**SERMON OUTLINE**

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| **SERMON TITLE:** | God’s Forever Family |
| **SERMON REFERENCE:** | Philippians 1:1-6, Acts 16:6-32 |
| **LWF SERMON NUMBER:** | #1497 |
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1. INTRODUCTION
   1. The early church lived in anticipation of the soon coming of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.
      1. Not only the soon coming, but also the imminent coming.
         1. The “imminent coming” means “the any moment coming.”
   2. What do the following people have in common?
      1. A Jewish philosopher who hated Christ and the very mention of Christ.
      2. A New Ager who was deep into the occult.
      3. A prison guard whose heart was filled with malignity and hate against all humankind.
      4. A feminist who was perhaps a widow, a divorcee, or who had never married and who had her own business.
         1. This broad spectrum of people were all members of the church at Philippi.
            1. The Jewish philosopher who was saved was the Apostle Paul.
            2. The New Ager was a demon-possessed girl who was saved by the Gospel of Christ.
            3. The prison guard was the jailer who was saved in a Philippian revival.
            4. The businesswoman, Lydia from Thyatira, had a business selling purple dye.
         2. The incredible thing is that the grace of God took people from a divergent background and made them one in the Lord Jesus Christ.
            1. That is what a church is.
   3. A church is a family of people who have come from all kinds of backgrounds, beliefs, ideas, and ideals, and who have found a unity in the family of God.
      1. The common denominator in the church is Jesus.
         1. Because we have one Lord, we have one life.
         2. Because we have one Lord and one life, we have one love, which is the Lord Jesus Christ.
      2. We are the family of God.
         1. A church is but an extended family.
   4. There are many people who don’t have families.
      1. The Apostle Paul didn’t have a family.
         1. Scholars tell us that Paul, at one time, had been a married man.
            1. We don’t know what happened to his wife.
      2. We don’t know if Lydia, the seller of purple, was divorced, widowed, or never married.
         1. But she needed a family.
      3. The demon-possessed girl had become a slave.
         1. She needed a family.
      4. The brutal jailer needed a family.
      5. There are a lot of people who need a family.
   5. Not only is the church a place to help people build their family at home, but the church is also a family for those who don’t have the joy and the privilege of having a home family.
   6. In today’s message, we will look at the church in Philippi.
      1. It is a model, a pattern, and an encouragement for our churches today.
      2. We will look at how this church was started.
      3. We will see the formation of God’s forever family.
      4. Philippians 1:1
         1. How did these saints get to be saints?
            1. There are only two categories of people in the world:

The saints

The ain’ts

You are either one or the other.

* + - * 1. The saints are those who are saved.
    1. We will look in Acts 16 at the founding of this church and see what lessons there are for us there.

1. the supernatural formation of the church (acts 16:6-32)
   1. The only thing that we have any right to ask anyone to believe about a church is that it is supernatural.
      1. The people of the world can build buildings.
      2. The people of the world can have organizations.
      3. But there needs to be a dimension to the church that cannot be explained by program, personality, propaganda, or planning.
         1. If it is not supernatural, then it will be superficial.
   2. The church at Philippi had a supernatural dimension as it got started.
   3. The restraint of the Spirit
      1. Acts 16:6-7
         1. This passage speaks of Paul (God’s missionary) and Silas.
         2. The Holy Spirit told them not to go to Asia.
            1. They were wanting to serve the Lord.
            2. Their motive was right, which was to preach the Gospel of Jesus.
            3. They were going into Asia and Bithynia, or so they thought.

But the Holy Spirit said not to go that way.

That was the restraint of the Spirit.

