

***COMMENTARY ON
THE BIRTH OF
THE CHURCH AT
PHILIPPI AND
THE EPISTLE TO THEM***

by

R. Lindsay Poteat

The following pages are brief comments on a portion of *Acts 16* and the book of *Philippians*, verse by verse. They are not exhaustive, nor are they infallible. They are just thoughts gathered over the years as I have taught the book in churches and on the radio. I trust you will find them somewhat helpful as you study the Philippian letter. I fell in love with *Philippians* in 1972, studying it while we were in the hospital for the birth of our first child. It is among my favorite New Testament studies. Be blessed as we journey together through this lovely little letter.

Acts 16:6-34 - The Founding of the Church at Philippi

Philip II, King of Macedon, father of Alexander the Great, founded the city in 357 BC - the region was well known for gold mining. In 42 BC, Antony and Octavian defeated Brutus and Cassius there, and Philippi was made a Roman colony by Octavian. Situated on Egnatian Way (Via Egnatia), from Italy to Byzantium (1,120 miles). It was 20 feet wide and paved. This city as a gateway between Europe and Asia was not unlike New York or San Francisco. Philippi had its gold mines and fertile soil - Paul saw a gold mine of souls and fertile soil for Gospel seed. So Paul, Silas, Timothy, and Luke arrived there, and a church was born in adversity.

WE MUST CONTINUE TO SERVE GOD IN THE FACE OF ADVERSITY!

*"It is better to go to Troas **with** God than anywhere else **without** Him." - G. Campbell Morgan. Now we have the marvelous account of how the gospel got from the Middle East into Europe. Since our forebears, at least those who colonized this continent and established this nation, came from Europe, this is no small thing for us personally. I often wonder if the gospel had gone on into Asia instead of Europe, how different things might have been. How wonderful for us that God's geographical trip plan for Paul was laid out as it was. We are, again, in God's debt.*

I. A CLOSED DOOR AND AN OPEN ONE (Acts 16:6-11)

DESIRE, DENIAL, and DIRECTION (6-9) *"Trying to go into Bithynia...Spirit did not permit them"* (6), 7), 8) A new missionary troupe has now formed with Paul at its head. Joining him have been Silas, Luke, and Timothy. They have gone through Syria and Cilicia to strengthen the churches already established there, some of them at least by Paul and Barnabas on the previous mission effort. They find themselves in north central Asia Minor (what is today Turkey) with a decision to make about where to go next. A man of action, Paul attempts to go northeast, but the Holy Spirit puts on the brakes. The Scripture tells us that *"the steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord"* (Psalm 37:23). It appears here that God also leads by "stops" as well as "steps." A closed door leads to an open one. God has forbidden them to go north or east; they came from the south, so their remaining alternative is to go west. A mentor of mine, Dr. Robert Delnay, said that "when all possibilities but one have been eliminated, that remaining option, however unlikely, must be correct." God's direction was clear, "Go west, young men." And west they went - to Troas, ancient Troy. Troas was a coastal port city. The travelers found themselves staring into the Aegean Sea, considering what might be their next option. Paul was later to write to the Corinthians these words, *"Now when I went to Troas to preach the gospel of Christ and found that the Lord had opened a door for me..."* We, too, must look for direction "in stops as well as steps."

9) God's means of revealing things to His people have been quite varied over the ages - Hebrews 1:1 says *"in various ways."* Of course we know that His primary means today is through His Word, which is why we spend so much time in the Bible. We want to hear from God! At Troas God reveals the open door in a vision. Macedonia is ready for the Gospel. I often wonder if the man in the vision was the Philippian Jailer who came to Christ?!

DISCERNMENT

10) God has made known His will. It appears that the sovereign God who led them also provided the means by which they would go. We would simply grab a flight and leave. Sailing was their

option; did God have a boat ready to go, with room for four passengers? The Gospel is to go into Europe! Two preachers, an apprentice, and a physician serving as recording secretary, move out to carry the gospel to the continent of Europe (and to us).

DEPARTURE

11) Paul is a leader - He follows Christ, and his companions follow him. They moved ahead by conviction ("*God had called us*"), not by consensus. Acts 20:6 shows that the reverse sailing trip later from Neapolis to Troas takes 5 days, and that with the prevailing westerly winds in their sails. Here it takes only 2 days! When God leads and His people follow, He puts the wind in their sails. This confirms his call and enables their mission, as well.

II. A SERMON PREACHED, A FAMILY SAVED (Acts 16:12-15)

WAITING

12) Neapolis is the seaport that gives them access to the greater city of Philippi. A major city situated on the Egnatian Way, an important east-west Roman highway, Philippi was critical for the spread of the gospel. Its copper mines had made it an important city economically, but Paul saw another ore in this mine - the precious ore of human souls for whom Christ died. A gospel lighthouse here would influence many in commercial travel.

WORSHIPING WOMEN, WITNESS, and WINNING

13) The Sabbath comes, and there appears to be no synagogue in town. He and the group went outside the city gate and found a group of worshipers "down by the riverside," a group of women in prayer. The men seized this witness opportunity and began sharing their faith with these ladies who were gathered. Did Paul wonder why the person in his vision was a man, but his opening Gospel salvo was to be fired at a group of women?

