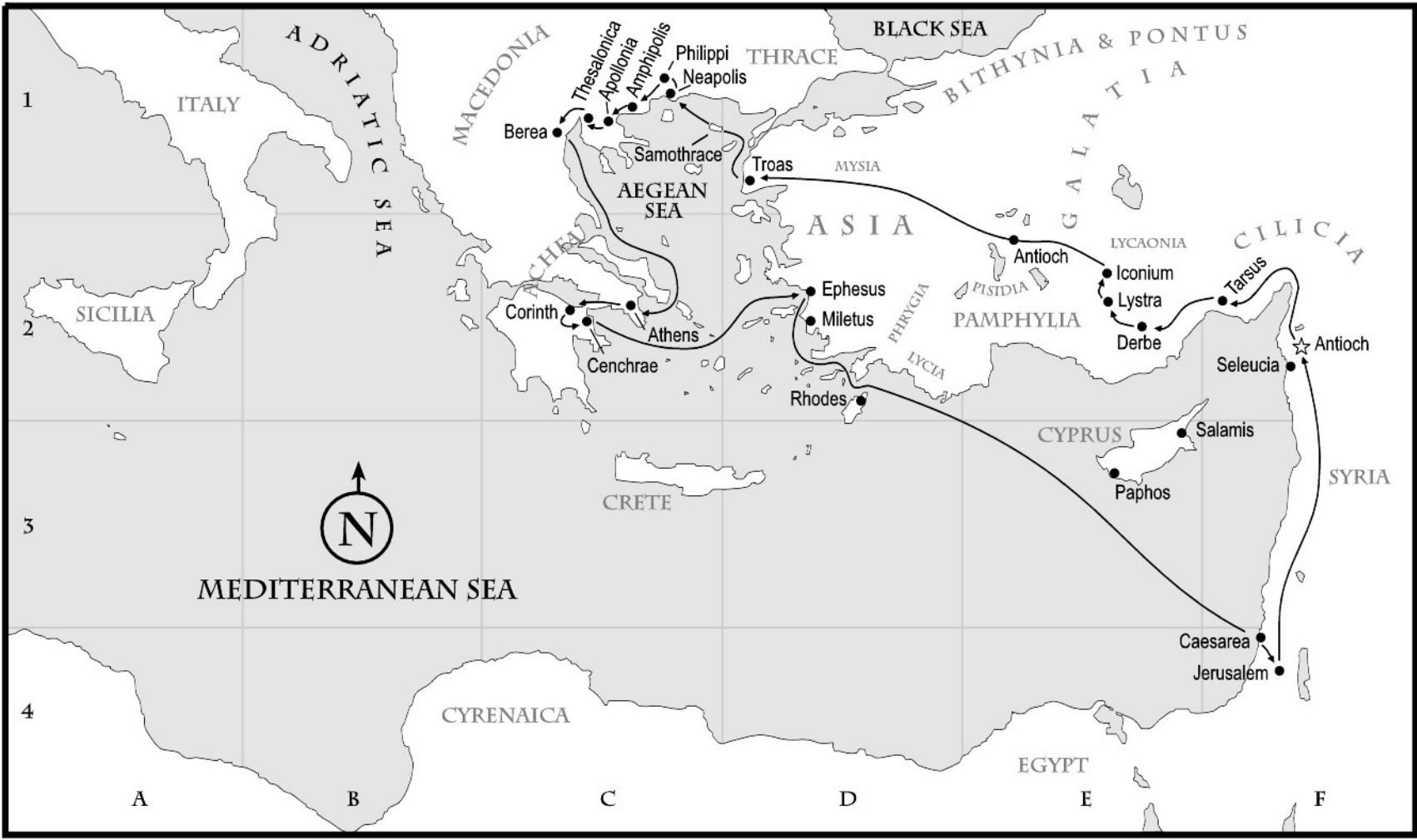




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Spring Retreat  
2016  
Philippians



## PHILIPPIANS – Introduction

Martha Lair

*“Philippians is Paul’s love letter to the church at Philippi.”*

### I. Philippi

A. City in Macedonia, ancient name was Crenides, “Little Fountains”. There were numerous springs in the area. About 9 miles inland from the Mediterranean Sea

- The area had rich gold and silver deposits
- It became the sectional headquarters of the Egnatian Way, a natural 500 mile trade route from East to West, Asia to Europe
- Today the town is not inhabited and is marked by the ruins of an amphitheater and a great temple

B. Philip II of Macedon repaired the town and beautified it. He like the town so much that he named it after himself - PHILIPPI

- Used the gold from the area to enlarge his army and for bribery
- Reported that 1000 talents/per year in gold and silver were taken from the mines
- Philip died before he could conquer the world but his son Alexander the Great would do just that

### C. Roman occupation

- By the time the Romans took over the area, two centuries later, the mines were exhausted
- There was a famous Roman battle in the area. In 42 B.C., Brutus and Cassius (who had assassinated Julius Caesar) fought Octavian and Mark Anthony. 16,000 of their followers died in the fight. Eventually Octavian and Mark Anthony won. Octavian would be renamed Caesar Augustus some 15 years later.
- Augustus made it a colony of Rome, lavishing Roman money rebuilding and enlarging it.
- The inhabitants possessed many privileges, including exemption from taxes, freedom from the regulations of the provincial governors and political autonomy; The colonists were given rights of Roman citizens

### D. Characteristic qualities of the Philippians during the times of Paul

- It is the least Jewish of any of the places featured in Pauline literature
  - No Hebrew names are found in the list of converts in this church mentioned in the N.T.

- Paul went to worship at a place of prayer by the river suggesting that there was no synagogue. Which indicates that there were fewer than ten Jewish men in Philippi
- Women were prominent in the congregation from the first.
- Lydia brings her whole family with her into the church.
- Lydia's home being the base of operations for Paul's evangelism of the city.
- ISBE – "There seem to be no theological differences in their company. That may testify to the fact that most of them were women."
- They seem to be more mindful of Paul's comfort than any of his other converts were. They raised money for Paul's support and forwarded it to him again and again.
- Diversity marked the Philippian population. Philippi had both Greek and Roman characteristics. In the Acts 16 account of the first converts, three are mentioned, one is from Asia, one a native Greek and one a Roman official.
- Extraordinary liberality characterized them, Phil 4:15-17; 4:18 2Cor. 8:2-5; 2Cor 11:8-9. They gave themselves to the Lord and to Paul (8:5); they gave beyond their power (8:3); II Cor. 11:8,9.

## II. Paul –

- Paul suffered hard things in Philippi, scourging, and stocks but he didn't hold it against the Philippians
- Although he discusses himself in the book, the focus is not on him but on Christ. 2:5-12; 3:7-11
- In this letter, "Paul was not the cool logician, profound theologian, or impassioned defender of the faith. Rather he was a man writing from his heart to his friends."
- Paul made a special effort to visit the church in Philippi. On his third missionary journey, after nearly 3 years in Ephesus, he traveled to Macedonia (Acts 20:1; 2 Cor. 2:13; 7:5) where Philippi was located. At the end of the third journey he left Corinth and headed for Jerusalem.

## III. Church in Philippi

- During Paul's second missionary journey, (52 A.D.) he took Silas and went up through Galatia, modern day Turkey, and revisited some of the churches he helped to establish such as Lystra and Derby. In Lystra he met Timothy and took Timothy with him
- The churches beginnings were small, Lydia and her household, the jailer and his household
- The bond between Paul and the church in Philippi was unusually close. The description of the start of the church in Philippi was narrated at an unusual length in Acts 16.
- Possibly the first church in Europe
- When Paul left Philippi to go to Thessalonica with Silas and Timothy, Luke was apparently left behind in Philippi. See Acts 16:10 "we sought to go to Macedonia," Acts 17:1, 14. Acts 20:6 Luke again refers to "us" and obviously was with Paul again when he went through Philippi on his way back to Jerusalem.

#### IV. Book of Philippians

- Author is the Holy Spirit. The writer is Paul. One of the few books where the authorship is not questioned.
- One of the four prison epistles: Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon and Philippians
- Written from prison, Phil. 1:7, 13, 14, 17.
- Written about 60/62 A.D. at the end of his imprisonment as he expected to be released soon (see 2:24).
- Was it written from Rome or one of his other imprisonments? He was imprisoned in Ephesus (55 A.D.; Acts 20:17, 31) and in Caesarea (A.D. 58; Acts 24:27); and in Rome (A.D. 60-62) Rome is likely because his imprisonment in the cause of Christ has become well known throughout the whole praetorian guard and to everyone else." (2:13) Praetorian guard: Acts 23:35, John 18:28, 33; 19:9.
- Speculation by some it was earlier than the letters written to Ephesians, Colossians or Philemon. Some say it was the last of the four written which would make it toward the end of Paul's imprisonment in Rome.
- "Not an essay or treatise of any kind but a personal letter to beloved friends, and it runs along the same somewhat rambling fashion of any personal letter." It is a simple letter to personal friends.
  - It is a letter of love.
  - It is a letter of joy.
  - It is a letter of theological importance.

#### V. Biblical Characters associated with Philippi-

- Timothy – Joined Paul in the area of Lystra and Derbe, (Acts 16: traveled with him to Philippians; Paul hoped to send Timothy back to them. 2:19
- Luke – Joined Paul in Troas (Acts 16:10), remained in Philippi when Paul went on Thessalonica (Acts 17:1), joined Paul again when Paul returned through Philippi (Acts 20:6).
- Silas – Accompanied Paul on his second missionary journey, was imprisoned in Philippi with Paul, left Philippi with Paul.
- Lydia – not mentioned in the book
- Jailer – not mentioned in the book
- Epaphroditus – Greek, took the contribution gathered by the Philippians to Paul. He risked his life to work with Paul; was sent back to Philippi. Mentioned only in Philippians.
- Euodia – woman in the church in Philippi. Mentioned only in Philippians.
- Syntyche – woman in the church in Philippi. Mentioned only in Philippians.
- Clement – fellow worker with Paul. Mentioned only in Philippians. Speculation that he is Clement of Rome, elder in Rome during the first century.

#### VI. Key Words:

- Christ – 37-42 times – the Anointed One. The spirit of Christ and the grace of Christ are in the entire epistle. “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit” 4:23.
- Jesus – 21 times – 19 times with Christ, i.e. Christ Jesus or Jesus Christ – Literally Jehovah is salvation.
- Lord – 9 times by itself, in combination with Jesus or Jesus Christ - 5 times
- Joy – 15 times – gladness, rejoice, cause or occasion of joy, to rejoice with, take part in another’s joy
- 5 times – Chara – joy gladness, receive joy from you, the cause or occasion of joy. Used 59 times in NT, 5 times in Philippians; 1:4; 1:26; 2:29; 2:2; 4:1
- 7 times – Chairō – Rejoice, be glad, exceedingly joyful, 68 times in NT, 7 times in Philippians; 1:18; 2:17-18; 2:28; 3:1; 4:4; 4:10
- 1 time – sugchairō - with joy or with gladness, to take part in another’s joy, rejoice together, 7 times in NT, 1 time in Philippians 2:17-18
- Mind, attitude, think (or ponder) and remembrance
- “In Christ” – 16 times (see 1:1, 26; 4:4)

VII. Common characteristics of a letter in the first century:

- Identification of the writer: “Paul and Timothy, bond-servants of Christ Jesus.” (1:1a)
- Identification of those addressed: “To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi including the overseers and deacons.” (1:1b)
- Salutation: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ” (1:2)
- Thanksgiving: “I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, always offering prayer with joy in my every prayer for you all, in view of your participation in the gospel from the first day until now” (1:3-5; plus vv. 6-11)
- Message: the body of the letter (1:12-4:20)
- Greetings: It was common to close the body of the letter with additional words of blessing and greetings. Paul did this (4:21-23)

VIII. Outline:

Malone, Press to the Prize: studies in Philippians, p. 17, 18.

