



Season 8 Podcasts

The Affection of the Gospel

By

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So far in my 8th Season Podcast series I've shared thoughts with you about:

- 8 Rules for Bible Study
- 40 Rules for Ministry
- The Heart of the Gospel
- Defending and Confirming the Gospel
- Your Fellowship in the Gospel
- Completion of the Gospel

The next aspect I'd like to share with you is the 'Affection' of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

“For God is my witness, how greatly I long for you all with the affection of Jesus Christ.” Philippians 1:8

Paul’s letter to the Philippians demonstrates how deeply he loved the church in that city. I shared some of the history Paul had with the Christians in Philippi in an earlier podcast (The Fellowship of the Gospel). He was truly thankful for them and prayed regularly for them – ‘I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine making request for you all with joy.’

In verse 8 Paul wrote that God was his witness of how greatly he longed for them ‘with the affection of Jesus Christ.’ The Greek word for ‘long for’ is *epipotheó* and means ‘earnestly desire, yearn for, dote upon.’ The root word *epipoth* means ‘yearn affectionately, have a great affection for.’ Paul used an interesting turn of words when he wrote, ‘I long for you all with the affection of Jesus Christ.’ Paul first expressed his personal deep yearning and affection for the Philippians, then used a different word to express the affection that came from Jesus Christ. I think that’s something many Christians either miss or forget. Feeling a deep ‘yearning of affection’ for

another Christian isn't something that emanates from us. It comes from the 'affection' that Jesus Christ has for His people. The Spirit of Christ living in us shares the Lord's deep affection in and through us toward others.

The Greek word for 'affection' is *splagchnon* and means 'tender mercy, inward affection, pity.' The idea of the word in an emotional sense was a feeling of deep 'empathy' and 'sympathy' for others. The word in a physical sense was about 'internal organs' and carried the idea of 'gut level compassion.' That explains why the King James Version chose the word 'bowels' in translating the Greek.

Paul loved the Philippians and felt deep compassion and empathy for them and what they were facing as Christians living in a pagan society. As we read through Paul's letter to the Philippians we learn that the Christians in Philippi were also dealing with many 'adversaries,' including internal strife within the church. Though we are living almost two thousand years after Paul wrote this letter to the Christians in Philippi, not much has changed. Christians across the world find

themselves living in a pagan society facing many adversaries, including internal strife within their churches.

That's one reason I'm so committed to sharing this podcast series with you. The lessons we can learn from Philippians, and the other letters that Paul wrote, are as meaningful and helpful to Christians today as the day he wrote them. We need to look deep into the Word of God, and deep into our own hearts and minds, to see if we are learning and living out those lessons.

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In Christ's Love and Grace,

Mark McGee

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