14) A lady who had been transplanted from Thyatira here to Philippi was in the group. Lydia, a merchant, and probably quite wealthy, was a woman who worshiped God, and as Paul shared the Gospel, God opened her heart to receive Christ as her Savior. The importance of the Word of God in ministry is seen again and again (Rom 10:17). Christianity helps woman find a place of rightful honor. The gospel is not "male-oriented;" Paul is no chauvinist.

15) The missionaries baptized those who believed, including Lydia's household. She immediately displayed the grace of hospitality, inviting the group to take lodging with her while in Philippi. "I am, after all, a believer." The importance of baptism is seen here, and we should not take it lightly that Christ commanded us to so obey.

III. MAID LIBERATED, MISSIONARIES LOCKED UP (16-24)

UNACCEPTABLE TESTIMONY

16), 17) The missionary troupe were one day headed to the riverside prayer-place when they encountered a demon-oppressed slave girl. By her demonically-enabled soothsaying she was earning a lot of money for her owners. She kept on shouting that Paul and Silas were God's servants showing men the way of salvation. While this was the truth, the ministry of the gospel was not intended to be aided by hellish sources.

UNBOUND GIRL

18) Her persistent, day-after-day screaming became a real annoyance for God's servants, so much so that Paul finally turned and cast the demon out of her in the name of Jesus Christ - the name more powerful than Satan's imps!

UNHAPPY MERCHANTS

19) Hit where it hurts greedy men the most, in their pocketbooks, these slave-owners grabbed Paul and Silas and dragged them by force into the "*agora*," the marketplace, where they could call a kangaroo court to deal with them.

UNLAWFUL BEATING

20), 21), 22), 23), 24) These men seized upon one of the oldest hatreds in the world, anti-Semitism, and reported that these men were **Jews**, and they falsely said that they were causing a riot by teaching customs that were unlawful for Romans. A mob mentality took over, and the magistrates yielded to the outcry, ordering that the missionaries be stripped and flogged. Remember that their crime was to free a young girl from the tyranny of demons. After the beatings, it seems that the jailer was rough with them as he bound them in the jail there at Philippi. What a work God would do in his life and his family's lives that night!

IV. SONG-SERVICE IN JAIL, JAILER SAVED (25-34)

TESTIMONY OF THE PRISONERS

25) Beaten, bruised, bloody, and with no way to get comfortable, Paul and Silas find joy not in their changing circumstances, but in the unchanging Christ. There is a midnight prayer and praise service there in the jail, and it is a great witness to the other prisoners. Their changed circumstances only serve to bring them into contact with a new congregation of needy sinners!

TERROR FOR THE JAILER - DUTY, DISTRESS, DETERMINATION, DELIVERANCE

26) Earthquakes were not uncommon in Macedonia, but this was a nighttime, violent quake that shook the building to its foundations. Barred prison doors flew open; chains came loose from walls! Is this a miraculous escape?

27), 28) The sleeping jailer was awakened by quake. Note the contrast between the jailer and prisoner, Paul. ***Sleeping*** versus ***praying***. ***Confusion*** versus ***confidence***. ***Suicidal*** versus ***selflessly courageous***. A Roman guard who loses his prisoner would face execution himself. He prepares to fall on his sword, thinking his prisoners are gone. Somehow Paul knew he would commit suicide, and he shouted to him to stop. "We're all here, don't take your life!" What grace is this that Paul displays!

TRANSFORMATION OF THE JAILER

29), 30) The rough Philippian jailer, saved from unnecessary death only by the kind act of a prisoner he mistreated, recognized something in these men that he did not have, and something that he wanted - then and there! Securing a light, he rushed in, and as the captor, he fell quaking with fear before his captives. He rose and removed them from the dungeon. Already saved from death by earthquake and suicide, he now asked them how to be saved from sin. Did he have previous exposure to Paul's ministry? He asked life's greatest question.

31) Such a great question calls for a great answer. Here is Paul's chance to make a statement for all men for all time on what God requires for salvation. He put nothing in that was unnecessary; he omitted nothing that was essential. Simply this: *"believe in Jesus and you'll be saved."* This is God's simple plan of salvation!

32) The missionaries then spent time explaining the Gospel message to jailer's entire household. It mattered not that they had been mistreated, thrust into prison, gone without rest, suffered physically. This was why they came to Philippi. God sent them there to help this man find faith in Jesus Christ. Jail was the means to that end!

33), 34) This jailer is a changed man. Once brutal, now he is a blessing. He who once harmed now works to heal. He who is washed of his sins, washes the wounds he helped inflict. Hurting hands become helping hands. Next all who received Christ testify to that experience of faith with symbol of baptism. Following that is a meal shared in this new household of faith. A night that started in grief ends in glory to God!

The injustice of Paul and Silas being beaten and jailed for helping a young demon-possessed girl is great. But the plan of God to use the circumstances to reach souls for Christ is greater. Let us ask God to help us look beyond the difficulty of the moment to find a greater purpose for our struggles. Then we can sing and pray at the midnight trial.

WE MUST CONTINUE TO SERVE GOD IN THE FACE OF ADVERSITY!

Paul lost his partner, Barnabas.....Took Silas
He was directed away from his personal inclinations.....Followed the Spirit
Taunted by demon.....Cast him out Beaten by magistrates.....Prayed and sang
Cast in jail, suffered an earthquake.....Stayed and witnessed

JOY STANDS ON FOUR LEGS

A STUDY IN PHILIPPIANS

The prison epistle of Paul to the church
in Philippi has two major themes:
JOY and UNITY.

