



March 25, 2020

### ***PAUL'S PRAYER FROM ISOLATION***

*"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."*

Isn't it a wonderful message? This is how the apostle Paul began his letter to a congregation of Christians in Philippi. (This letter is known as the book of Philippians in the New Testament. It's a short read, and a great place to begin reading the Bible on your own).

Paul's first message is especially meaningful when we remember that he wrote this letter from a place of isolation. Paul wrote this letter during one of his times in prison.

Of course, it is foolish to compare imprisonment to the isolation of the Massachusetts "stay at home" advisory. Even the more severe restrictions during this pandemic do not compare to the terrible experience of living in prison, and I raise my prayers to God for all those who are currently incarcerated in any form.

Still, I find a new resonance these days in Paul's words. Paul was isolated, but his desire to remain in community was strong, and his thoughts of others turned him to prayers of joy. Written letters were the original text messages.

I am grateful that we have many more ways of communicating from isolation than Paul did, but while some things have drastically changed in two thousand years, others have not changed so much.

And so I affirm these words as my message to all of you:

*"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."*

Peace,

Rev. Dr. Matthew Wooster  
Senior Minister