* + 1. When we teach another person how to drive, do we first show them the accelerator or the brake?
       1. We show them the brake.
       2. Before God will show us the accelerator, He must always show us the brake.
    2. If we are not interested in the restraint of the Spirit, then we will never know the release of the Spirit.
    3. The path of life is strewn with the wrecks of people who have high-powered engines and faulty brakes.
       1. They don’t know how to listen to God’s no.
       2. God’s no is as important as God’s go.
    4. It has been said that a fanatic is someone who, having lost sight of his goal, increases his speed.
    5. Do you know the restraint of the Spirit?
       1. Can God tell you no, and you will listen?
    6. We cannot choose the place of our service.
  1. The release of the Spirit
     1. Acts 16:9-10
     2. First, God told them no, and then He told them go.
        1. The result is the release of the Spirit.
     3. Sometimes God doesn’t give us what we want, but He gives us something better than what we wanted.
     4. Paul assayed to go into Bithynia and Asia, but the Holy Spirit told him to go to Greece and Macedonia instead.
        1. God opened up all of Europe for the preaching of the Gospel.
           1. God was supernaturally building His church.
  2. The results of the Spirit
     1. Acts 16:11-32
     2. Lydia, the seller of purple, heard Paul, and God touched her heart.
        1. She told Paul that he could start his Bible studies at her house.
           1. That was the beginning of that church.
        2. Acts 16:14
           1. God opened her heart.
           2. Soul winning takes on a new dimension when we know the restraint and the release of the Spirit.
     3. The demon-possessed girl followed Paul and Silas around the city of Philippi, saying that they were servants of the Most High God.
        1. Acts 16:16-18
        2. She was in the New Age, only the New Age was not new.
           1. It started in the Garden of Eden with Satan’s doubts about the Word of God.
        3. Paul tried to avoid her.
           1. We are to resist the devil, not chase him.
        4. Finally, Paul had enough and rebuked her in the name of Jesus and ran the devil out of her.
        5. The girl was saved.
     4. Paul and Silas ended up in jail because the demon-possessed girl who was saved had been making a lot of money for the men who were profiteering off of her.
        1. Acts 16:19-32
        2. Paul and Silas were beaten and put in the innermost part of the jail.
        3. They praised God and gave God glory.
           1. The prisoners in the jail had heard moaning; they had never heard praising.
           2. The prisoners had heard cursing; they had never heard praying.
        4. Paul and Silas prayed; God was pleased.
           1. God looked down and began to shake the whole jail.

There was an earthquake.

The bonds fell off of the prisoners.

* + - 1. The jailer (the hardened, prison guard) was ready to commit suicide, but Paul and Silas stopped him.
         1. All the prisoners were still there.
         2. They told him about Jesus, and the jailer was saved.
      2. When a church gets right with God, no matter how much persecution comes along, the devil cannot stop the revival.
         1. The revival went right into that jail.
  1. Paul was a philosopher.
     1. Who is the answer to the intellectual sophistication of our age?
        1. Jesus.
  2. Lydia was a businesswoman.
     1. Who is the answer to the deepest needs of a woman’s heart and militant feminism?
        1. Jesus.
  3. The demon-possessed girl was in the grip of the occult.
     1. Who is the answer to the occult?
        1. Jesus.
  4. The jailer was surrounded by prisoners and criminals.
     1. Who is the answer to the crime problem?
        1. Jesus.
  5. Through the restraint of the Spirit, the release of the Spirit, and the results of the Spirit, God puts people together in a forever family.

1. the sweet fellowship of god’s forever family (philippians 1:1-5)
   1. The Apostle Paul had these people in his heart.
      1. Paul couldn’t say this for the Corinthian church, but he could for the Philippian church.
      2. A supernatural formation always leads to sweet fellowship.
   2. Our fellowship is in the Gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.
      1. We may not know many of the people whom we attend church with.
         1. But if we know Jesus and they know Jesus, then that is enough.
   3. Fellowship is the bond that holds us together.
   4. The word “fellowship” is the Greek word “koinonia.”
      1. It means “to have something in common.”
         1. We have a common Lord, a common life, and a common love.
            1. That is what makes the fellowship of the church what it is.
   5. Here are three times where the word “koinonia” is used in the book of Philippians and how it is used:
      1. The fellowship of the Gospel
         1. Philippians 1:5
         2. The Gospel is the good news of Jesus Christ.
         3. If you want to have fellowship, then find a brother or sister who is interested in the Gospel of Jesus Christ and win someone to Jesus with that person.
            1. Two people who win a third person to Jesus Christ are never again the same.
            2. There is nothing that will bond someone’s heart to a brother or sister like soul winning together.
         4. The fellowship of the Gospel is the fellowship of winning people to Jesus Christ.
         5. Fellowship is not going to church and listening to a preacher.
            1. That is just observation.
         6. Fellowship is being in the trenches together.
            1. When we work and serve together to get out the Gospel, we become one in the Lord Jesus Christ.
         7. This is the fellowship of soul winning and service.
      2. The fellowship of the Spirit
         1. Philippians 2:1
         2. Get a prayer partner.
         3. Meet with someone, and study the Word of God together.
         4. Get in a Sunday school class and meet with someone from that class.
            1. Get some people on both of your hearts and begin to pray for those people.
            2. Let the Spirit of God meld you together.

