

## SERMON OUTLINE

**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

- a) The early church lived in anticipation of the soon coming of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.
  - i) Not only the soon coming, but also the imminent coming.
    - (1) The “imminent coming” means “the any moment coming.”
- b) What do the following people have in common?
  - i) A Jewish philosopher who hated Christ and the very mention of Christ.
  - ii) A New Ager who was deep into the occult.
  - iii) A prison guard whose heart was filled with malignity and hate against all humankind.
  - iv) 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.
      - (a) The Jewish philosopher who was saved was the Apostle Paul.
      - (b) The New Ager was a demon-possessed girl who was saved by the Gospel of Christ.
      - (c) The prison guard was the jailer who was saved in a Philippian revival.
      - (d) 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.
      - (a) That is what a church is.
- c) 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.
  - i) 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.
  - ii) We are the family of God.
    - (1) A church is but an extended family.
- d) There are many people who don't have families.
  - i) The Apostle Paul didn't have a family.
    - (1) Scholars tell us that Paul, at one time, had been a married man.
      - (a) We don't know what happened to his wife.
  - ii) We don't know if Lydia, the seller of purple, was divorced, widowed, or never married.
    - (1) But she needed a family.
  - iii) The demon-possessed girl had become a slave.
    - (1) She needed a family.
  - iv) The brutal jailer needed a family.
  - v) There are a lot of people who need a family.

- e) 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.
- f) In today's message, we will look at the church in Philippi.
  - i) It is a model, a pattern, and an encouragement for our churches today.
  - ii) We will look at how this church was started.
  - iii) We will see the formation of God's forever family.
  - iv) Philippians 1:1
    - (1) How did these saints get to be saints?
      - (a) There are only two categories of people in the world:
        - (i) The saints
        - (ii) The ain'ts
          - 1. You are either one or the other.
      - (b) The saints are those who are saved.
  - v) We will look in Acts 16 at the founding of this church and see what lessons there are for us there.

## 2) THE SUPERNATURAL FORMATION OF THE CHURCH (ACTS 16:6-32)

- a) The only thing that we have any right to ask anyone to believe about a church is that it is supernatural.
  - i) The people of the world can build buildings.
  - ii) The people of the world can have organizations.
  - iii) 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.
- b) The church at Philippi had a supernatural dimension as it got started.
- c) The restraint of the Spirit
  - i) 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.
      - (a) They were wanting to serve the Lord.
      - (b) Their motive was right, which was to preach the Gospel of Jesus.
      - (c) They were going into Asia and Bithynia, or so they thought.
        - (i) But the Holy Spirit said not to go that way.
          - 1. That was the restraint of the Spirit.
  - ii) 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.
  - iii) If we are not interested in the restraint of the Spirit, then we will never know the release of the Spirit.
  - iv) 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.
- v) It has been said that a fanatic is someone who, having lost sight of his goal, increases his speed.
- vi) Do you know the restraint of the Spirit?
  - (1) Can God tell you no, and you will listen?
- vii) We cannot choose the place of our service.
- d) The release of the Spirit
  - i) Acts 16:9-10
  - ii) First, God told them no, and then He told them go.
    - (1) The result is the release of the Spirit.
  - iii) Sometimes God doesn't give us what we want, but He gives us something better than what we wanted.
  - iv) 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.
      - (a) God was supernaturally building His church.
- e) The results of the Spirit
  - i) Acts 16:11-32
  - ii) 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.
      - (a) That was the beginning of that church.
    - (2) Acts 16:14
      - (a) God opened her heart.
      - (b) Soul winning takes on a new dimension when we know the restraint and the release of the Spirit.
  - iii) 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.
      - (a) It started in the Garden of Eden with Satan's doubts about the Word of God.
    - (3) Paul tried to avoid her.
      - (a) 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.
  - iv) 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.

