

## Philippians 1: Radical Philosophy

Paul again. Under the transforming inspiration of the Holy Spirit this persecutor-turned-apostle wrote 13 of the 26 books in the New Testament!

After years of missionary journeys, church-planting, pastoring and teaching he is now imprisoned and knows he is facing possible execution. That doesn't stop him writing a thankyou letter to the fellowship in Philippi, whose members had sent him a gift!

Sometimes called 'the Epistle of Joy', it's remarkably cheerful and upbeat. Paul is confident that God's plan of grace will prevail, despite failings within the Church and harsh opposition from outside.

Knowing the crucified and risen Christ has given him a radical philosophy on life. He doesn't mind dying for that will mean 'departing 'to be with the Lord which he reckons will be 'better by far'. (v 23)

He doesn't actually seem too bothered by suffering in the short term, counting it an honour to do so for the Master! He chooses to focus on the positive encouragement others have gained from his 'chains'.

With thanks and affection he assures them of his prayers, 'being confident of this, that He Who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.' (v 6)

Radical philosophy for a cruel and disillusioned 21<sup>st</sup> century! Maybe we could call it 'Spirit-inspired optimism'.

Or maybe something simpler.

'Christianity' for example.