

# Speaking to the Soul



## Partnership

**Every time I think of you, I give thanks to my God. Whenever I pray, I make my requests for all of you with joy, for you have been my partners in spreading the Good News about Christ from the time you first heard it until now. Philippians 1:3–5**

I love this Philippian letter because it is so full of bubbling joy. That's particularly remarkable because Paul was in prison as he wrote these words! Paul had three spells in prison which we know about and we can't be sure which

one this is, but most people think that he was in Rome at the time. His life was on the line and on a number of occasions he spoke as if his end might be very close. But nothing stopped his torrent of joyfulness.

Paul was particularly grateful for his Christian brothers and sisters in Philippi. He was there when the church in that city was founded and only had to think about them to feel joyful. Christian fellowship is always an amazing and miraculous gift. The only reason we have a relationship with our Christian brothers and sisters is because of our relationship with Jesus, and it is constantly strengthened by his presence with us. There is much to be joyful about but it is all too easy for us to focus on the negative side of church life. Paul was fully aware of the problems facing the Philippian fellowship, but they were insignificant alongside the blessing of their unity in Christ.

The partnership that Paul enjoyed with the Christians in Philippi had a very specific purpose. Their focus was to share the good news about Jesus. Churches exist for many purposes including worship, fellowship and service but, if we are to remain faithful to Jesus' Great Commission, we are always under an obligation to share the gospel as widely as possible. The people of Philippi, like our own society, would have had little or no knowledge of the Christian message and the only way they were going to hear it was if the Church committed themselves to spreading it. What activity could possibly be more joyful than that – for the Philippian church or for us?

## **QUESTION**