Ch. 1: Christ is our purpose (see v. 21)

Ch. 2: Christ is our pattern (see v. 5)

Ch. 3: Christ is our prize (see vv. 13, 14)

Ch. 4: Christ is our provision (see vv. 13, 19)

Roper, Truth for Today Commentary, Ephesians & Philippians, p. 377.

1. Paul’s salutation (1:1, 2)

2. Thanksgiving and prayer for the Philippians (1:3-11)

3. Insight on Paul's imprisonment – and suffering in general (1:12-30)
4. Encouragement to foster unity by being humble and obedient – as Christ was (2:1-18)
5. A plan to send Timothy in the future and a plan to send Epaphroditus immediately (2:19-30)
6. Warnings against false teachers, with Paul himself held up as the proper example to follow (3:1-21)
7. Miscellaneous exhortations – for unity, joy, and right thinking (4:1-9)
8. Granting expressed for their gift, with teaching on contentment (4:10-20)
9. Conclusion – with personal greetings and blessings (4:21-23).

#### Bibliography:

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Orr, James, General Editor, International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, (Materials in the Public Domain, 1915)

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Roper, David L., Truth for Today Commentary, Ephesians & Philippians, (Resource Publications, 2009)



# Philippians 1

Kristy Huntsman

❖ **1:1-Paul and Timothy, bond-servants of Christ Jesus, To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, including the overseers and deacons:**

- This letter is from Paul and Timothy to the church at Philippi
- Notice the emphasis throughout the letter on the phrase “in Christ Jesus” or similar wording. Paul emphasizes their common ground from verse 1.
- Paul understands that the issues he will bring up in this letter will require action by the congregational leaders so he addresses them specifically in the introduction.
- Definitions:
  - Bond-servants (DOULOS)-one who is solely committed and subject to another, slave
  - Saints (HAGIOS)-the holy ones, believers, loyal followers of Christ, consecrated to God

❖ **1:2- Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.**

- “Grace and Peace” was a typical greeting in Paul’s letters. Grace (CHARIS) being a common Greek greeting and Peace (EIRENE) being a common Jewish greeting.
- Paul puts the focus on the fact that the grace and peace come from God the Father and Jesus
- Definitions:
  - Grace (CHARIS)-a beneficent disposition toward someone, favor, grace, gracious care, goodwill
  - Peace (EIRENE)-a state of well-being, peace

❖ 1:3- I thank my God in all my remembrance of you,

- Paul begins this letter on a positive note, he wants this congregation to understand the depth of the love he has for them.
- It is evident that the Philippian church has done something worthy of Paul's appreciation.
- Notice that he says ALL here, every time he prays for the Philippian congregation he is thankful, even when he is praying about their problems.
- Definitions:
  - Thank (EUCARISTO)-the express appreciation for benefits or blessings, give thanks, express thanks
  - Remembrance (MNEIA)-mention someone in prayer

❖ 1:4- always offering prayer with joy in my every prayer for you all,

- Notice Paul's emphasis on words like all and every in these verses. Paul wants them to understand the attitude he has toward them continually. It does not change with circumstances.
- This is not the typical word used for prayer. This insinuates an urgent request for something.
- Definitions:
  - Offering (POIEO)-to do something, to be active in some way
  - Prayer (DEESIS)-urgent request to meet a need, exclusively addressed to God
  - Joy (CHARA)-the experience of gladness, joy

❖ 1:5- in view of your participation in the gospel from the first day until now.

- We finally discover what is that Paul is so thankful about, their work in spreading the gospel.

- Gospel is a keyword in chapter 1 appearing 6 times (9 times total in the entire book). Paul wants to focus on their ultimate goal and what they should be united for.
- The very word he uses for participation (KOINONIA) implies togetherness and fellowship. This is a key concept in this letter.
- Definitions:
  - Participation (KOINONIA)-close association involving mutual interests and sharing, association, fellowship, close relationship
  - Gospel (EUANGELION)-good news, proclamation, good news of Jesus Christ

❖ **1:6- For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.**

- Paul is continually putting their focus where it should be, the work of Christ and their eternal goal.
- Definitions:
  - Confident (PEITHO)-to be so convinced that one puts confidence in something, depend on, trust in
  - Good (AGATHOS)-something meeting a high standard of worth and merit
  - Work (ERGON)-Deed or accomplishment
  - Perfect (EPITELEO)-to finish something, to bring something to a designed end

❖ **1:7- For it is only right for me to feel this way about you all, because I have you in my heart, since both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, you all are partakers of grace with me.**

- In some letters Paul goes out of his way to establish apostolic authority to his audience. Here he does almost the opposite, he is emphasizing the equality and fellowship they have in their sharing of the gospel and in the grace God has given them.
- The words think, feel, dwell on will be keywords throughout this letter. A big part of dealing with the contentious situations within their congregation will be in taking control of their minds and emotions.
- Definitions:
  - Right (DIKAIOS)-in line with certain requirements of justice, right, fair, equitable
  - Feel (PHRONEO)-to have an opinion with regard to something, think, hold an opinion
  - Defense (APOLOGIA)-the act of making a defense
  - Confirmation (BEBAIOSIS)-process of establishing or confirming something, confirmation, validation
  - Gospel (EUANGELION)- good news, proclamation, good news of Jesus Christ
  - Partakers (SYNKOINONOS)-participant, partner
  - GRACE (CHARIS)- a beneficent disposition toward someone, favor, grace, gracious care, goodwill

❖ **1:8- For God is my witness, how I long for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus.**

- Paul is demonstrating selfless love for them and will expect them to show the same selfless love for one another.
- Definitions:
  - Witness (MARTYS)-one who affirms or attests, testifier, witness
  - Long for (EPIPOTHEO)-have a strong desire for something, with implication of need

- Affection (SPLANCHNON)-a feeling of love or affection so deep it reaches the most inner parts

❖ **1:9- And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment,**

- Notice that Paul connects the idea of love and knowledge. The emotions must be tempered with thought. Our minds must be engaged in how we interact and view one another.
- Definitions:
  - Pray (PROSEUCHOMAI)-to pray or petition a deity
  - Love (AGAPE)-the quality of warm regard for and interest in another, esteem, affection, self-sacrificial love
  - Abound (PERISSEUE)-to be present in abundance
  - Real Knowledge (EPIGNOSIS)- knowledge, recognition, a knowledge of the truth
  - Discernment (AISTHESEI)-capacity to understand, discernment, denoting moral understanding

❖ **1:10- so that you may approve the things that are excellent, in order to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ;**

- Paul wants their love to abound more and more *SO THAT* they can approve the things that are excellent
- Their focus should be on the things that are worth more than themselves—Christ and the spreading of His kingdom
- If their focus is on the higher things, then it will be more difficult for them to harbor hidden motives in their hearts. It will also cause the offenses they have been committing to one another to disappear.
- Definitions:

- Approve (DOKIMAZO)-to make a critical examination of something to determine genuineness, put to the test, examine
- Excellent (DIAPHERO) – to be worth more than, to be superior to
- Sincere (EILIKRINES)- to be sincere, without hidden motives or pretense, pure; literally “unmixed, without alloy”
- Blameless (APROSKOPOS)- to be without fault because of not giving offense

❖ **1:11- having been filled with the fruit of righteousness which comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.**

- This is not a goal they can achieve on their own, only through the righteousness that comes from Christ
- The ultimate goal of all of this is the glory and praise of God
- Glory will be a keyword throughout Philippians. Everything they do or think about should focus back and bring glory to God.
- Definitions:
  - Having Been Filled (PLEROO)-to make full, fill
  - Fruit (KARPOS)-the produce or outcome of something, fruit
  - Righteousness (DIKAIOSYNE)-the quality or characteristic of upright behavior, uprightness, righteousness
  - Glory (DOXA)-honor as enhancement or recognition of status or performance, fame, recognition, renown, honor, prestige
  - Praise (EPAINOS)-the act of expressing admiration or approval

❖ **1:12- Now I want you to know, brethren, that my circumstances have turned out for the greater progress of the gospel,**

- Paul will now exit the introduction and begin discussing his current circumstances. His purpose in doing so is to highlight his selfless attitude. It

didn't matter what his circumstances, the most important thing was that the gospel was being spread.

- Definitions:
  - Know (GINOSKO)-to have come to the knowledge of, have come to know
  - Brethren (ADELPHOS)-a person viewed as a brother in terms of close affinity, brother, fellow member
  - Progress (PROKOPE)-a movement forward to an improved state, progress, advancement, furtherance
  - Gospel (EUANGELION)- good news, proclamation, good news of Jesus Christ

❖ **1:13- so that my imprisonment in *the cause of Christ* has become well known throughout the whole praetorian guard and to everyone else,**

- Paul will begin the list of all of the great things that occurred while he was in prison. He could have focused on his suffering, instead he focuses on the progress of God's kingdom.
- Because of his imprisonment, the soldiers and everyone else learned about the gospel. This means he must have been continually discussing it with everyone.
- Definitions:
  - Well Known (PHANEROS)-become evident so as to be readily known, visible, clear, plainly to be seen
  - Praetorian Guard (PRAITORION)-the praetor's tent camp with it's surroundings, the governmental headquarters

❖ **1:14- and that most of the brethren, trusting in the Lord because of my imprisonment, have far more courage to speak the word of God without fear.**

- Another effect of Paul's imprisonment was that others became bolder in sharing the gospel.
- Once again, this positive effect is directly related to furthering God's kingdom.
- Definitions:
  - Trusting (PEITHO) -to be so convinced that one puts confidence in something
  - Courage (TOLMAO)- to show boldness or resolution in the face of danger
  - Fear (APHOBOS)-fearlessly, without fear of what might happen

❖ **1:15- Some, to be sure, are preaching Christ even from envy and strife, but some also from good will;**

- Even while the gospel is being spread, there are two opposite motivations. Some have pure motives, but some spread the gospel because of jealousy and with the wrong motivations.
- Definitions:
  - Envy (PHTHONOS)-jealousy, envy
  - Strife (ERIS) -engagement in rivalry especially with reference to positions taken in a matter, strife, discord, contention
  - Good Will (EUDOKIA) -state or condition of being kindly disposed

❖ **1:16- the latter *do it* out of love, knowing that I am appointed for the defense of the gospel;**

- The latter=those who preach from good will
- The proper motivation of preaching the gospel should be love.
- Definitions:



- Love (AGAPE)-the quality of warm regard for and interest in another, esteem, affection, self-sacrificial love
- Knowing (OIDA) -to know, understand how, be able
- Appointed (KEIMAI)-to have a place, to be appointed, set, destined
- Defense (APOLOGIA)-the act of making a defense
- Gospel (EUANGELION)- good news, proclamation, good news of Jesus Christ

❖ **1:17- the former proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition rather than from pure motives, thinking to cause me distress in my imprisonment.**