A BROAD OUTLINE OF THE BOOK FOLLOWS:

I REJOICE WITH YOU IN CHRIST, WHO IS OUR **LIFE** (CH 1)

1-8 THEY ARE PARTNERS WITH HIM

9-11 HE PRAYS FOR THEM

12-18 HE PRAISES GOD FOR CIRCUMSTANCES

19-30 HE PLACES HIS FUTURE IN GOD'S HANDS

I REJOICE WITH YOU IN CHRIST, WHO IS OUR **EXAMPLE** (CH 2)

1-4 SACRIFICE SELF FOR THE BENEFIT OF OTHERS and UNITY

5-11 CHRIST'S EXAMPLE OF SACRIFICE

12-16 GET TOGETHER!

17, 18 PAUL'S EXAMPLE

19-24 TIMOTHY'S EXAMPLE

25-30 EPAPHRODITUS' EXAMPLE

I REJOICE WITH YOU IN CHRIST, WHO IS OUR **GOAL** (CH 3)

1-6 CAUTION ABOUT THE FLESH - IT IS **CHRIST** WHO:

7-9 OVERSHADOWS MY PAST GAINS

10-19 IS THE OBJECT OF MY PURSUITS

20, 21 SHALL CHANGE US AT HIS COMING

I REJOICE WITH YOU IN CHRIST, WHO IS OUR **SUFFICIENCY** (CH 4)

GOD'S PEACE IS AVAILABLE BY:

1-4 JOYFUL CO-OPERATION

5-7 PRAYER

8, 9 RIGHT THINKING

10-12 PERSONAL CONTENTMENT

13-23 CONFIDENCE OF GOD'S SUPPLY

PHILIPPIANS, CHAPTER 1

This letter was written from Prison (10 years after Paul's visit)

Two themes run together in the book - **"unity"** 1:27 (2); 2:2-4 (6), 14; 3:16 (2), 17; 4:2

"joy" Phil 1:4, 8 (2), 25, 26; 2:2, 16, 17 (2), 18 (2), 28; 3:1, 3; 4:1, 4

It includes a "thank-you note" for their gift to him 1:5, 4:18

"I REJOICE WITH YOU IN CHRIST, WHO IS OUR **LIFE**" - 1-8 They are Paul's Partners

I. THE PEOPLE OF THE CHURCH

"Paul and Timothy" together at the church's founding; "servants" - they are slaves of Jesus!

Saints (1) consecrated to... separated from

In Jesus we are "holy;" all believers are saints! How "saintly" is your life? Are you challenged?

Bishops (1) 1 of 3 NT titles for "pastor," along with "elder" Acts 20:17, 28

Pastors are not "lords over" but "examples to" the flock 1 Peter 5:2, 3

Deacons (1) Not so much a position of authority as a place of service

II. THE PARTNERS WITH THE CHURCH

The Lordship of Christ (1, 2) **He** is in charge, and we are **His** slaves

The Love for the People (3,4,7,8)

They remembered him in giving, he remembered them in ministry, praying, joyful intercession

"In my prayers" (4) and "in my heart" (7) "I greatly long for you all" (8) [as Epaphroditus - 2:26]

The Love from the People (5)

They had supported Paul's missionary from the start (multiple gifts in Thessalonica - 4:16)

The Life of Prayer (3,4) Gratitude, earnestness, intercession

III. THE PERFECTING OF THE CHURCH Isa 57:21 "no peace to the wicked"

Commenced in Grace (2) peace "with" God Rom 5:1 peace "of" God Phil 4:7

"Grace" and "peace" The Greek gives us the names "Karen" and "Irene"

Fountain of all good things and crown of all blessings. Full name - "Lord Jesus Christ"

Completed by God (6) "confidence" 28 times in Paul (Phil 1:6, 14, 25; 2:24; 3:3, 4)

It is God Who works; we are laborers together with him; God initiates, perfects

As God "finished" redemption," so God will "complete" our sanctification

PTM, GIFWMY = "Pardon the mess, God isn't finished with me yet"

God uses pastors as a tool for the "perfecting of the saints" Eph 4:11,12

When we have a proper perspective of Christ, we have proper regard for people, including pastors

How do you view the "Pastor" of the church? Are you praying for him?

How do you view the people? Praying for the lost? ...for the wayward church members?

Are you sharing your faith? ...living consistently to undergird your witness?

COMMENTS ON 1:1-8

1) As in ancient epistles (letters), the name of the author appears at the beginning, and attached to it is the name of his associate, Timothy. The Philippians would remember the young apprentice who was with Paul at the founding of the church (see Acts 16). "Servants" = "bond-slaves," belonging to Christ (1 Corinthians 6:20) by redemption, and His to command as He wills. He refers to the Philippian Christians as "holy people," "saints" in many versions. They and we are made holy in Christ (1 Corinthians 1:30). He concludes by mentioning the two offices in the early church: "overseers" - this is one of three names for "pastors" (along with "elders"); and "deacons" - see Acts 6 for the origin of this office, and 1 Timothy 3 for its qualifications (and those of the pastor).