- (a) The prisoners in the jail had heard moaning; they had never heard praising.
    - (b) The prisoners had heard cursing; they had never heard praying.
  - (4) Paul and Silas prayed; God was pleased.
    - (a) God looked down and began to shake the whole jail.
      - (i) There was an earthquake.
      - (ii) The bonds fell off of the prisoners.
    - (5) The jailer (the hardened, prison guard) was ready to commit suicide, but Paul and Silas stopped him.
      - (a) All the prisoners were still there.
      - (b) They told him about Jesus, and the jailer was saved.
    - (6) When a church gets right with God, no matter how much persecution comes along, the devil cannot stop the revival.
      - (a) The revival went right into that jail.
  - f) Paul was a philosopher.
    - i) Who is the answer to the intellectual sophistication of our age?
      - (1) Jesus.
  - g) Lydia was a businesswoman.
    - i) Who is the answer to the deepest needs of a woman's heart and militant feminism?
      - (1) Jesus.
  - h) The demon-possessed girl was in the grip of the occult.
    - i) Who is the answer to the occult?
      - (1) Jesus.
  - i) The jailer was surrounded by prisoners and criminals.
    - i) Who is the answer to the crime problem?
      - (1) Jesus.
  - j) 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.
- 3) THE SWEET FELLOWSHIP OF GOD'S FOREVER FAMILY (PHILIPPIANS 1:1-5)
  - a) The Apostle Paul had these people in his heart.
    - i) Paul couldn't say this for the Corinthian church, but he could for the Philippian church.
    - ii) A supernatural formation always leads to sweet fellowship.
  - b) Our fellowship is in the Gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.
    - i) 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.
  - c) Fellowship is the bond that holds us together.
  - d) The word "fellowship" is the Greek word "koinonia."
    - i) It means "to have something in common."
      - (1) We have a common Lord, a common life, and a common love.
        - (a) That is what makes the fellowship of the church what it is.

- e) Here are three times where the word “koinonia” is used in the book of Philippians and how it is used:
- i) 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.
      - (a) Two people who win a third person to Jesus Christ are never again the same.
      - (b) 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.
      - (a) That is just observation.
    - (6) Fellowship is being in the trenches together.
      - (a) 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.
  - ii) 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.
      - (a) Get some people on both of your hearts and begin to pray for those people.
      - (b) Let the Spirit of God meld you together.
        - (i) So many churches are wired together, rusted together, or frozen together.
          1. They need to be melded together by the Holy Spirit.
    - (5) Two people who pray together are never the same.
      - (a) Get on your knees with someone and really begin to pray with them.
  - iii) The fellowship of suffering
    - (1) Philippians 3:10
    - (2) Find someone who is hurting and hurt with them.
      - (a) 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.
      - (a) How can we know this?
        - (i) Matthew 25:40
- f) Two people who win a soul together are never quite the same again.
  - g) Two people who pray together are never quite the same again.

- h) Two people who cry together are never quite the same again.
  - i) The church is not a club.
    - i) We are one body in Christ.
    - ii) Quit being a spectator, and get into the church.
- 4) THE SURE FUTURE OF THE CHURCH (PHILIPPIANS 1:6)
- a) Who began the good work?
    - i) Jesus.
    - ii) How did He do it?
      - (1) Through the Holy Spirit.
  - b) We talk about building churches, but we don't build churches.
    - i) 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."
  - c) Philippians 1:6
    - i) 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.
        - (a) They are the church home.
    - ii) Jesus is the builder of the church; therefore, there is a sure future.
  - d) How do you get saved?
    - i) Do you think it was your idea to get saved?
      - (1) It wasn't.
    - ii) The Bible says that there is none that seek after God.
      - (1) Romans 3:11
    - iii) 1 John 4:19
    - iv) He chose us.
    - v) We are chosen of the Spirit, convicted of the Spirit, and then converted of the Spirit.
    - vi) We are completed by the Spirit.
      - (1) The chooser, the convicter, and the converter is the completer.
  - e) Anything we start is not going to be finished.
    - i) Everything is winding down to the grave.
      - (1) It is going into oblivion.
  - f) But anything Jesus does is forever.
  - g) Philippians 1:6
- 5) CONCLUSION
- a) What God does is forever.
  - b) Jesus Christ is going to come again, and He will say, "Welcome home, children."
    - i) Thank God for His forever family.

- c) Do you know Jesus Christ?
  - i) Not about Him, but do you know Him?
- d) Do you know if you died right now that you would go to Heaven?
  - i) You can be absolutely certain of it, if you do it God's way.
- e) Titus 3:5
  - i) Quit trying to get to Heaven by being good.
- f) Romans 3:23
  - i) Cast yourself on the mercy of God.
- g) 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.
- h) Do you know Jesus personally? If not, you can pray to Him today by asking Him to come into your life.
- i) 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.
  - i) Romans 10:9-10
  - ii) Romans 10:13
  - iii) Acts 16:31
  - iv) John 3:16