- The former=those who preach from envy and strife
- Paul points to the mind of these people once again. It is so important to keep our minds focused where they should be.
- These people purposefully set out to cause Paul distress, but were unsuccessful because of his mindset.
- Definitions:
  - Selfish Ambition (ERITHEIA)-selfishness, strife, contentiousness
  - Pure Motives (HAGNOS)-purely, sincerely
  - Thinking (OIOMAI)-to consider something to be true but with a component of tentativeness, think, suppose, expect
  - Distress (THLIPSIS)-inward experience of distress, affliction, trouble

❖ **1:18- What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed; and in this I rejoice. Yes, and I will rejoice,**

- It doesn't matter why God's word is being preached, Paul focuses on the simple fact that it is.
- It would be easy for Paul, in his position, to get caught up in personal attacks toward him, but since his focus is on one singular goal—the progress of the gospel—he can always find reason to rejoice

- Joy probably the thing Philippians is most well-known for as it is one of the most common keywords in this letter. Pay attention each time this word is used; it always points towards finding joy in the furtherance of God's plan. It is joy based on a common goal!
- Definitions:
  - Pretense (PROPHASIS)-falsely alleged motive
  - Truth (ALETHEIA)- an actual event or state, reality
  - Proclaimed (KATANGELLO)-to make known in public, with implication of broad dissemination, proclaim announce
  - Rejoice (CHAIRO)-to be in a state of happiness and well-being, rejoice, be glad

❖ **1:19- for I know that this will turn out for my deliverance through your prayers and the provision of the Spirit of Jesus Christ,**

- Again we see the use of this uncommon word for prayer (DEESIS). This congregation has been praying urgently for Paul.
- More emphasis on togetherness, when they are praying together for Paul to be delivered, the Spirit is actually working alongside them to accomplish his deliverance.
- Paul's confidence in his deliverance suggests that this is not his final imprisonment in Rome. (cf. 2 Time 4:6-In this verse he recognizes that his death is imminent.
- Definitions:
  - Know (OIDA)-to know, understand how, be able
  - Will Turn Out (APOBAINO)-to result in a state or condition, turn out, lead
  - Deliverance (SOTERIA)-rescue from bondage, survival from punishment

- Prayer (DEESIS)-urgent request to meet a need, exclusively addressed to God
- Provision (EPICHOREGIA)-assistance, support

❖ **1:20- according to my earnest expectation and hope, that I will not be put to shame in anything, but *that* with all boldness, Christ will even now, as always, be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death.**

- Again, Paul's ultimate goal has nothing to do with himself, he could live or die, it only has to do with bringing glory and focus to Christ.
- Earnest expectation and hope both have a connotation of confidence, Paul knows this outcome will come to pass.
- The outcome Paul is assured of is that he will continue to preach Christ without fear, saying what needs to be said.
- Definitions:
  - Earnest Expectation (APOKARADOKIA)- eager expectation, eagerly awaiting
  - Hope (ELPIS)-the looking forward to something with some reason for confidence respecting fulfillment, hope, expectation
  - Put To Shame (AISCHYNO)-to experience shame, to be disgrace, be disappointed in a hope
  - Boldness (PARRESIA)-openness to the public before whom speaking and actions are taking place, a use of speech that conceals nothing and passes over nothing, outspokenness, frankness, plainness
  - Be Exalted (MEGALYNO)-to cause to be held in greater esteem through praise or deeds, exalt, glorify, magnify, speak highly of

❖ **1:21- For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.**

- Essentially either option is good. If Paul lives he can do more for Christ, but if he dies, he gains his eternal reward.

- Definitions:

- Gain (KERDOS)-that which is gained or earned, a gain, profit

❖ 1:22- But if *I am* to live *on in the flesh*, *this will mean fruitful labor for me*; and I do not know which to choose.

- In this inner debate, Paul shows his incredible selflessness. He knows that even though he is suffering and going through unimaginable persecution on earth, he can help accomplish great things.
- This word labor is equivalent to occupation. Spreading the gospel should be such an important goal to us that we consider it an occupation.
- He isn't necessarily choosing one or another, he can't decide which to prefer.

- Definitions:

- Fruitful (KARPOS)-advantage, gain, profit; product or outcome of something

- Labor (ERGON)-that which one does as a regular activity, work, occupation, task

- Choose (HAIRESOMAI)-prefer, choose, take

❖ 1:23- But I am hard-pressed from both *directions*, having the desire to depart and be with Christ, for *that* is very much better;

- There is a war going on within Paul's mind. He desires to be released from these earthly bonds and be with Christ; however, he understands that the better choice for the kingdom is for him to stay and work.

- Definitions:

- Hard-Pressed (SYNECHO)-to cause distress by force of circumstances, seize, attack, distress, torment

- Desire (EPITHYMIA)-a great desire for something, longing, craving

- Depart (ANALYO)-loose, untie, depart from something
- Better (KREISSON)-having a relative advantage in value, more useful, more advantageous

❖ **1:24- yet to remain on in the flesh is more necessary for your sake.**

- Paul once again points to his unselfish attitude. He is setting a high bar for the way they should behave toward one another.
- Definitions:
  - Remain (EPIMENO)-to remain at or in the same place for a period of time, stay
  - More Necessary (ANANKAIOS)-meeting a need, necessary

❖ **1:25- Convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy in the faith,**

- Paul's main goal was the furtherance of the kingdom. He now shows us a secondary goal. Helping to strengthen others.
- These two goals ultimately fit together. If the church is strong and joyful in their faith, the gospel will be spread.
- Definitions:
  - Convinced (PEITHO)-to be so convinced that one puts confidence in something
  - Remain (MENO)-to continue to exist, remain, last, persist
  - Continue With (PARAMENO)-to remain in a state or situation, stay on
  - Progress (PROKOPE)-a movement forward to an improved state, progress, advancement, furtherance
  - Joy (CHARA)-the experience of gladness

- Faith (PISTIS)-state of believing on the basis of the reliability of the one trusted, trust, confidence, faith

❖ **1:26- so that your proud confidence in me may abound in Christ Jesus through my coming to you again.**

- Here is another hint that this is not Paul's final imprisonment, he is confident that he will see them again.
- Paul again turns their focus away from him and on to Christ.
- Definitions:
  - Proud Confidence (KAUCHEMA)-act of taking pride in something or that which constitutes a source of pride, boast
  - May Abound (PERISSEUO)-to be in abundance, be more than enough left over, be present in abundance

❖ **1:27- Only conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or remain absent, I will hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel;**

- This verse holds the key to the entire book. Our life is all about striving together for the cause of Christ!
- Paul uses a lot of battle language in the next few verses. He wants them to recognize who the true enemy is. They have become so caught up in their petty squabbles they have viewed one another as the enemy instead of as allies and fellow soldiers.
- Definitions:
  - Conduct Yourself (POLITEUOMAI)-to conduct one's life, live, lead one's life
  - Manner Worthy (AXIOS)-worthily, in a manner worthy of, suitably

- Gospel (EUANGELION)- good news, proclamation, good news of Jesus Christ
- Standing (STEKO)-to hold one's ground, to be firmly committed in conviction or belief
- Spirit (PNEUMA)- the non-material part of our being
- Mind (PSYCHE)-seat and center of the inner human life in its many and varied aspects, often refers to feelings and emotions
- Striving Together (SYNATHLEO)-struggle along with, fight alongside
- Faith (PISTIS)-state of believing on the basis of the reliability of the one trusted, trust, confidence, faith

❖ 1:28- in no way **alarmed** by **your opponents**—which is a sign of **destruction** for them, but of **salvation** for you, and that *too*, from God.

- Paul forces them to examine who their true adversaries are and instructs them to show no fear!
- This fearless disposition leads to destruction for their opponents and salvation for them, both coming from God.
- Definitions:
  - Alarmed (PTYRO)-to let oneself be intimidated, frightened, terrified
  - Opponents (ANTIKEIMAI)-to be in opposition to, adversary
  - Destruction (APOLEIA)-destruction, annihilation, waste, ruin
  - Salvation (SOTERIA)-deliverance, preservation, salvation with focus on transcendent aspects

❖ 1:29- For to you it has been **granted** for Christ's sake, not only to **believe** in Him, but also to **suffer** for His sake,

- The wording here is extremely humbling, “granted” is a form of the word grace. God hasn’t just allowed suffering, He has given it to us graciously. This seems like a really difficult pill to swallow, but when we consider Paul’s outlook, it makes more sense. If I suffer honorably for the cause of Christ, it does nothing but bolster the kingdom of God. Even though it might not be my favorite thing, the only thing that truly matters is the furtherance of God’s kingdom.
- This is just one of the many verses throughout scripture that allude to the fact that Christianity will come with sacrifice. We must be willing to empty ourselves for Christ’s purpose. Christianity is about more than simply believing God is real.
- Definitions:
  - Granted (CHARIZOMAI)-given graciously; a common term in honorific documents lauding officials and civic-minded persons for their beneficence
  - Believe (PISTEUO)-to entrust oneself to an entity in complete confidence, believe in, trust
  - Suffer (PASCHO)-to suffer death or endure suffering at the hands of someone

❖ **1:30- experiencing the same conflict which you saw in me, and now hear to be in me.**

- The struggle Paul is referring to is that which he mentioned in 1:21-26. He knows that if they truly adopt this unified, self-sacrificing mindset, they will experience the same desire to serve God and others.
- This attitude should be our goal!
- Definitions:
  - Experiencing (ECHO)-to experience something, have
  - Conflict (AGON)-a struggle against opposition, fight



## **Adopting the Mind of Christ — Philippians 2**

### **Introduction**

- A. Philippians 1:27-30 serves as transition into a key teaching Paul develops in chapter 2
  - 1. The Philippian Christians are experiencing difficulty and outside persecution as a result of their Christian faith
    - a. They need to be bold and stand firm in the midst of opposition
    - b. It should be encouraging they get to suffer for their Lord who suffered for them
  - 2. It's hard enough facing opposition from the world, Christians should not have to worry about opposition and fighting with their brothers in Christ
    - a. This leads Paul into his instruction about unity in the church in 2:1-4
    - b. If we can maintain unity with our brethren it helps us to stand firm for the faith when the world tries to make it difficult.
- B. The key verse in this chapter is Philippians 2:5 "Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus."
  - 1. "Have this attitude" is one word in the Greek (φρονέω). This verb literally means "to develop an attitude based on careful thought, *be minded/disposed* ." (Arndt 1066)
  - 2. The Christian walk is so much more than following a list of "Do's and Don'ts" it's about a total transformation in the way we think, which translates into a changed life
    - a. God wants us to do away with our fleshly way of thinking and take on the very mind and thinking of Christ Himself
    - b. If we can adopt the mind of Christ in our lives we'll start to
      - (1) See the world the way Jesus does
      - (2) See people from Jesus' perspective
      - (3) Talk to people as Jesus would
      - (4) Treat people precisely the way Jesus would
    - c. God wants to see Christ in us, but in order to do this we need to take on the mind of Christ first
  - 3. Everything in chapter 2 centers on this idea of adopting the mind of Christ
    - a. We can maintain unity in the church by adopting the mind of Christ (2:1-4)
    - b. The epitome of the mind of Christ (2:5-11)

- c. We should display the mind of Christ through your daily conduct (2:12-18)
- d. Look for Christian role-models who exhibit the mind of Christ (2:19-30)

## **Discussion**

### **I. Maintain unity in the church by adopting the mind of Christ (2:1-4)**

#### **A. Christ is our standard for how we treat others (2:1)**

1. “Therefore if there is any...”
  - a. Paul is not questioning whether these things are true
  - b. A better translation may be “therefore since...”
  - c. This is a declaration of irrefutable truth
    - (1) We know that all these attributes are found in Christ
    - (2) These truths should motivate us to treat others as Christ would
2. “in Christ”
  - a. Two possibilities as to Paul’s meaning of “in Christ”
    - (1) This could mean the fact that we are now Christians
      - (a) Is Paul saying “Since you have encouragement in Christ”?
      - (b) The emphasis would be on the blessings we experience as Christians. i.e. “Since it’s encouraging to be a Christian, you should promote unity in the church...”
      - (c) However, sometimes brethren let us down and we don’t always receive encouragement, love, fellowship, affection & compassion.
    - (2) “In Christ” could mean in the person of Christ Himself
      - (a) If this is the case Paul is saying, “Look at the life of Christ. What do you see? You see encouragement. You see love. You see someone who has fellowship of the Spirit. You see affection and compassion...”
      - (b) This view fits much better with the context
  - b. Remember, our key verse is 2:5. In verse 1 Paul is saying “Here’s the mind of Christ, therefore if you take on His mind it should change the way you treat brethren in the church.”
3. When you look at Christ you see...
  - a. “Encouragement”

- b. “Consolation of love”
- c. “Fellowship of the spirit”

(1) Fellowship (κοινωνία) is “a sharing” or “communion” (Arndt 552)  
 (2) This could refer to...

