

I thank my God every time I remember you, constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you, because of your sharing in the gospel from the first day until now.
Philippians 1:3-5

Paul's words to the Philippians convey such a beautiful sentiment, "I thank my God upon every remembrance of you." Certainly there are objects or songs or situations that remind us of important people in our life. Perhaps those things remind us to be thankful, too: thankful for those who taught us the gospel, for those who supported us in prayer, for those who came to our defense, for those who befriended us or remained our friend when we needed one the most, and for those who nurtured our faith.

Paul's words are even more powerful when we realize they were written from prison. How can he be so thankful? How can he speak of joy while he is in chains?

The answer appears in the same verse, if we pause long enough for a careful and meditative reading of the Scripture.

Paul is "constantly praying," and that conduit and communication with God is his lifeline. It keeps him focused outside himself on the needs of others and on the work of spreading the gospel. This daily, hourly, minute-by-minute relationship with Jesus allows him to experience thankfulness and joy in the midst of his own suffering. It gives him insight to see that "what has happened to me has actually helped to spread the gospel" (verse 12).

In a season when extra attention is paid to thanks giving, let Paul be our model of true thankfulness and joy, found in holy conversation with our Lord Jesus Christ.

Philippians 4:23 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit,

~ Pastor Chris