles in Greece are into philosophy, prideful, not thinking about God, etc. He is a scholar in Judaism, but a young student in Greek

Philosophy.
    - St Paul in Philippi: Acts 16
    - St Paul preached the gospel to women who were praying on the Sabbath and one of them - Lydia - and her household were baptized. The first Christians in Europe.
    - Then, St Paul cast out the spirit of divination from the slave girl; he and Silas were thrown into prison.
    - ”But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them.” There’s an earthquake, and everyone’s chains were loosed and the doors were opened. None of the prisoners fled, but the keeper of the prison was going to kill himself (if anyone escapes, that’s on him). But Paul calls out to him “Do yourself no harm, we are all here.” He preached the gospel to the Philippian Jailer and he and his family were baptized and were saved.
    - The next day, the magistrates wanted to release Paul and Silas but Paul refused saying “they beat us openly, uncondemned Romans, and have thrown us into prison” - The magistrates, now knowing that they had beaten and imprisoned Roman Citizens without due process, came and pleaded and begged with them. So Paul and Silas eventually departed in peace.
  - Third Missionary Journey
  - Journey to Rome
    - St Paul, intending to go on a Fourth Missionary Journey, was led by the Holy Spirit to Jerusalem in order to be captured and taken to Rome and imprisoned and martyred.
    - In the Prison in Rome, St Paul wrote and sent the epistle to the Philippians. This is about 10 years after his visit to Philippi.
- Reason for Writing the Epistle
  - The Philippians sent Paul some aid - food, clothing, etc. with Epaphroditus.
  - He wrote the letter in order to thank them for their generosity, and excuse them from any gifts in the future because “I have all and abound. I am full, having received from Epaphroditus the things sent from you…”
  - He took the opportunity to give them a message of rejoicing
  - He has hope that he will leave the prison
- Tone of the Epistle: Joy and Rejoicing
  - All of the circumstances are not worthy of rejoicing (in our eyes)
    - He’s in prison!
    - They are facing divisions and envy internally and persecution externally
  - Sometimes we have everything going okay (ma32oola) and still we aren’t joyful
  - It’s an encouraging letter

Greeting

[1] Paul and Timothy, bondservants of Jesus Christ,

To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, with the bishops and deacons:

[2] Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

- Paul and Timothy
  - Timothy is likely imprisoned with him (he was released before him) - “I will send you Timothy soon” - and in Hebrews “Know that our brother Timothy has been set free, with whom I shall see you if he comes shortly.”
  - St Paul respects all of the servants with him and likes to include him
- Bondservants
  - St Paul would sometimes use bondservant, sometimes apostle
  - He used apostle when he was dealing with people who were doubting his apostleship. But when that wasn’t the case, he preferred Bondservant.
- Saints
  - St Paul sees all of them as saints - they have received the Holy Spirit and were baptized... so they are saints!
  - The Church does the same - “The Holies are for the holy”
  - The same Liturgy that asks God for mercy, has words of sanctification for us
- In Christ Jesus
  - At the end of the Liturgy “In Christ Jesus our Lord…”
  - We are all in the Lord Jesus, and in Him, we have faith, wisdom, goodness, etc.
- With the Bishops and Deacons
  - St Paul puts the congregation BEFORE the Bishops and Deacons
  - The Church in Philippi is complete with its bishops and deacons and congregation
  - This indicates for us that St Paul did not leave a city without establishing for it a Church **with its clergy**
  - Why didn’t he mention “priests”
    - Bishops and Deacons are the order of priests
    - In those days the bishop would do the role of the bishop and presbyter, and the deacon was a consecrated servant (nowadays a “full deacon”)
- Grace and Peace
  - We are in the era of grace - we know the One True God, we took His Spirit, our names are inscribed in heaven, we are a part of His Body with the Myron, we abide in Him through Eucharist, the angels surround us - GRACE!
  - Peace - the peace of Christ (King of Peace); The heavenly peace

3I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, 4always in every prayer of mine making request for you all with joy,

- Thankfulness
  - Most of St Paul’s epistles start with thanksgiving (even though most are written under difficult circumstances).
  - This is the first message about joy/rejoicing - if I want to be joyful, I should increase in thankfulness
  - The Church teaches us “for everything, concerning everything, and in everything.”
  - St Paul lived a life of thanksgiving
    - Even when he was in prison in Philippi, he was giving thanks all night (praise is thanksgiving!)

    - Our Church gives us that in the month of Kiahk, for example
    - He sees that God is arranging everything, and that the Lord is driving
- I thank my God upon every remembrance of you
    - Like any father, St Paul is joyful by the success of his children - not like us about school and grades and marriage - but their spiritual success. That they are saints.
    - The Philippians give him real joy because they are serious, and they are faithful
    - In thanksgiving, remember the nice/good/successful people in your life
        - Your fathers
        - Your servants
        - Those who you served
        - Those who led you to repentance
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