- (a) Christ possessing God’s Holy Spirit
- (b) Christ sharing the same spirit (i.e. disposition or mindset) as His Father in heaven.
- (c) “spirit” refers to mindset or disposition in Philippians 1:27

- d. “Affection”
- e. “Compassion”

**B. When Christians adopt the mind of Christ... (2:2-4)**

1. The church maintains unity (2:2)
  - a. When we’re united we can accomplish so much more
  - b. Illustration: Mules can pull more weight when harnessed together than when you add up their individual capabilities
2. They don’t behave selfishly (2:3a)
  - a. Every action of Christ was determined based on how it would benefit others, not simply serving Himself
  - b. “empty conceit” (κενοδοξία) is “a vain or exaggerated self-evaluation, *vanity, conceit, excessive ambition* .” (Arndt 538).
3. They view others as being more important than themselves (2:3b)
4. They put the interests of others before their own (2:4)
  - a. We hear of division and church splits all the time. Would we ever hear of another church split if every Christian put the interests of their brethren ahead of their own?
  - b. If I’m putting my brethren’s interests above my own, and they choose to do the same, everyone’s needs are going to be met.

Notes

## II. The epitome of mind of Christ (2:5-11)

A. This passage is most likely an early Christian hymn

B. What Christ's mind looks like (2:5-8)

1. We are required to adopt Christ's mind (2:5)

- a. This is the key verse for chapter 2
- b. Verses 5-8 contain some powerful teachings, but this is also a very difficult passage. Take some time to do careful word studies to make sure you represent the incarnation of Christ accurately.
- c. In 2:5-8 we're going to see the mind/thinking of Christ epitomized in His decision to give up His divine privileges, take on the weakness of human flesh and live and die as a servant in obedience to God's will.

2. How Christ's mind was manifested (2:6-8)

a. Willing to focus on the needs of others (2:6)

(1) Christ existed "in the form of God"

(a) The NIV has "being in very nature"

(b) This word "form" (μορφή) in its most basic meaning is "form, outward appearance, shape" (Arndt 659).

- This Greek word serves as the root that gives us our English word "metamorphosis." In metamorphosis an insect transforms from one form (a caterpillar) to a different form (a butterfly). It's still the exact same insect, but its mode of being is entirely changed.
- It's difficult to comprehend the "form" of God. God does not have an outward appearance or shape because He is "spirit" in essence (cf. John 4:24). It's impossible for mortal man to see God in His true essence (cf. John 1:18). God is an all-powerful, all-knowing, omnipresent spiritual being.
- Paul is saying that everything that is "God" can be found in Christ. Christ is not less than God in any sense. He's not merely a created being like the angels. He's totally God.

(c) "Here, it seems best to understand the idea of 'form of God' as referring to anything and everything that God is. It consists of His glory and His nature and His essence. Paul is saying that whatever is true of God, is true of Christ Jesus. He exists in the very form of God. Without this understanding, the rest of the passage makes little sense." (Orbison 15.7 p. 2)

(2) He did not regard equality with God “a thing to be grasped”

(a) “grasped” is a difficult term to translate and understand

- The NKJV translates this “did not **consider it robbery** to be equal with God.” This word can mean robbery in some contexts, but it doesn’t seem to mean that here.
- It seems that all of our translations fall short at capturing the depth of meaning here in this context.

(b) “Grasped” (ἀρπαγμός) occurs only here in the N.T. and there is a wide spectrum of views as to its meaning here. Here are two options that seem to best fit the context:

- Many take the view that “grasped” means that Christ did not regard His equality with God as something to cling to in order to avoid becoming man in order to die on the cross.
- Another view suggests that this term developed an idiomatic sense. This view suggests that Jesus did not view His equality with God as something to be used merely for His own advantage. This view harmonizes with 2:4 and shows how Christ was not concerned about His own interests, but the interests of others.

b. Willing to give up His privileges for others (2:7)

(1) “emptied Himself”

(a) This term (κενόω) primarily has the sense of “to deprive of content or possession (TDNT, v.3 p. 661)

(b) Christ did not give up His equality with God. That would make Him less than God during His earthly life. What Paul means when He says Christ “emptied Himself” is that He purposely chose to deprive Himself of many of the privileges that belong only to God

- Jesus was not omnipresent, He chose to deprive Himself of that privilege
- Jesus was not all-knowing, He willingly deprived Himself of that privilege (cf. Matthew 24:36).
- Jesus gave up some of the power of God. In doing so He was able to be tempted to sin, and fully experience the weakness of Human flesh.
- In emptying Himself of His divine privileges He never stopped being God. “I and the Father are one.” (John 10:30)

(2) Here is a helpful way to illustrate this concept:

- (a) “Many years ago, when the Duke of Windsor was the Prince of Wales, he one day left Buckingham Palace, journeyed west into the coal mining country, put on a miner’s cap, and went down into the dingy tunnels to see for himself the conditions in which men toiled in a difficult and dangerous branch of British industry. As a member of the royal family he was as much a prince in the coal mine as he was when he lived in the palace in London. But, while his essential equality with royalty was unchanged, there was no longer an equality of experience. He had consented to enter into experiences that never came to him amid the elegances and immunities of the palace.”
  - (b) The Duke of Windsor was as much royalty in the mines as he had been in the palace. Even so, Christ was as divine — as much deity — on earth as He had been in heaven. While His mode of existence radically changed, His nature — His godhood — remained the same (Malone 55-56).
- (3) Taking the “form of a bondservant being made in the likeness of men”
- (a) In the form of God, Christ is above all creation. He can do what He wants when He wants, how He wants to do it.
  - (b) A bondservant however has no authority in his own life. He has no say over what he does. Christ willingly chose that mode of being when God became man in the person of Jesus.
- c. Willing to endure the greatest hardship for others (2:8)
- (1) “He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death”
- (a) The mind of Christ is one of total obedience to the Father
  - (b) For Christ it was never a question of “Will I do what My Father wants or what I want?” Even when it was hard and painful, Christ always said, “Not what I will, but what you will” (cf. Mark 14:36)
- (2) “even death on a cross”
- (a) Roman crucifixion was one of the worst ways to die
  - (b) Not only was He willing to obey God to His own death, He was willing to go through utter pain and humiliation in the process

### C. Because of what Christ has done... (2:9-11)

- 1. God highly exalted Him (2:9)
  - a. “For this reason”

- (1) Despite giving up so many privileges in life and enduring a humiliating death, the result of Christ's life was supreme exaltation
  - (2) Paul wants us to learn from this. We may have to give up some things in the best interest of others and become a servant now. That doesn't mean we got a raw deal. God rewards those who take on this spirit.
- b. Christ was given a "name that is above every name"
  - (1) Names are significant. Your name reveals to others everything about who you are. A good name is one that has authority behind it.
    - (a) Police may say, "Open this door in the name of the law"
    - (b) Some names carry more authority than others
  - (2) Because of choosing to live as a slave, Christ was given a name that carries all authority.
  - (3) This name will be explicitly said in verse 11 — Christ is "Lord"
- 2. All creation will praise Him (2:10-11)
  - a. "Every knee will bow" and "every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father"
    - (1) At the last day every man and woman will kneel before their true King and acknowledge His lordship and mastery over them
      - (a) Christians look forward to this since this will be a time of joy
      - (b) Many will be forced to kneel in terror that they never acknowledged Christ's lordship during their lives
    - (2) In the end everyone will give the Father the glory He deserves because of what Christ did for all mankind.
  - b. "of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth"
    - (1) This is an idiom (he's not saying there are beings under the earth)
    - (2) This refers to all created beings everywhere (human and angelic)

Notes

**A. Make sure you have the proper motivation (2:12-13)**

1. Don't just do it to impress people (2:12)

- a. Do we behave one way at church or in front of Christians we respect and another when we're on our own?
- b. "work out your salvation"
  - (1) We need to carefully study this expression — "Work out" (κατεργάζομαι)
  - (2) Do not make the mistake of interpreting this as "work for your salvation"
    - (a) Over and over in Paul's writings the apostle declares that nothing we do can help us earn or deserve our salvation (he does so even in Philippians 3)
    - (b) Paul is not saying here that our work contributes to our salvation
  - (3) Paul doesn't say work for, he's saying work OUT
    - (a) In other words, if you are truly saved and are committed to taking on the mind of Christ inside of you than that needs to be shown outwardly through your lifestyle choices.
    - (b) "Paul may be exhorting the Philippians to continue continuing themselves in a manner worthy of the gospel. That is, to let others see the change that has occurred within us...to bring it out into the realm where people may observe it." (Orbison 15.8 p. 2)
    - (c) This fits perfectly with the specific instructions Paul gives in verses 14-18.

2. Do it "in fear and trembling" because God is at work in you (2:13)

- a. "fear and trembling" is an idiomatic phrase that can have two basic meanings:
  - (1) In some contexts it refers to literal fear and terror. But this is always a reference to how sinners should respond to God.
  - (2) In other instances it refers to an overwhelming sense of awe and reverence toward God. Here it doesn't mean scared because it's an occasion for joy (cf. Jeremiah 33:9).
  - (3) In our context Paul has the second view in mind. Everything in the following verse is joyful and positive and we should be awestruck that God is working in us.



- b. “for it is God who is at work in you both to will and work for His good pleasure”

- (1) There is nothing mysterious or supernatural about this
- (2) In context *how* is God at work in us?

- (a) If we take on the mind of Christ we are taking on the very thinking, the very nature of God Himself
- (b) If we think and see the world through the eyes of God, then our actions will be the very actions of Christ. If we’re committed to adopting Christ’s mind, God will be working in us.