- 2) As elsewhere, Paul's opening greeting combines one from Hebrew culture and one from Greek: "Grace" - the Greek word gives us the name "Karen." It is the fountain of all good things, God's unmerited favor for sinners. "Peace" ("shalom" in Hebrew) - the Greek word produces our name "Irene." Peace, the crown of all blessings, is a harmonized relationship with God ("peace with God" - Romans 5:1) and with our circumstances ("peace of God" - Philippians 4:7). These things come to us from the Father and the Son.
- 3) These folks are in Paul's mind ("*I remember you*"), and there was gratitude for them in his heart (to 'my' God). The Philippian believers were intertwined with Paul's deep feelings.
- 4) Thorough, joyful prayer for Philippians "all...all...always." Prolific prayer life of Paul - a joy for him to pray for them - good thoughts.
- 5) This gratitude was prompted by their partnership in his gospel work, dating to the beginning of their relationship. From their inception, the Philippians were a missionary giving church - Paul, their missionary.
- 6) Paul was persuaded, convinced of God's plan to complete the work He had begun in the Philippians. No "maybe" here! God initiates - God perfects! Growing a church is God's work!
- 7) My feelings (heart) for you are justified in prison or in preaching. You are co-partners. There is an understandable attachment of the missionary to his support group - sharers.
- 8) Before God - my desire and love for you are great! The Apostle calls on God to verify the reality - no false sentiment this!

PAUL'S PRAYER FOR THE PHILIPPIANS 1:9 -11

*The High Priest's breastplate had 12 stones on it with the names of the 12 tribes on them. The symbol was that he had Israel over his heart in love. His ministry was to go to God on their behalf. Paul told the Philippians (1:7) "I have you in my heart." He, too, went to God on **their** behalf. Our text today is a prayer Paul uttered for them - a prayer for their growth and maturity. Let us never be satisfied with our level of growth, the maturity to which God has brought us!*

WE MUST MOVE FORWARD IN OUR WALK WITH CHRIST!!! HOW?

I. BY ABOUNDING IN LOVE (9) (Rom 8:28, John 13:35, 1 Cor 13:13 Eph 4:32-5:2)

LOVE'S SUPPLY and LOVE'S SPHERE

9) The Apostle bursts into prayer that the love of the Philippians would grow into knowledge and sensitivity. Abound...plenty, spare, Knowledge. ...principles... insight...application "...a flood of love within the bounds of good sense and discretion." -A. T. Robertson

II. BY APPROVING THE BEST THINGS (10)

Notes

"Intuitively perceives right; unconsciously shrinks from wrong." - Wordsworth

Discernment - *knowing the best* (Amos 5:14, 15)

Desire - *Wanting the best* (Eph 5:10, 1 Thess 5:21)

Decision - *doing the best*

Before God - "Sincere" - hold it up to the light - John 3:21

Before Man - "blameless" - not stumbling or causing others to stumble

Day of Christ - the day of scrutiny for believers - Rapture and Bema (Judgment Seat of Christ)

10) This done, Philippians will have discernment and sincerity and non-offence in distinguishing things that differ- sensing what is good or what is best - transcending things are able to stand the test of light, not stumbling or causing others to do so.

III. BY ADDING THE FRUITS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS (11)

Overflow - "having been filled with the fruit of righteousness" (Proverbs 11:30, Galatians 5:22)

Righteousness = "being right (before God)" Fruit of Righteousness = "doing right" (people can see)

Origin - "which comes through Jesus Christ"

We bear no fruit unless we abide in the Vine (John 15:4)

Outcome - "to the glory and praise of God" (Phil 2:11, 1 Cor 10:31, Mt 5:16)

Other motives are good: not to cause stumbling, reward at Bema... This is best: God's glory!

11) Results of fruit in life through Christ that praises God... righteousness is "**being** right" - its fruit is "**doing** right" - be so filled! Such fruit is by Christ and unto the glory of God (manifestation) and praise (recognition).

*When planning our week, we need to set priorities - do the **best** things, not just the **good**.*

Some questions to ask then when facing the week:

When making the plan: (intentional)

How can I show love to someone this week?

How can I help others stand tall this week?

How can I glorify God this week?

What would I like to be doing when Jesus comes?

When facing unplanned choices:

Will this thing show love to Christ, others?

Will this thing make others stumble?

Will this thing call attention to me or glorify God?

Would this make me ashamed if Jesus came?

Man has his plans and expresses his desires (Acts 19:21, Romans 1:10, 12, 15) "I must.. I may.. I may.. I am." Our plans include - keep our health, strength, and longevity - serve God as long as we can! And then God has His plans - often quite different from our plans. Paul finally preaches in Rome - to guards in a cell and to churches by letters. Accommodations: palace dungeon / Auditorium: small cell / Congregation: guards and guests.

WE SHOULD REJOICE IN AFFLICTIONS THAT COME FOR THE GOSPEL'S SAKE! HOW?

I. BY USING THE PLACE OF SUFFERING AS A GOSPEL PLATFORM (12, 13)

Don't Feel Sorry For Me! My Obstacles Become Opportunities! (12)

12) The Philippian believers no doubt knew of Paul's imprisonment, and he writes to let them know that he is alright with that circumstance. His chains and cell just changed the geography of his witness, and God was still using him to spread the gospel. When Christ is Lord, our circumstances can never become our master. God Uses Strange Weapons In Spiritual Warfare

13) Every four hours a new guard was chained to Paul for his watch. Who was really the captive? Paul shared his faith constantly, and the word of his being imprisoned for his faith spread throughout the Praetorian guard - these were elite troops assigned to guard important prisoners. The Word of God was not bound, was it?!

