

Philippians 1: 1-11

Luke 14: 1-6

Paul opens his letter to the Philippians with words of encouragement, affirmation, and joy. He can do this because he recognises the degree to which they are following his example of spreading the good news. Paul is encouraged in his own ministry too, by the way the Philippians have persevered, and continue to persevere, through good times and bad, just as he has and does. He feels joyful because they, "...have shared the privileges which have been mine: both my chains and my work defending and establishing the gospel. We all need the encouragement of others! Paul's prayer should reflect our own, that, "Your love for each other may increase more and more and never stop improving your knowledge and deepening your perception so that you can always recognise what is best." Thus, eventually reaching the perfect goodness of eternity in Christ.

When Jesus goes for a meal at the home of one of the leading Pharisees, it is a sabbath day. A holy day when the Jews are called to rest from all types of work. So, when Jesus cures the man with dropsy, he is seen by the pharisees as breaking the law of Moses. No encouragement here. None of the love and compassion which Jesus, Paul, the Philippian community, and we, are called to recognise and promote.

Jesus says, "Which of you here, if his son falls into a well, or his ox, will not pull him out on a sabbath day without hesitation?" In God's law, love always comes first!