**B. When your life is guided by the mind of Christ you will... (2:14-16)**

- 1. Do all things without grumbling or disputing (2:14)
- 2. Prove to be blameless and innocent (2:15a)
- 3. Be above reproach (2:15b)
- 4. Appear as a light in the world (2:15c)
- 5. Hold fast to the word of life (2:16a)

**C. When Christians live out the life of Christ it’s cause for rejoicing (2:16b-18)**

- 1. It will give Paul reason to rejoice on the last day (2:16b)
- 2. It gives Paul reason to rejoice now despite his suffering (2:17)
- 3. It gives the Philippians reason to rejoice now in spite of their difficulties (2:18)

Notes

**IV. Two role models who exhibit the mind of Christ (2:19-30)**

**A. Timothy (2:19-24)**

- 1. Paul plans to send Timothy to be an encouragement
  - a. An encouragement to the Philippians
    - (1) “you know of his proven worth” (2:22)
    - (2) Timothy was in Philippi when they were converted (cf. Acts 16)

- b. An encouragement to Paul when he brings back a good report (2:19)
- 2. Timothy's character demonstrates someone guided by the mind of Christ
  - a. "Genuinely concerned for your welfare" (2:20)
    - (1) Timothy practices the mind of Christ as described in 2:3
    - (2) He regards welfare of others as more important than himself
  - b. Unlike others in Rome Timothy does not merely "seek after his own interests" (2:21)
    - (1) Timothy practices the mind of Christ as described in 2:4
    - (2) He puts the interests of others above his own
  - c. "furthered the gospel like a child serving his father"
    - (1) Timothy exhibits the mind of Christ as described in 2:6-8
    - (2) He humbly takes on the role of a servant to further the will of God

Notes

**B. Epaphroditus (2:25-30)**

- 1. His relationship to the Philippians
  - a. He is their "messenger" and "minister" to Paul's needs
    - (1) "messenger" in the Greek is ἀπόστολος (apostolos)
      - (a) An apostle is one who is sent on a mission
      - (b) Paul is an apostle of Christ (i.e. sent on a mission by Christ)
      - (c) Epaphroditus is an apostle (NOT the same way Paul was) of the Philippian church (i.e. sent on a mission by the Philippian church)
    - (2) Epaphroditus brought a financial gift from Philippi (cf. 4:18)
  - b. He is very dear to them, and they're worried about him (2:26)
- 2. Epaphroditus' character demonstrates someone guided by the mind of Christ

- a. Paul sees him as his “brother”, “fellow worker”, “fellow soldier” (2:25)
  - (1) When you look at Paul and Epaphroditus you see two Christian brothers who are of “the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose” (cf. 2:2)
  - (2) When we’re guided by the same standard, unity is easy to maintain
- b. He’s more worried about how they feel, than his own wellbeing (2:26)
  - (1) Epaphroditus practices the mind of Christ as described in 2:3
  - (2) He sees his brethren as being more important than himself
- c. “Came close to death for the work of Christ” (2:27, 30) and “risked his life” (2:30)
  - (1) Epaphroditus practices the mind of Christ as described in 2:8
  - (2) Like Christ, he was willing to give his own life in service to God
- 3. Paul wants them to take note and “hold men like him in high regard” (2:29)
  - a. When we see a brother or sister who truly reflects the mind of Christ in their lives we need to value their example
  - b. Who is your Epaphroditus? Who is your Timothy?

Notes

**Conclusion**

- A. It’s not easy to stand firm in the faith and strive for the cause of the gospel
  - 1. People discourage us; being immersed in the world makes it hard to obey God
  - 2. Simply going to church and trying to be a better person cannot help us be who God wants us to be
    - (a) God isn’t looking for outwardly going through religious motions
    - (b) He wants us to continually undergo an inner transformation, to take on the very mind of Christ Jesus Himself. Only then will we have the strength to press on
- B. *“Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus,”* (Philippians 2:5)

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## Philippians 3

### Erynn Sprouse

**3:1** Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things *again* is no trouble to me, and it is a safeguard for you.

- Finally--
  - The majority of reliable English translations render this “finally,” yet it should be noted that this word can be expressed as a transitory phrase such as “and now”, “whatever happens” or the like. Jesus uses this word in Luke 12:26 “...why do you worry about *other matters?*” Cf 1 Cor. 11:34 (“remaining matters”).
  - No matter how it is translated, Paul here sets apart what he is about to say for emphasis, essentially highlighting what follows.
- my brethren-- cf 4:1 “my beloved brethren whom I long to see my joy and crown... my beloved” This is a congregation Paul holds dear. He is not using this term lightly!
- rejoice-- This is the 12th of 16 occurrences of joy/ rejoice/ share in joy in the book of Philippians.
- in the Lord— the LORD is to be the source of our joy! We aren’t to find our joy in the things that don’t matter, but in the spiritual things of Christ. All the rest is unimportant.
- to write the same things again is no trouble to me— he has emphasized rejoicing throughout the book. A reader might be tempted to think, “Really, Paul? With the rejoicing again?” but he says it is a safeguard.
- safeguard— ASPHALES— firm, certain.
  - Sounds like asphalt (though I’m not sure the words are related).
  - Being reminded to rejoice in the Lord (vs. in worldly things) plants us on firm ground in that it helps us keep focus on what is truly important.

**3:2** Beware of the dogs, beware of the evil workers, beware of the false circumcision;

- Beware of the dogs, beware of the evil workers, beware of the false circumcision--
  - This phrase marks an abrupt change in tone. Paul has been quite lovey-dovey and here is rather harsh toward those who would harm his beloved brethren. “A mother may give the first impression of being small, gentle, and loving. However, if anyone were to threaten that mother’s child, she could turn into a passionate fury!”<sup>1</sup>. Here the situation facing the Philippians is extreme and calls for an extreme warning.
- beware--
  - “be ready to learn about something that is needed or is hazardous, *watch, look to, beware of*”<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Roper, David L. Ephesians and Philippians. Searcy, AR: Resource Publications, 2009. Print. Truth for Today Commentary: an Exegesis & Application of the Holy Scriptures. (485)

<sup>2</sup> Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., & Bauer, W. (2000). *A Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament and other early Christian literature* (3rd ed.) (179). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

- We cannot bury our heads in the sand when it comes to false doctrine and other dangers! We must be vigilant and learn about them in order to defend ourselves. In a war, one must first understand the enemy before doing battle (cf Matthew 10:16-- we must be shrewd as serpents).
- dogs, evil workers, false circumcision--
  - seems to refer to the Judaizers who have been causing problems in the church since Acts 15:1. If Philippians was written around AD 60-62, and the Jerusalem Council of Acts 15 was in AD 51, these heresies have been doing their damage for around 10 years.
  - evil workers-- not these people are workers! This is a word used especially of agricultural workers. They aren't sitting around waiting and hoping for someone to show interest in their teachings (as some of us do!); they are working and they are evil-- morally reprehensible.
  - false circumcision-- see 3:3

**3:3** for we are the *true* circumcision, who worship in the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the *flesh*,

- we are the *true* circumcision
  - note: the italicized "true" is not there for emphasis, but to indicate that this word is not in the original Greek manuscripts; it is added for our understanding. Literally, Paul says "we are the circumcision" but it is more readable for it to say "we are the true circumcision."
  - Circumcision is often used to stand for the whole Law and in the New Testament as a term for the Jews. Depending on the context, the term may specifically reference those Jewish false brethren who sought to compel Gentile Christians to be circumcised and keep the Old Law (cf Acts 15:1, Gal 2:7-8, 12).
  - Paul essentially says Christians are God's chosen people now in the days of the New Testament. We are the true circumcision, circumcised in heart (Rom 2:29, Col 2:11, 1 Pet 2:9,10), thus we are the true people of God.
  - Some versions here have "mutilate." Paul uses a play on words here. For "circumcision" (NASB) in 3:2, he uses KATATOME-- a word which more typically refers to a mutilative practice of the pagans. Since the New Testament's institution on the day of Pentecost, circumcision means nothing to one's spiritual state. To compel one to be circumcised for the sake of salvation is to abandon true Christianity for a false religion (Galatians 1:6,7). The Judaizers were no better than pagans for compelling Gentile Christians to keep the Old Law and the actual, physical circumcision was no longer a true rite, but simply a mutilation of the body. Christians, on the other hand, have the only true circumcision: that which is of the heart. For "circumcision" (NASB) in 3:3, Paul uses PERITOME-- the usual word for the Jewish rite of circumcision.
- worship in the Spirit of God

- “‘Worship in the Spirit’ does *not* refer to the charismatic exercises carried on by some religious groups today. The excesses of many of these services are the opposite of the dignity that should characterize worship.”<sup>3</sup>
- This is part of a contrast set up between the false circumcision who put their confidence in fleshly accomplishments and their own righteousness vs. the true circumcision (Christians) who put worship as God would have them do and whose confidence and pride is in Christ alone.
- cf. John 4:24
- put no confidence--
  - confidence-- depend on, trust in
  - picture someone leaning on something, taking their ease. That’s what this word is talking about. You stick out your elbow, rest it on something and then lean on over. What happens if that something isn’t solid or anchored? It slips out from under you and you’re on the ground! That’s just the kind of support anything except Jesus is.
- flesh-- refers not just to the physical body, but *everything* of the physical realm.
- Where do you get your self-confidence, your self-image from? Is it in worldly things? The Christian’s trust and joy is to come from Jesus, and only from Jesus. The false teachers are the ones who draw their confidence from things of this world.
- If mama ain’t happy (from Dan Owen)...
  - If mama ain’t happy, then why ain’t she happy? Why can’t she be content? It may be that she’s jealous that someone else has a bigger house than she has. Or maybe that someone else drives a nicer car. Or somebody else’s family has better clothes. Or maybe someone else has a husband who has more ambition than hers does. But if she’s not happy because of those things, then she’s putting her confidence in those things.
  - And then you have the woman who may not have as much as others, but she seems content because she’s a Christian, her family are Christians, she’s working for the Lord, she feels that their lives count for something and so she’s rejoicing in the Lord. She’s not going to be resenting other people and being jealous of other people because she’s found her joy and it’s where it needs to be: it’s in the Lord.

**3:4** although I myself might have confidence even in the flesh. If anyone else has a mind to put confidence in the flesh, I far more:

- If anyone had cause to put trust in his own abilities, standing, credentials, etc., it was Paul. This is his preface to revealing much about who he was BC (Before Christ). It is hard for us to grasp just how important a man Saul of Tarsus was before he became Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles. His confidence in worldly things (the flesh) could have been great. Paul often uses his past in a masterful way. When someone needs convincing that even the most sinful of men can be saved, he reminds them that he, the chief of sinners, is saved (1 Timothy 1:15). In this case, people must be reminded that no matter who they might be in this world, even if they should reach whatever pinnacle they might strive for, it’s nothing to put confidence in,

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<sup>3</sup> Roper 488

so he explains that even his very illustrious resume is nothing to boast in, but is in fact rubbish.