II. BY PROVOKING OTHERS TO WITNESS BY OUR SUFFERING (14-18)

PERSONAL WITNESSING IS ENCOURAGED

14) And then there was the effect of Paul's imprisonment on those outside the palace! His fellow-preachers were emboldened to fearlessly share God's Word with others. "If my brother Paul is willing to suffer imprisonment for our faith, how much more should I use my freedom to make Christ known!" Satan must have been surprised at this. Suffering improves and strengthens the church rather than sending it into hiding. And you...?

PERSONAL CRITICS ARE CHALLENGED - Paul had aroused the ire of unchallenged powers.

15) Even in Paul's day there were sectarian attitudes in the body of Christ. Remember "I am of Paul...I am of Apollos I am of Cephas...I am of Christ?" Some who opposed Paul in some frivolous matters seized this opportunity to work harder to make their group grow. Others who were "in Paul's camp" worked hard to vindicate their imprisoned champion. It is indeed sad that then and now our efforts may on occasion have impure motives.

MIXED ATTITUDES TOWARD THE MINISTER - "defense of the gospel" (1 Peter 3:15)

16), 17) The second group had a seemingly good motive for their preaching, for they loved the Apostle and wished to encourage him in his bonds. By the way, when some active saint is laid up in inactivity, does it challenge you to work harder to make up the loss and stand in the gap? We should be so motivated. How sad that Paul's sectarian opponents (but brothers in Christ) hoped by their efforts to make trouble for him. Would the news of increased Christian activity in Rome press the authorities to make life harder for Paul, Rome's best-known religious prisoner? Could he be made an example of to stifle the efforts of others?

JOY AT THE GOSPEL'S ADVANCE

Paul cared not who won the most followers to Christ, or who was most popular!

He only cared that Christ was preached and souls were won!

18) Paul is not here discounting the importance of our motives in serving the Lord. We will indeed give account for the "why" as well as for the "what." What he is saying is that God can get glory out of work done even with impure motives. The important thing is that men are preaching the gospel of Christ and sinners are being saved.

Some servants of God get laid up by illness or imprisonment; some are called home to glory. Jim Elliot; Nate Saint; Roger Youderian; Pete Fleming; Ed McCully - Ecuador, Aucas. All five of these men died on Sunday, Jan 8, 1956. A flood of missionary volunteers surrendered to God's call in the wake of this terrible tragedy.

*As Jamestown was to England; so Philippi was to Rome; so the Church is to Heaven, **Phil 1:19 - 30** Paul is here on earth, but is a citizen of heaven. To be loosed from earth is to be bound for heaven. This prisoner for Christ is unsure about his immediate future, but confident in his faith and certain for glory! He discusses staying or leaving, and he delivers instructions for the Philippians in either case. In being prepared to stay and bless those around us, or to leave and be blessed in heaven...*

WE MUST PUT CHRIST AT THE CENTER OF OUR LIVES!

I. PAUL'S DELIVERANCE (1:19,20) Rom 8:28

Notes

"I know" - confident of deliverance "This" - his circumstance "Shall turn out" - its end result
"Deliverance" - release from bonds "Your prayers...spirit's provision" - these work in concert for us
"Expectation and hope" - strong longing and confident hope (which is an unrealized reality)
"not be put to shame" - not to hang his head "boldness" - chin up, looking ahead
"Christ exalted... by life or death" - acquittal and service, or conviction and death, just glorify Jesus!

19) How is it that Paul will be delivered? The prayers of the saints and the answer of the Holy Spirit will - he is confident - bring him deliverance. Will it be **from** execution? Or will it be **through** it? This was a win-win situation for Paul. May we be reminded by this of the importance of prayer in the accomplishment of God's will. Pray!

20) Once in a while we discuss the matter of "dying grace." Would we have such grace if we were called upon to suffer as martyrs? Paul knew that he might die, and, if need be, he wanted to do it with grace and courage. He lived to glorify Christ, and if he must die, he wished to glorify Christ in his death as well. Good priorities.

II. PAUL'S DILEMMA (1:21-26) Galatians 2:20, Colossians 3:4

Notes

"To me" - Paul's perspective; what is yours? "To live is Christ" - gives life meaning, purpose
"To die is gain" - heaven's glory, with Christ, reunions, sin gone, crowns, union with Christ complete
"If I live...fruitful labor" - *If I stay here, it is to work, to bear fruit for Christ!*
"I do not know...choose" - *what blessed options!* - break camp, loose moorings, weigh anchor
"Hard-pressed" - so torn between the two! "Desire...Christ" - strong burning desire to join Christ
"Very much better" - O the blessedness to join Him, leaving tears, toil, death, good-byes - 2 Cor 5:8
"Yet to remain" - again the conflict "necessary for your sake" - *sine qua non* essential for you
I yield my desire to your need, and at God's direction, I stay here rather than go there (for now)
"Convinced...know" - He must have received revelation of his continuing life on earth (Acts 20:25).
"Progress and joy" - *their joy accompanies their growth; regression = depression; growth = joy*
If I can get to Philippi once more, your cup of joy can run over as we fellowship in Christ

21) Here is a great truth. If God's child lives, it is by Christ and it is for Christ that he lives. *"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me:"* (Galatians 2:20). My life is not my own, but Christ's Who bought me with His blood. And if my life ends, I go to be with Him in heaven, which is gain - not loss. I cannot lose.

