

# Speaking to the Soul



## Slaves of Christ

**This letter is from Paul and Timothy, slaves of Christ Jesus. I am writing to all of God's holy people in Philippi who belong to Christ Jesus, including the church leaders and deacons. Philippians 1:1–2**

The apostle Paul was absolutely clear that it is not what you know but who you know that really matters in life. And so he began this warm and encouraging letter by focusing on Jesus. It was Paul's relationship with the Lord that compelled him to write this letter and he identified the fact

that, as a community, the Philippian church belonged to Jesus.

Paul described his own relationship with Jesus as being that of a slave. Philippi was a busy Roman colony and there would have been huge numbers of slaves, probably about 20 per cent of the population. Everyone would have understood what Paul was saying. Slaves were owned by their master, who totally controlled their lives to the extent that they didn't even possess their own bodies. They had no ancestors, no name and could have no possessions. On the face of it that all sounds pretty grim, but Paul's discovery was that to be a slave of the best master of all, the Lord Jesus Christ, was the most joyful and liberated way of life. He was delighted to be entirely controlled by Christ and Christ's agenda.

Paul first visited Philippi on his second missionary journey (Acts 16:11–40) and there, as we read, he met Lydia who became the first Christian convert in Europe. Lydia opened her home to Paul and that's where the first church in the city was established. In his letter, he described the Christian community in Philippi being God's holy people who belong to Christ Jesus. He was affirming the fact that they, too, were slaves of Christ.

Every day we are all under pressure from many directions, just like the Philippians. And the same is true for us as it was for them – it's not what we know, but who we know that counts. Knowing Jesus as our saviour and Lord is everything.

## **QUESTION**