- It's always a temptation to depend on our own efforts and try to earn our own way to Heaven. Such a gift of salvation can make us feel obligated to work for it. Imagine that your friend gives you something you have been wanting and perhaps even saving up for. She says she saw it and knew you wanted it, so she bought it for you. Amazed, you say to her, "What do I owe you for it?" and she says, "Nothing." Most of us don't feel quite right leaving things there. We try to persuade our friend to take something for this amazing gift... but she persists and will not name a price. So we say something like, "Well at least let me pay for lunch!" When we realize the amazing and wonderful gift we have been given by God in salvation, it is sometimes difficult to accept that we really owe nothing for it. We ought to work, but it is not to earn our salvation, but because we love God. Our offer to buy our friend's lunch in this case is not done necessarily out of love. The cost will be much less than the cost of the item, but it is a small gesture of "I owe you SOMETHING; at least I can do this." We buy the lunch out of a sense of obligation. In a spiritual sense, we sometimes do the same thing. "Well, at least I can do good works... at least I can teach Sunday School... serve the poor... spread the gospel." But as soon as we think that we are paying back or in some way earning the gift we have been given, we are putting our trust in the flesh. Sometimes we may buy our friend's lunch just because we want to express love and appreciation for her. This is the same kind of motivation our Christian works should have.

**3:5** circumcised the eighth day, of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the Law, a Pharisee;

- "Paul's statements gave proof that he was 'an authentic Jew.' The apostle established ritual purity ('circumcised the eighth day'), racial purity ('of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin') and cultural purity ('a Hebrew of Hebrews')"<sup>4</sup>
- a Pharisee--
  - the strictest sect of the Jewish faith
  - Paul was not just any Pharisee. Acts 26:2-24 records Paul's account of his conversion given before King Agrippa. In 26:10, Paul says that he cast his vote against the Christians. If he had a vote to cast in such matters, it means he was a member of the Sanhedrin, the 70 most elite Jews of his day, those set as rulers.
  - Not only was Paul a Pharisee sitting on the Sanhedrin, but he was also educated at the feet of Gamaliel (Acts 22:3). If it is hard for us to grasp how important Paul was, it is even more so for Gamaliel.
    - He was the grandson of the very well respected and much-loved Hillel.
    - "The learning of Gamaliel was so eminent and his influence so great that he is one of only seven Jewish scholars who have been honored by the title 'Rabban.'"<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Roper 493

<sup>5</sup> Elwell, W. A., & Beitzel, B. J. (1988). *Baker encyclopedia of the Bible* (838). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House.



**3:6** as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to the righteousness which is in the Law, found blameless.

- If his resume and heritage were not enough to earn him “brownie points,” his fervor and actions just might have been. This is the part in a job interview where you’ve just finished rattling off your Ivy League background and now you talk about how you’re a go-getter and you’ve won every award there is out there.

**3:7** But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. **8** More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ, **9** and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from *the* Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which *comes* from God on the basis of faith, **10** that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; **11** in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.

- This is often depicted as Paul’s profit/ loss statement, like an accountant’s worksheet. It’s an apt illustration. On the loss side, Paul lists these things he has just ticked off (circumcised on the eighth day, etc.), but not only that. He adds anything else that might have been counted as a profit and then everything else besides. He stamps it with a giant red LOSS and then lists what he gains: knowing Christ.

**3:7** But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ.

- On Paul’s previous career track, he had a lot going for him, but he counts it all of no account at all.
- gain--
  - profit, something earned, advantage.
  - cf Phil 1:21- the only gain Paul counts now is Christ and being with Him.
- loss--
  - “Having to do with suffering the loss of something, with implication of sustaining hardship or suffering, *damage, disadvantage, loss, forfeit*”<sup>6</sup>
  - If Paul had continued on the career path laid before him as Saul of Tarsus, he wouldn’t have been likely to want for much and certainly could have saved himself much trouble. But all those things which could have saved him he considered lost, gone, taken off of his balance sheet.
- for the sake of Christ
  - Paul didn’t lose these things to no end or purpose; he counted them loss for Christ
  - We do not typically give up something of great value that will cause us a hardship. For example, I have a very expensive juicer in my garage... sitting... gathering dust. It is of

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<sup>6</sup> Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., & Bauer, W. (2000). *A Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament and other early Christian literature* (3rd ed.) (427–428). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

great monetary value, but it would not cause me a hardship if it were gone. If a friend needed it, I would likely be willing to give it to them for the sake of our friendship. It will not give me any suffering for it to be gone. On the other hand, I use my oven on a near daily basis. If a friend needed an oven, I would not be very likely to pull mine out and give it to her, even for the sake of our friendship because it would cause me hardship to do so. Paul, though, counted his reputation and credentials as loss for the sake of Christ even though it cost him dearly and caused suffering and hardship.

**3:8** More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ,

- This is like in the cartoons when a starving person finds a chunk of crusty bread and eagerly begins devouring the meal... but then he spots IT. His mouth drops open, his eyes bug out and he stares. As the scene pans over, we see IT. There before him is a veritable mountain of the best food imaginable. He looks at the dry bread in his hand, makes a disgusted face, throws the former treasure to the ground, and races toward the mountain of goodies.
- Paul looks at what he once took great pride in-- his life as a Jew-- and is repulsed. Not only that, though: he looks at anything that could possibly distract Him from the cause of Christ and he is disgusted with it. Everything is thrown to the ground and left in filth as he races toward Christ (cf Hebrews 12:1,2).
- I count all things to be loss--
  - Not only his reputation and illustrious resume, but *everything* (cf Matthew 13:44-45).
  - This is in the present tense. Paul counted all things loss in the past and continues to do so every day.
- surpassing value--
  - the value of knowing Christ is higher than anything Paul had or could possibly have on Earth.
  - This word appears three times in the book of Philippians: 2:3, 3:8, 4:7.
  - It is also used to refer to someone in authority (Rom 13:1, 1 Pet 2:13).
- knowing Christ Jesus my Lord-- in Greek there are two words for “know.” It is typically explained that one is an experiential knowledge (GINOSKO) and the other is an intellectual knowledge (OIDA). This is the experiential knowledge. By abandoning the world and living as Christ, we come to know Him.
- rubbish-- That which is thrown to the dogs, dregs, refuse, what is thrown away as worthless. Spoken of the refuse of grain, chaff, or of a table, of slaughtered animals, of dung, and figuratively of the filth of the mind.<sup>7</sup>

**3:9** and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith,

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<sup>7</sup> Zodhiates, S. (2000). *The complete word study dictionary: New Testament* (electronic ed.). Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers.

- “‘In Christ’ was one of Paul’s favorite expressions (see Rom 3:24, 6:1, 8:1, 9:1). He used it to convey the relationship we have with the Lord-- a relationship so special, so close, so intimate that it can only be communicated by saying that we are ‘*in Him*.’ A Christian lives ‘in Christ’ as a bird lives in the air, as a fish lives in the water, and as a tree is rooted in the soil. A Christian is ‘different’ from those about him because he is always aware of the encircling presence of Jesus.”<sup>8</sup>
- not having a righteousness of my own derived from *the* Law, but that which is through faith in Christ
  - righteousness-- being counted as right in the sight of God
  - Paul presents two hypothetical options: a) righteousness earned by his own Law keeping or b) righteousness given by God, granted through faith in Christ.
    - He chooses the righteousness granted by God which is *only* available through faith in Christ.
    - If something is only available through QVC, you know that you won’t go down to Walmart and find it. You must get it from QVC in the way that QVC says to get it and for the price they set. You might go to Walmart and find a knock-off that looks similar, but it won’t be the same thing. Likewise, righteousness that leads to the resurrection from the dead (3:11) only comes from God and it only comes on the basis of faith in Christ. The righteousness that one works for and attempts to earn looks the same, but it is only a knock-off and will not ultimately lead to the resurrection from the dead.
    - His own efforts are fruitless. Not only fruitless, but they are part of the filth/ rubbish/ refuse he has counted loss in order to gain Christ. These things of the world are not just lower on Paul’s totem pole-- they’re GONE. Striving for his own righteousness would leave him without Christ.
- the righteousness which *comes* from God on the basis of faith
  - Again, this righteousness is only on the basis of faith. It can be summed up this way: “Dependence on anything other than Christ = loss... Dependence on Christ = profit.”<sup>9</sup>

**3:10** that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death;

- Paul already enjoys a special relationship with Christ, but does not count himself as completely knowing Jesus. His knowing his savior deepens as he experiences life in Christ.
- power of His resurrection-- the power of Christ’s resurrection is the hub of Christianity. It is the “good” of “good news”! If we say that Christ lived and died... that’s not really good news. But say that He lived, died and was raised on the third day... THAT is good news (cf 1 Cor 15:12-20). It is by the power of the resurrection that we are raised from the dead ourselves.

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<sup>8</sup> Roper 379

<sup>9</sup> Roper 496-7

- fellowship of His sufferings-- Paul counts being persecuted for the sake of Christ (having fellowship with Christ through suffering) a gain on his figurative profit/ loss sheet. cf Acts 5:41
- conformed to His death-- cf Romans 6:3-7; Gal 2:20, 6:14

**3:11** in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.

- Here is the crux of the whole matter. Paul has suffered all things loss ultimately so that he may gain resurrection from the dead. Of course, all will be resurrected, but only those found righteous will be resurrected to life (cf John 5:28-29).

**3:12** Not that I have already obtained it or have already become perfect, but I press on so that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus.

- Not that I have already obtained it-- obtained what? What he has lost all for: knowing Christ (3:8). Even the apostle Paul did not count himself as one who fully knew Christ. Full knowledge of Christ can only come with the resurrection when we will be in His presence continually.
- become perfect-- “Particularly with the meaning to bring to a full end, completion, reaching the intended goal, to finish a work or duty (John 4:34; 5:36; 17:4)...(Phil. 3:12, not that I have already completed my course)”<sup>10</sup>
- press on-- this is the same word translated “persecute” in Acts 9:4, 5, 22:4, 7, 8, 26:11 (pursuing), 14, 15.
- I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus
  - lay hold/ laid hold-- “In allusion to the public games, to obtain the prize with the idea of eager and strenuous exertion, to grasp, seize upon” <sup>11</sup> (cf 1 Cor 9:24).
  - The riddle here is to figure out what “that” refers to.
    - In part, it refers to the reason Christ “laid hold” of Paul. Paul strives to achieve the goal set for him by Christ. It is as though Paul had been hired to do a job and now earnestly works to do that job.
    - It also refers to what he has just been talking about. He has given all up so that he may know Christ... not just as a friend, but such a relationship as can only be described as being “in Christ.” He wants to experience the things Christ experienced and live as Christ lived. For our part, we were not specifically chosen on a road to Damascus with a blinding light, but those who obey the gospel were chosen in advance as those who would receive this same blessing: to be in Christ.
  - Acts 9:15 records God explaining to Ananias the task He has chosen Paul for: to bear His name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel. This was a charge Paul considered an honor and a gift (cf Rom 1:5, Gal 2:7).