22), 23), 24) Here again is the blessed dilemma Paul faced - "Am I going to remain in my body (stay alive)? Or, am I going to leave my body (die) and go to heaven?" On the one hand, to remain here on earth meant adding to his fruitful labor, that is more people coming to know and learning to follow Christ. He said he didn't know how to choose - not that the choice was really up to him! Each of these two options offered positive results. To die would be to leave this world and be with Christ! How much better that would be than persecutions, jail cells, hunger, "dangers, toils, and snares." However, the unselfish church-planting Apostle also knew of the benefit the Philippians would receive if he remained in the flesh. He could pray for them whether with them or absent from them. He could teach and encourage them when present, or write blessed letters like this one when absent. Death for Paul would be his and heaven's gain, but a great loss to the living church on earth. No wonder he said he was "torn between the two!" Looking at life through those glasses changes values.

25), 26) The man who led me to Christ is in heaven, now, and I miss him greatly. It was good to call, write, or visit with him while he remained in the flesh. It was better for me while he was here. It was better for the Philippians for Paul to remain. Now Paul seems to have word from the authorities or some revelation from heaven that he was not yet going to die. He shares with them his confidence that his presence would continue and that they would grow in their faith in Christ, and that they would rejoice together when God allowed them to get together. Let us today determine to make the most of the time the Lord gives us on this earth. Use it for the good of others and the glory of the Lord. Like Paul, put selfishness aside, and be a blessing to others!

III. PAUL'S DIRECTIONS (1:27-30)

SERVE IN UNITY AS GOSPEL-WORTHY CITIZENS (27)

Let your conduct as citizens of heaven produce unity; **"one spirit, one mind, striving together"**

If I'm with you, I'll see it; if I'm absent, I'll hear it (Psalm 133:1, Ephesians 4:3).

STAND FAST, UNINTIMIDATED BY OPPOSITION (28) (Isaiah 51:7, 12, Matthew 10:28).

SHOW COURAGE IN SUFFERING (29, 30).

WITH THE LIFE AND CALLING OF FAITH COMES SUFFERING - (Rom 8:17, 2 Tim 2:3, 8-12).

27) Paul charges the Philippians to behave as "gospel-worthy citizens." The gospel imposes obligations, brings to us privilege, and has with it a high calling. Whether Paul got to visit them again

or only hear from them, he wanted them to be unified: “standing firm in one spirit, contending as one man...” What a good testimony is unity!

28) Not being intimidated by their opponents conveyed to them that they were on the winning side. War horses, hardened by battle, are undaunted by canon fire. When we can thus stand in the battle, it conveys to us a sense of our ultimate victory - a victory achieved by Christ and shared by even the weakest little believer in Philippi!

29) We who believe in Christ must also partake of suffering. “If they persecuted me, they will persecute you” (John 15:20). “All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution” (2 Timothy 3:12). To suffer for Christ is indeed a high honor and a noble calling. We are not here to win the world to us, but to bring men to know Jesus Christ.

30) Their suffering was not unlike the “agony” they saw in Paul when he labored there among them (see Acts 16). They had seen it when he was present with them; they now heard about it in his absence.

Take-aways from Chapter 1:

- 1) *Chains and the prospect of death by execution do not dampen Paul’s spirit.*
- 2) *He weighs the positive results only of each option - living or dying - and sets them forth.*
- 3) *He rises above the situation and challenges his readers (and us) to stay focused on Christ.*
- 4) *At least 7 times in this paragraph, he mentions Christ - he never loses that focus, and...*
- 5) **WE MUST PUT CHRIST AT THE CENTER OF OUR LIVES!**

PHILIPPIANS, CHAPTER 2

The epistle to the Philippians has two parallel themes running throughout its lines - Joy and Unity. Of the 13 times the author mentions unity, 6 of them are found here in our passage. I, for one, am glad that the Philippian church struggled in this area, for to aid in their struggle Paul penned this unparalleled “Christ Hymn” as an antidote to discord. If there are five chapters of Scripture that stand out as favorites in my heart, this is one of them, perhaps standing the highest. This is a passage that commends much study, meditation, and even memorization. In my generation, memorization was done from the King James Version, and for this passage, I am glad that it was. The beauty of language, the depth of insight into Christ’s heart, the challenge to the modern soul, are without peer in this paragraph. Do not read it lightly; do not study this lesson without asking the Holy Spirit to help you plummet its depths and soar to its great heights.

I REJOICE WITH YOU IN CHRIST WHO IS OUR LIFE (CH 1), EXAMPLE (CH 2) Philippians 2:1-4

“To live above with saints we love, O that will be glory;

To live below with saints we know, that’s another story!”

In Abraham’s day, disunity was a bad testimony to the objects of the believers’ witness, Gen 13:7,8

Psalm 133:1 *“How good and pleasant it is when brothers live together in unity!”*

CHRISTIANS MUST LIVE and WORK and WORSHIP TOGETHER IN UNITY

I. THE MOTIVATION FOR UNITY (2:1)

Notes

Does your position in Christ stimulate you to unifying action?