So many churches are wired together, rusted together, or frozen together.

They need to be melded together by the Holy Spirit.

* + - 1. Two people who pray together are never the same.
         1. Get on your knees with someone and really begin to pray with them.
    1. The fellowship of suffering
       1. Philippians 3:10
       2. Find someone who is hurting and hurt with them.
          1. This world is full of people who need someone to love them and to put their arms around them.
       3. Paul said that he wanted to know the fellowship of Christ’s sufferings.
          1. How can we know this?

Matthew 25:40

* 1. Two people who win a soul together are never quite the same again.
  2. Two people who pray together are never quite the same again.
  3. Two people who cry together are never quite the same again.
  4. The church is not a club.
     1. We are one body in Christ.
     2. Quit being a spectator, and get into the church.

1. the sure future of the church (philippians 1:6)
   1. Who began the good work?
      1. Jesus.
      2. How did He do it?
         1. Through the Holy Spirit.
   2. We talk about building churches, but we don’t build churches.
      1. Jesus said, “I will build My church.”
         1. Matthew 16:18
         2. He didn’t say, “You will build My church.”
         3. He didn’t say, “I will build your church.”
   3. Philippians 1:6
      1. This is not talking about church buildings.
         1. One of these days, these buildings are going to be rust, dust, and rubble.
         2. The buildings are not the church.
            1. They are the church home.
      2. Jesus is the builder of the church; therefore, there is a sure future.
   4. How do you get saved?
      1. Do you think it was your idea to get saved?
         1. It wasn’t.
      2. The Bible says that there is none that seek after God.
         1. Romans 3:11
      3. 1 John 4:19
      4. He chose us.
      5. We are chosen of the Spirit, convicted of the Spirit, and then converted of the Spirit.
      6. We are completed by the Spirit.
         1. The chooser, the convicter, and the converter is the completer.
   5. Anything we start is not going to be finished.
      1. Everything is winding down to the grave.
         1. It is going into oblivion.
   6. But anything Jesus does is forever.
   7. Philippians 1:6
2. CONCLUSION
   1. What God does is forever.
   2. Jesus Christ is going to come again, and He will say, “Welcome home, children.”
      1. Thank God for His forever family.
   3. Do you know Jesus Christ?
      1. Not about Him, but do you know Him?
   4. Do you know if you died right now that you would go to Heaven?
      1. You can be absolutely certain of it, if you do it God’s way.
   5. Titus 3:5
      1. Quit trying to get to Heaven by being good.
   6. Romans 3:23
      1. Cast yourself on the mercy of God.
   7. The same Jesus who saved the Apostle Paul, the same Jesus who saved Lydia, the same Jesus who saved the fortune-telling girl, and the same Jesus who saved the hardened prison guard is the one who will save you today, if you will ask Him.
   8. Do you know Jesus personally? If not, you can pray to Him today by asking Him to come into your life.
   9. Call upon Jesus today. Repent (turn) from your sins, and turn to Jesus. Ask Him to forgive you of your sins, and acknowledge Him as Lord of your life.
      1. Romans 10:9-10
      2. Romans 10:13
      3. Acts 16:31
      4. John 3:16