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<sup>10</sup> Zodhiates, S. (2000). *The complete word study dictionary: New Testament* (electronic ed.). Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid

**3:13** Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of *it* yet; but one thing *I do*: forgetting what *lies* behind and reaching forward to what *lies* ahead, **14** I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

- Paul knows he hasn't arrived, so to speak, but he leaves the past in the past and keeps on keeping on, headed always toward that final call to Heaven for those in Christ. Though Paul is not yet fully Christ-like, he continues on.
- 3:12-14 as a section is chock full of words indicating a great strain and effort.
- laid hold-- same word as 3:12
- forgetting what lies behind-- "forgetting" is the same as used in Matthew 16:5, Mark 8:14 when the disciples fail to bring bread with them. It wasn't on their minds. Likewise Paul doesn't dwell at all on what has already past.
  - Remember that Paul was one who persecuted the church. Not just persecuted, but actively sought to destroy God's people. He imprisoned them, obtained letters of authorization to pursue Christians in other cities. In Acts 8:1, he was "in hearty agreement with putting [Stephen] to death." Acts 9:1 records that he was "breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord." This kind of violence is far reaching and in his new Christian life, it seems likely that he would have had dealings with people whose family and friends he had imprisoned. In fact, Acts 21:8 records that Paul and his fellows stayed with Philip who was one of the seven selected in 6:5 and more than likely was a friend of Stephen, murdered while Saul of Tarsus looked on with hearty approval.
  - 1 Timothy 1:16 gives us yet another reason Christ chose the persecuting Benjamite as His own ambassador to the Gentiles. If Christ could forgive *this* man, He could forgive anyone.
  - Some even today feel that their own sinful past is too great to overcome. They feel that their deeds will haunt them always and their guilt causes them to reject Christ, His church and His offering of forgiveness through faith. What a shame! It's true that we can never be worthy. We can never work hard enough to gain our righteousness. Our flesh deserves no confidence. It is *only* through "righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith that we may know Him and the power of His resurrection" (3:9, 10).
  - The five step solution for the guilt ridden is the same today as it was for Paul:
    1. have faith in Christ
    2. count the good, bad and ugly as rubbish
    3. forget what is behind
    4. reach toward what is ahead
    5. press on
  - reaching forward-- "It is rare that one can use a word meaning 'to stretch out' or 'to reach toward' in this context of [Philippians] 3:13. It may be far better to use an expression such as 'to earnestly seek those things that are ahead' or 'to do one's

best to reach what is ahead' or 'to strongly desire to experience what is ahead of me' or '... what lies in the future.'"<sup>12</sup>

- press on-- same as 3:12
- prize-- with this choice of words, Paul continues his underlying reference to the public games. This word typically refers to the wreath or garland given to winners of the games. Here Paul uses it metaphorically to refer to Heavenly reward, but the double entendre adds depth to our understanding.
- upward call-- cf Heb 3:1

**3:15** Let us therefore, as many as are perfect, have this attitude; and if in anything you have a different attitude, God will reveal that also to you;

- perfect—
  - TELEIOS— this is a tough word to convey in English. It's translated "perfect" in Philippians, but it also means "mature." It means to reach the designed end.
  - this word seems quite contradictory since Paul just said in 3:12 that he is not perfect. He uses the word in a different sense here, though. In 3:12, he acknowledges that he is not perfect, as we use the word (flawless). Here in 3:15, however, he uses it to mean maturity. "Earl F. Palmer said that there may be 'an intentional play on words on Paul's part: If you are mature, you know that you are not perfect; if you think you are perfect, you are not mature.'"<sup>13</sup>
  - We also see this word in 1:6. If we draw the three verses together with the thematic concept that we do not put our confidence in the flesh (in earthly things), but only in the Lord, we see that this sub-theme can convey the same idea. We, in ourselves are not perfect (3:12), and those who are truly mature understand this and that only Jesus can perfect us, and He will continue to do so for our entire journey.
- attitude-- PHRONEO— (both "attitude" in this verse) this is the same word as 2:5 ("Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus")
- if in anything you have a different attitude, God will reveal that also to you
  - There are three main interpretations for this phrase, all of which carry with them the confidence Paul had that further revelation/ learning would not contradict what he had already taught:
    - considering this is still the age of miracles, it could be that Paul has in mind a miraculous revelation of God's will concerning these other attitudes.
    - full revelation of truths, like full perfection, will be revealed in eternity
    - further instruction from godly influences will eventually instruct on such matters where there may be dissent.

<sup>12</sup> Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.). New York: United Bible Societies.

<sup>13</sup> Earl F. Palmer as quoted by Roper, 508

- “The way Paul dealt with possible dissenters is instructive. Considering Paul’s apostolic authority, he might have been tempted to say, ‘What right have you to disagree with me? I am an apostle!’ At times, Paul did assert his apostolic authority (see 1 Cor 14:37, 38; 1 Thess. 2:13), but he apparently did not thing that approach was called for on this occasion. Instead, he was gentle with those who disagreed with him, expressing confidence that, over time, they would learn better.”<sup>14</sup>

**3:16** however, let us keep living by that same *standard* to which we have attained.

- It has been said that if you are not moving forward, you’re drifting backward. Paul here warns us not to let that happen. It can happen even to the most mature among us. There are far too many stories of men who were once elders/ deacons/ preachers but who are now estranged from Christ.

**3:17** Brethren, join in following my example, and observe those who walk according to the pattern you have in us.

- join in following-- literally imitate together. This word comes from MIMETES, where we get our word “mimic.”
- observe-- this word is sometimes used in the sense of “watch out” and carries the idea of examining. As we observe those who walk according to the pattern, it is not sufficient to simply say “Oh yes, Susie does as Paul does. She is a good example” and move on. We are to examine and try to learn from those whose examples are worthy.
- walk-- refers to a manner of life. cf Eph 4:1
- pattern-- TUPOS-- used of a prototype or example, a pattern to be followed. Think of a sewing pattern.

**3:18** For many walk, of whom I often told you, and now tell you even weeping, *that they are enemies of the cross of Christ*,

- walk-- again, this speaks of a manner of life. In this case, though, the manner of life is not one to be followed because they are not patterning their lives after Christ and His life. Instead they are enemies of Christ.
- of whom I often told you--
  - He may have told them while there in person or perhaps in a previous letter (see 3:1).
  - This may refer to those Judaizing teachers.
  - Paul did not miss an opportunity to remind his beloved brethren of spiritual dangers. Sometimes today we may see a brother or sister headed down a path which we feel may lead to a spiritual trap, but we consider it none of our business. Granted, Paul was an apostle and inspired writer, but he counted it his duty to warn his brethren. Likewise, we ought to help our brethren in their walk. cf Gal 6:1
- even weeping-- Paul was not gloating; rather he was weeping over those who had walked away. This word is not just a trickle of tears. It is often used of weeping that comes with mourning (cf Matt 2:18). Paul is truly grieved by these souls’ state. Likewise, when someone

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<sup>14</sup> Roper 509

chooses a path away from Christ, we ought to weep over their souls, not gloat and feel superior. cf Rom 9:1-3

- enemies of the cross of Christ-- the cross is where the redemptive work of Christ took place. When someone attempts to earn their own righteousness, they essentially reject the redemptive work of Christ on the cross in favor of their own efforts at salvation, trusting in their own flesh. Reliance upon anything but Christ-- including the Law given by God but now nailed to the cross (Col 2:14, Rom 7:4)-- for salvation causes one to be an enemy of the cross.

**3:19** whose end is destruction, whose god is *their* appetite, and whose glory is in their shame, who set their minds on earthly things.

- whose god is *their* appetite
  - “god” here refers to something that is of prime importance in one’s life. When we set something or someone other than God Almighty as the prime importance of our life, that something or someone becomes our god, our idol.
  - If those referred to are the Judaizers, it may be that this refers to the dietary laws of the Old Law and their keeping of these laws.
  - appetite could also be figurative. Their god is their own desires. Whatever they want to do, or be or have becomes their god.
- glory is in their shame--
  - “... could apply to [Judaizers’] boasting about keeping the Law when they should have been ashamed of their shortcomings.”<sup>15</sup>
  - what should be a shame is instead what they are proud of, boastful of.
- set their minds on earthly things--
  - set their minds-- this is the same word as seen twice in 3:15 for attitude. It speaks of the mind. Some scholars believe that the mind [PHRONEO] is Paul’s primary concern with the Philippian church. If so, this verse contains a key concept.
  - Judaizers would have their minds set on keeping the rites and rituals of the Old Law.
  - their confidence is in the flesh, making them enemies of the cross of Christ, but not only that, their minds are set on things here... temporary things. cf 2 Cor 4:18
  - cf 4:8

**3:20** For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ;

- citizenship is in heaven-- during this time Roman citizenship was a valuable commodity. Some could purchase citizenship, but it was very expensive and unattainable for most. In Acts 22:28 we learn that Paul was born a citizen (uncommon for a Jew). It is likely because of this citizenship that he was not killed as a trouble maker. Instead, he appeals to Caesar on the basis of his citizenship. For Paul to say that his citizenship is in Heaven is to count yet another gain (Roman citizenship) as rubbish.

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<sup>15</sup> Roper 518



- eagerly-- cf Rom 8:25

**3:21** who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself.

- transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory--
  - cf 1 Cor 15:35-57
  - transform-- To transform, change the outward form or appearance of something.<sup>16</sup> Our essence will not be changed, only our outer body.
  - body of our humble state-- refers to our earthly, frail, aging bodies.
  - body of his glory-- our bodies will be like that of Jesus in His now glorified state
  - “The application to the subject at hand is obvious: Why center your attention on the flesh when the flesh is going to be changed? Your heart should be set on *a heavenly purpose*: the transformation of your ‘lowly body’ (Phil 3:20; RSV)”<sup>17</sup>
- exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself
  - exertion-- ENERGEIA-- where we get our word energy
  - power-- His power is such that he can subject all things. He has power to be master over all. This is the power He is going to apply to transform our bodies into new bodies like his own.

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<sup>16</sup> Zodhiates, S. (2000). *The complete word study dictionary: New Testament* (electronic ed.). Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers.

<sup>17</sup> Roper 524

## **PHILIPPIANS CHAPTER 4**

Tami Roberts

INTRODUCTION: Paul is writing a love letter. I think it is SOOO important for us to remember that. A love letter to the church in Philippi while he is in prison. A church that has been his “sweetheart” church. A church that he founded a dozen or so years earlier. History tells us the first church established in Europe. (Acts 16) So you know how special this group was to him. We see him express it all throughout the letter. Paul isn’t really admonishing them but just reminding them of what they knew as truth and the love for the Lord that they shared. So in chapter 4 he is bringing his love letter to an end. He’s wrapping up his thoughts and reassuring the Christians in Philippi as he closes out his letter. As he does so, he:

1. Tells them again that he loves them. (vs. 1)
2. Makes a personal request. (vs. 2-3)
3. Reminds them to keep their focus.. (vs. 4-9)
4. Thanks them for their help and tells them he is content. (vs. 10-19)
5. Closes out with greetings. (vs. 20-23)

And as we read through this final chapter of his letter we will take these words and work diligently to apply them to our own lives.

### **4:1 – Paul Once Again Expresses His Love for Philippi**

1. “Therefore” means it’s connected to before. 3:20-21  
Since our citizenship is in heaven.  
We are family!
2. “my beloved brethren” (He uses it twice in this sentence)  
This is an agape term meaning of close and warm affection.
3. “my joy and crown”  
The crown refers to a crown of victory.  
This expresses Paul’s joy in the fact that he brought them to the Lord.
4. “Stand firm in the Lord”  
Because you believe in Him. Because your citizenship is in heaven.  
Do not be moved!

#### **4:2-3 – Paul Makes A Personal Request for Euodia and Syntyche**

1. Urged to live in harmony with the Lord.
  - a. “Live in harmony” = be of the same mind
  - b. Probably personality differences and not doctrinal problems because of what Paul says next.
2. Shared Paul’s struggle in the cause of the gospel.
  - a. Wording shows that they were teachers, not just caring for the needs of others or living godly. They were sharing the gospel.
3. He asks a “true comrade”, Clement and the rest of his fellow workers to help the ladies.
  - a. Paul loves these women! He considers them special, not needing a “spanking”.
  - b. He obviously respects and loves these people. They are all special to him.
4. Their personalities were causing some kind of trouble. An obvious problem since someone had shared it with Paul.
  - a. How often do we allow our “personalities” to cause trouble in the church?