Love Christ and

A “calling alongside” Christ and others - they go together

Love People

Does Christ’s love for you and in you for others persuade you to cooperation with others?

Love makes us speak to others in a friendly way! Prov 15:1

Does the fellowship of the Spirit & fellowship He provides prompt you to getting along with others?

We who (all) share in the same Spirit should be drawn together by His work in us! (1 Cor 12:13)

Do your inward affections, yearnings for the saints, motivate you to live in peace with others?

Same words used together in Col 3:12 Heartfelt affections, resultant compassionate acts, Rom 12:1

1) Paul is about to ask the Philippians a tough task - **to pursue corporate unity by practicing personal humility**. He assumes 4 things are true for them since they are in Christ: ① Position in Christ stimulates to action. ② His love gives an incentive to obey, ③ They have communion with indwelling Spirit, ④ Heartfelt affections result in compassionate acts. All four of these “ifs” should be translated “since.” These are realities in the saint’s life.

II. THE MANDATE FOR UNITY (2:2)

Notes

“Fulfill (1:4, 18) my joy by your unity” This statement links the 2 themes of **“Joy”** and **“Unity”**
 Think the “one” thing - oneness of mind, common purpose Unity of Mind
 Have mutual affection - **“you are loved alike, therefore, love alike!”** Unity of Heart
 Be knit together in soul - Unity of Soul
 Have unity in aims, goals, purposes - this is not “uniformity” or “unanimity” Unity of Intent
 If the mind, heart, and soul are right, right intent will lead to right actions!
 2) As their spiritual father, Paul takes great pride and joy in their spiritual growth. They can fill up the cup of his joy by doing three things - all of them related to unity. First, they can think alike (not mindless unanimity, but a unity of thought - striving to get on the same page!). Next they can share a mutual affection in Christ. Finally, they can have unity in aims, goals, and purposes for their lives - egocentric division destroys; unity in Spirit builds us up.

III. THE MEANS FOR UNITY (2:3,4)

Notes

UNDERSTAND THE HINDRANCES (3a, 4a)

“Selfishness” - this a work of the flesh, not fruit of Spirit Galatians 5:19, 20
 “empty conceit” [the **empty** heads in the wheat field are the ones held high] Proverbs 13:10
 The parable of the Pharisee and the tax-collector Luke 18:10-14

UTILIZE THE HELPS (3b, 4b)

“Humility of mind” - This is a mind-set, and attitude Matthew 11:29, James 4:6
 “regarding others as higher” These are the altruistic actions the mind-set produces Romans 12:10
 “look out for the interest of others”

3) It seems that some may have been puffed up and seeking personal glory in the church in Philippi. Paul chides those who behave so, and he challenges them to a higher path. That higher path is to stoop low in humility, seeing others as being above themselves. It is good to contemplate the areas where others excel. John the Baptist, speaking of Jesus, said, *“He must increase; but I must decrease”* (John 3:30). That is a spirit of humility desirable for all.

4) Self-absorption is a deadly disease. “The smallest package of all is a person who is all wrapped up in himself.” How blessed is the person who gets outside himself, becoming concerned with the interests of others. One’s conversation will betray their interests: if “I, me, my, and mine” are our favorite words, we are not looking on the things of others as Paul taught. Examine yourself; where is the center of your universe - Christ, others, self?

We are quick to condemn the easily-identified sins: carousing and drunkenness, promiscuity and sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, outbursts of anger, abusive language. But look at the sins of the heart that are linked in the same texts with these!

James 3:16, Romans 13:13, 1 Corinthians 3:3, Galatians 5:20, 1 Timothy 6:4

God forgive us for being so quick to condemn the sins (outward, especially) of others, and so slow to allow the Spirit to show us our own (inward) wrongs!

Two have gone before us that were men of moment - Both were “Adams” - the 1st Adam and the last

Adam. One, like Lucifer of old, rose up in pride and left his first estate - plunging the entire human family into sin. The Other stooped down in humility, also leaving His 1st estate, to enter the human family and redeem us from sin. Philippians 2:5 and following is the story of Christ's marvelous condescension to bring us redemption. It is couched in the setting of a plea for unity within the local church. Proverbs 13:10 "only by pride comes contention."

WE MUST PURSUE CORPORATE UNITY THROUGH PERSONAL HUMILITY - HOW?

I. BY HUMBLING OURSELVES LIKE CHRIST'S EXAMPLE (5-8)

DESCENT OF THE WORD; God comes to earth; Emptying, **His** act

The Command (5) *"Be disposed in mind as Jesus was." "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he." You may not be what you think you are, but what you think, you are!*

5) Here is truly one of the greatest passages in the Bible - it is all about Jesus. Paul commands us to think like Jesus thought. True humility is born in the mind, and to have the mind of Christ is to have a humble mind. The imitation of Christ is commanded for our thought life as it is for all our life. Oh, that we might think as He thought! All earth's problems would fade from view if Adam's race would adopt the wonderful mind of Christ.

The Height From Which He Descended (6)

John 1:1, 8:58, 17:5 *"Possessing from the beginning continued existence as God."*

"In inner being and essence, He was God." Did not clutch outward expressions of deity.

