

Shaping Our Young

Read Philippians 1:3-11

³I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, ⁴always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, ⁵because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. ⁶And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ. ⁷It is right for me to feel this way about you all, because I hold you in my heart, for you are all partakers with me of grace,^[a] both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel. ⁸For God is my witness, how I yearn for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus. ⁹And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, ¹⁰so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, ¹¹filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

Partners in the gospel (v3-7)

The mission work in our chaplaincies is not just for the full-time chaplains but for *each* and every member of the CCR family.

In the same way, Paul's prayer thanked *each* member of the Philippian church for being partners in the gospel with Paul. The Philippians collectively supported Paul by giving gifts (4:15-16) whilst he was imprisoned, and they also made defense and confirmation of the gospel (1:7).

Paul was sure that God who began a good work in the Philippians will bring it to completion at the day of Christ. Just as God has begun His work in the Philippians, *He will* bring it to completion. He has gathered us to be partners of the gospel. This gospel will spread throughout the world and be brought to completion until He returns.

DISCUSS

- 1) How does knowing that our partnership in the gospel is being both started and completed by God, encourage us as we labour for the gospel work? (Whether to our friends, family, co-workers, or the chaplaincy ministry.)**

The Love of God (9a)

Paul prays that the Philippians' love may abound more and more. Love must be the hallmark of the church because God is love. And this love isn't merely a feeling but a love in action. We see this most clearly in Jesus Christ, in his sacrificial love for us.

Jesus showed compassion and love for the children (Lk 18:15-17). This story is placed between the stories of the self-righteous Pharisees and the self-sufficient ruler. Luke, therefore, emphasizes how helpless little children are, in contrast to the wisdom of the world. It is those who are dependent on God and not self who will receive the kingdom of God. God loves the little children.

As a church with two chaplaincies, we are also to love our neighbours with a sacrificial love.

2) What are practical ways we can show Christ's love to the students and staff in our chaplaincies?

The Knowledge of Christ (v9b)

Paul also prays that their love will abound *with knowledge*. Such knowledge is not academic, but spiritual, revealed to us by God — about Himself, mankind, and creation. We are to love *with* a knowledge of God in the person of Christ.

The chaplaincy ministries are a precious opportunity to share the knowledge of God. Whilst students learn important knowledge about subjects like English, Math, and Science, we are to share with them the most valuable knowledge of *knowing* God.

3) How can we help young people develop godly wisdom in a world full of competing voices?

Discernment in the Spirit (v9c-11)

Discernment is the ability to weigh a matter in right judgment with regards to what is right and wrong.

There are two outcomes to such discernment

Firstly, that they may approve what is excellent and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ (v10). The most excellent choice is to follow Christ, because it is through Him alone that we can be pure and blameless.

Secondly is to be filled with the fruit of righteousness (v11a). While academic success is important, the ultimate goal is to bear the fruit of righteousness through having faith in Jesus Christ (v11b).

Therefore, the message of the gospel must be shared and lived in the school. This is crucial for each and every student in both St. Hilda's Primary and Secondary schools during their time here. We all have a part to play in this gospel mission.

4) In what ways can you personally support this mission? The chaplaincy ministry has provided us 3 ways: to give, pray, and serve.

Pray:

1. Pray for the students – That they will have open hearts to encounter Jesus and grow in faith during their time in school.
2. Pray for the chaplains and teachers – That they will have wisdom, strength, and love as they minister to the students and staff.
3. Pray for the church's role – That more members will be stirred to support the chaplaincy through giving, praying, and serving.