Sidenote: Paul also shows that we “can know” that our names are in the book of life. 1 John 5:13

#### **4:4-9 – Paul Reminds Them to Keep Their Focus**

4:4 – Rejoice!

1. Rejoice in the Lord.....ALWAYS
  - a. The command here is always rejoice.
  - b. The key to that is “in the Lord”.
  - c. Paul’s joy is not found in outward circumstances but found in a relationship with Jesus Christ.
  - d. Do we let the “circumstances” in our lives get in the way of our rejoicing? Do we become wallowers and not rejoicers?
  - e. Choose to rejoice!!! Work to replace negative reactions with rejoicing!

4:5 - Be Gentle!

1. Let your forbearing spirit be known.
  - a. “forbearing” meaning gracious gentleness or loving restraint.

- b. That quality that does not have an unbending attitude about your own rights or opinions. In other words, you have an understanding that “It’s not about you.” You put others first.
- 2. To all men.
  - a. He doesn't just say to the body of Christ.
  - b. How often do we force even our religious “opinions” on others thinking we are “standing firm in the truth”? (FaceBook, or other forms of social media)
- 3. Because the Lord is near.
  - a. Not necessarily “can return at any time”, but more like “He’s with us always”.
  - b. How would our behavior towards others change if we kept the thought that “the Lord is with us” always at the front of our thoughts? Think of how Jesus treated others. (And don’t go directly to the money changers.-)

#### 4:6-7 – Be at Peace!

- 1. Be anxious for nothing.
  - a. The word “anxious” has its root idea, “the divided mind”.  
That worry that pulls us in two different directions.
  - b. How often do we rely on “self” to be able to fix everything in our lives?
- 2. To worry about nothing pray about everything.
  - a. Paul uses 3 different words to describe prayer:  
Prayer – making requests made known to God.  
Supplication – an earnest sharing of our needs and problems.  
Thanksgiving – showing appreciation.
  - b. This shows turning everything over to God. Let God do the worrying!  
A true TRUST in Him!
- 3. Not just “peace”, but “THE peace of God”!
  - a. A peace that means we are free from worry.
  - b. Peace is not the absence of trouble, but the presence of Jesus.
  - c. A peace that we know in Christ Jesus, but that the world cannot even begin to understand.
- 4. “shall guard your hearts and your minds”
  - a. “guards” carries the meaning of “like a walled city”.
  - b. Our hearts and our minds are the 2 areas that cause worry.

- Heart can create wrong “feeling”.
- Mind can create wrong “thinking”.
- c. THE peace of God surrounds our hearts and our minds and protects us from worry because we have given our worry to Him in prayer.

#### 4:8-9 – Control Your Mind!

Paul basically says, “So you want to have less worries, turn them over to God and He will give you peace. And here are some other ways to receive that peace.”

Paul gives them some things to think on.

1. Whatever is true.
  - a. That which is real, actual, altogether true.
  - b. God’s word is truth. (John 8:31-32)
  - c. So many times we let the world tell us what is truth.
  - d. Or we have some altered truth in our minds and that causes us to worry.
2. Whatever is honorable.
  - a. Deserving of honor, respect. Worthy. Possessing holiness.
  - b. Do we allow our minds to be filled up with trivial things? Things that are just getting us all riled up but they really aren’t worth thinking on?
3. Whatever is just/right.
  - a. Reputable
  - b. Doing the right thing starts with thinking the right thing. (1 Pt. 1:13)
4. Whatever is pure.
  - a. The Greek here means to be free from alloy or foreign substance; that which is free from moral defilement. Belongs to the same family of words as holy, holiness, sanctify.
  - b. Authentic.
  - c. This is also purity of motive. (Not about me, glorify Christ, not men.)
5. Whatever is lovely.
  - a. Winsome is the best translation. That which calls forth love.
  - b. Focus on the “lovely”! See the positive!!

- c. This will help us see the “beauty” in others, and not their flaws.
6. Whatever is of good repute.
- a. Whatever things are well spoken of.
  - b. It may not always seem like it, but even the world draws lines where behavior is concerned.
  - c. Set your mind on things that are thought highly of: kindness, love, compassion.....
7. If there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise.
- a. “If” = “Since”
  - b. “Since” these things are excellent, worthy of praise, respectable.
8. Think on these things.
- a. “Your thoughts make you. You may not be what you think you are, but what you think, you are.” – Ralph Waldo Emerson, Norman Vincent Peale
  - b. You want to be at peace, free of worry? Think on these things.
9. Now DO!!!
- a. Paul points out that they should KNOW what to DO. You have learned, received, heard and seen Paul’s example.
    - 1. They saw it put into action in Paul’s life.
  - b. They didn't just learn or see how to, they “received” it.
    - 1. This implies that they took it within themselves and made it a part of them. A part of who they are.
  - c. Paul says to practice these things.
    - 1. Will it all come naturally at first? Requires practice.
      - a. “Practice” suggests over and over again on a regular basis.
      - b. Do we ever stop practicing these things?
10. And you will have the peace that can only be found in God.
- a. God wants us to be at peace.
  - b. Control our thinking and we will have that peace.
  - c. It all ties back up to “Rejoice, Be gentle, Don’t worry, turn it over to God.”

11. This is one of Satan's favorite targets. He is constantly bombarding us with negative, sinful things to think on.

- a. Sometimes we don't even recognize the "sinful" thoughts because we think we are being compassionate or conscientious. (Worrying about our family, our job...)
- b. Paul shows us how to conquer Satan's control in our lives, through our thinking.

#### **4:10-19 – Paul Thanks Them for Their Help and Tells Them He is Content.**

4:10 – They are supporting Paul again and he is rejoicing.

1. Something had stopped their support but they have been able to "revive" that support for him.
  - a. The Philippians had gone through a time of poverty. 2 Cor. 8:1-2

4:11-12 - Paul has learned to be content.

1. Contentment:
  - a. Webster = 1. To appease the desires of. 2. To limit (oneself) in requirements, desires or actions.
  - b. Greek = contained, self-sufficient, independent of external circumstances.
2. He reassures them that he isn't really "wanting" anything.
  - a. What do you think Paul "possessed" at that time? Remember, he's in prison.
  - b. What can that teach us about the "wants" or even the "needs" in our lives?
3. "Learned" implies that it took an effort.
  - a. Do we strive to "learn to be content"?
  - b. Through trial and testing Paul learned the secret of contentment.
  - c. Do we want to go through the "lessons" to learn to be content?
4. In whatever circumstances.
  - a. Humble means = having very little, just the basic necessities
  - b. Prosperity = having more than enough
  - c. Filled AND going hungry
  - d. In abundance AND suffering need

e. Pray for this level of contentment in our own lives!

#### 4:13 – The secret of contentment!!

1. Where does Paul's strength come from?
2. "Through" is actually "in".
  - a. How do we get "in Jesus Christ"? Gal. 3:27, Rom. 6:3-4
3. So, when Paul says he is content it is not a self-sufficiency that he is speaking of, it is a CHRIST sufficiency!
4. Through Christ we have the power to deal with life's times of prosperity and times of need. (Physically, emotionally and any other way you can think of.)
  - a. Paul has been pointing out "I can" thinking all throughout the end of his letter in this chapter. (Taken from Avon Malone)
    1. "I can" love. – Through Him I can love everyone. (vs. 1)
    2. "I can" forgive and be reconciled. (vs. 2)
    3. "I can" be a peacemaker. Help these women. (vs. 3)
    4. "I can" be happy. (vs. 4)

"Most men are about as happy as they make up their minds to be." – Abraham Lincoln
    5. "I can" be gentle and gracious. (vs. 5)

Let go of the "God made me this way" thinking. (Outspoken, rude, opinionated, domineering)
    6. "I can" let go of worry. (vs. 6,7)
    7. "I can" control my thoughts. (vs. 8)

Thoughts may flit through your mind but don't let them land and build a home.
    8. "I can" be content in any situation. (vs. 10-13)
  - b. "I can" thinking can change our lives!!
  - c. Remember the "in Christ" part and get to know Him! Know His desires for you!

#### 4:14-18 – Paul Expresses Gratitude

1. The Philippians did well to share with Paul. (vs. 14)
2. "No church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving but you alone". (vs. 15)



3. "You sent a gift more than once for my needs". (vs. 16)
4. They truly loved Paul and had a heart of generosity.

4:17 – Paul knows that the Philippians will be blessed.

1. "profit" = fruit
2. Jesus tells us, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." (Acts 20:35)

4:18 – Their gift to Paul is well pleasing to God.

1. They have been generous.
  - a. "everything in full", "have an abundance", "amply supplied"
2. Epaphroditus brought the gift to Paul and now Paul is getting ready to send him back to the Philippians. (2:25)
3. Paul knows that the Philippians have made a sacrifice for him and describes it that way.

4:19 – This shows Paul's confidence in his God.

1. He has acknowledged their sacrifice and encourages them by telling them that God will supply every need you have.
  - a. Not some, but all!
  - b. Including our earthly needs. (Matt. 6:24-33, 2 Cor. 9:8,11)
  - c. But more importantly our spiritual needs. (Heb. 4:16 – we may receive mercy and may find grace to help in time of need.)
2. Again, "in Christ Jesus".

Paul basically says, "I am filled by you and by Jesus Christ."

#### **4:20-23 – Paul's Closing.**

4:20 – God has done all of these wonderful things for us, to Him be the glory!!

4:21-22 – Paul sends greetings.

1. Greet every Christian for me.
2. The Christians here send greetings too.

- a. Where was Paul?
- b. Look at the lives Paul has touched while in prison at Rome.
- c. We see things in our lives as prisons that keep us from doing all that we desire to do. Did Paul let his imprisonment keep him from sharing the gospel?

CONCLUSION: This love letter to the Philippians shares so much about Paul. In this chapter alone we see his love for the brethren.. His love in the way he encourages Euodia and Syntyche and those around them to help each other and live in harmony. We see him share his focus with them, encouraging them to rejoice, be a generous spirit, pray, keep their minds centered on positive things. We see his faith in knowing that when they do these things God will give them peace. We see his genuine gratitude. We see that his learned contentment has been found in Jesus Christ and in believing that God is supplying all of his needs. Probably the best way to understand Paul's overall mindset is to look at 1:21 – "To live is Christ, to die is gain." Paul lived his life TOTALLY striving to focus on making sure that God was glorified. Striving to make sure that people understood that without Jesus Christ, they had no purpose, Paul had no purpose. I like to think that it's one of the reasons that Paul remained single. Paul was so self-emptying, so outward focused that he didn't have that need in his life. His life was full of Jesus and making sure that others knew and loved his Jesus. It's why Paul can talk about joy and rejoicing. I also love the fact that Paul talks about weeping for those who are enemies of the cross. Paul loved people, but he loved Jesus more and wanted everyone to not only know, but to understand the blessing of knowing Jesus. Paul has shared with us so many ways to be Christ-centered. Now we must DO them!

I pray that we can be more like Paul, who was striving to be like Jesus.

"Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ." 1 Cor. 11:1