



Pastor Toby Locke - Week 1  
January 7, 2018

## From Prison, With Love

(Philippians 1:1-8, 4:14-18)

Introduction: Hand-written letters clearly communicate: "I care."

### Opening Questions about this Personal Letter:

- ☐ Who is Writing this Letter? Paul (and Timothy)
- ☐ Who is Reading this Letter? Baby Christians in Philippi.
- ☐ Why did Paul write Philippians? It's a "Thank You" note!
  - For their close personal relationship with Paul (Phil. 1:3-8).
  - For their generous financial support (Phil. 1:5, 4:14-18).
  - For their loyalty to him in tough times (Phil. 1:7).
- ☐ What can we learn about "church" from all this?
  - "Church" is about what we have in common.
  - "Church" is supposed to be a family.
  - "Church" implies a shared mission.

Conclusion: Is your investment in "church" what God intends for it to be?



Debrief Plan: 1/7/2018

### Icebreakers:

1. Do you like getting handwritten letters? Why or why not?
2. Have you kept any hand-written letters from your younger days? Why did you choose to hold on to them?

Sermon Summary: Paul wrote a personal, hand-written note to his friends in Philippi to thank them for their loving care, their generous financial support, and their loyalty to him in tough times. This gives us insight into what God intends "church" to be, both then and now.

### Discussion Questions: (Read Philippians 1:1-8 and 4:14-18 together.)

1. Toby tried to make the case that the "books" of the New Testament shouldn't be read as "theological instruction manuals." Why not? What problems would that create? What might we miss if we do?
2. Some might say that Paul was an "unlikely" person to write Philippians because of his past. What is something that is true of your life now as a follower of Jesus that some people who knew your past might consider "unlikely"?
3. Make a long list together of all the things that followers of Jesus have in common. Why is it so easy for us to focus on the things that make us different?
4. What does it mean that a church is supposed to be a "family"? Be specific – no clichés in your answers! 😊
5. What do you think it means to "yearn for (a fellow believer) with the affection of Christ Jesus"? Is that even possible?
6. When you look at Philippians 1:1-8, what seems to be the mission that Paul shared with the Philippians?
7. Make a list of the wide variety of roles that "the church" needs individuals to live out in order to be successful in its mission.
8. What are some ways that we can support one another in the accomplishing of our shared mission?