6) Jesus possessed from the beginning continued existence as God. *"I and the Father are one,"* He said (John 10:30). John said that Jesus (the Word) was God. Scripture declares the deity of Christ again and again. Yet Jesus felt that this equality with God was not a thing to be clung to - that is, the outward expressions of His deity must temporarily be set aside if He were to enter the human family - though in essence He never became one bit less God!

The Wondrous Act of Descent (7)

Emptied Himself by: *Voluntary self-abasement. "He emptied Himself."*

"Taking...being made" "He seized the servant-nature."

Christ was truly God and truly man; 2 natures in 1 Person.

7) Quite far from clutching the outward expressions of His deity, Jesus laid them down. This was the greatest act of voluntary humiliation and self-abasement the world has ever seen or will ever see.

Jesus literally "emptied Himself." He stripped Himself of the garments of deity and placed on Himself a robe of human flesh. He willingly became a Servant of God and of men. He retained His deity while taking on true humanity - what a mystery!

The Obedience of the Man, Christ (8)

Romans 5:19, Hebrews 5:8 *As God, He emptied Himself; as Man, He humbled Himself.*

Divine nature recoiled at being made sin; human nature, at death and shame.

Painful, shameful, tortuous, punitive, ignominious death on the cross.

8) His outward expression now being one of humanity (as was His inward being), the God Who had emptied Himself and become a Man, now as a Man, humbled Himself. He submitted to the divine will and plan of redemption by becoming obedient to death, and not just any death, but death on a cross. This was the most shameful, ignominious, painful, tortuous death a man could die. This was the height of humiliation and the depth of love.

II. BY LEAVING THE MATTER OF OUR WELFARE TO GOD (9-11)

ASCENT OF JESUS; Man goes to heaven; Exaltation, **God's** act

The Act of Exaltation (9a)

Because of humiliation, exaltation came - James 4:6,10, 1 Peter 5:5,6

"What He renounced as a prize, He received as a gift." - A T Robertson

The Glory of His Name (9b, 10)

Jesus: Incarnate Deity, Savior

Christ: Anointed God-man, Messiah
Lord: Authority, Dominion, Sovereign
"All rise!"

When a dignitary enters

"All kneel!" When the Savior arrives
Creator elevates His name.
Creation recognizes His name.

The Glory of the Father in the Glory of the Son (11) John 5:23

9) A man is asked to humble himself for the sake of unity. He is willing, but asks, "Who then will look after my interests if I don't?" The answer is "GOD!" Jesus set aside His own interests for those of others, and because He did, God highly exalted Him, giving Him the name which is higher than any name - the name "Jesus Christ, the Lord!" And if we will humble ourselves, God will look after our interests better than we ever could ourselves.

10), 11) If a judge or other dignitary enters a scene, we are asked to **rise**. Paul tells us here that there will come a time when all of Adam's children will be required to reverence Him by **kneeling**. It will include 3 groups: 1) those in heaven - departed saints who are today in Christ's presence; 2) those on earth - the saved and unsaved now living; 3) those under the earth - the lost who have already died and are in Hades today. The theme of the human race in that day will be the Lordship of Christ. Every voice of Adam's race will join in a praise chorus to Jesus, acknowledging Him as Lord. Oh, that men would own Him as Lord today, willingly and while there is time to be saved! Yet so many scoff, blaspheming that holy name that one day they will be forced to bless. To glorify the Son is to glorify the Father, now, and then. *"Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved"* (Acts 16:31).

In John 13 we have a moving picture of Jesus living this out in an earthly setting.

Here the Master robes Himself in the garments of a Servant and moves about the upper room.

He girds Himself with a towel, and washes their feet as a symbol of being a Servant.

Mark 10:45 "...Came not to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."

1) *In Philippians 1:27 Paul mentioned his presence or absence - he does so again!*

2) *2:1-4 command to and grounds for unity among the believers in Philippi*

2:5-8 Christ, the great example of humility - humility, the great key to unity - To guide us

2:9-11 Results of Christ's humility - God exalted Him - To encourage us

3) *"So then" - whether I'm there or away, "work out" "Do" "Rejoice...share your joy"*

4) *1:27 spoke of a testimony to the missionary apostle; 2:15, of a testimony to a lost world!*

5) **WE MUST ALWAYS DISPLAY GRACE IN OUR LIVES! Here are some guidelines...**

Notice the imperative verbs in 12, 14, 18

I. BY DEMONSTRATING OUR SALVATION BY OUR LIVES (12, 13) *present middle imperative*

THE MEANING - Carry it to its conclusion; thoroughly digest it; apply it to daily living Romans 5:3

THE MANNER (12) - ways of world, weakness of flesh, wiles of Devil (These should make us fear)

THE POWER - God energizes us to serve Him John 15:4, 5

THE PURPOSE (13) - He works in us to: Want and Work - Desire and Do **"His good pleasure!"**

12), 13) Now comes another plea - for obedience. They had obeyed when Paul was with them; he asks for the same in his absence. Paul loved these saints, and he called them "his beloved ones."

He wishes them to work toward the natural consequences of their salvation - that what they have on the inside will now show forth to the outside. This is the outward display of the inward life - applying in practice what God has given in principle. Living the Christian life includes performing the good works that God has ordained for us to walk in (Ephesians 2:10). It is a serious matter, and should be done with "phobou and tromou" - fear and trembling. Where does the energy come from to do these works? From God! It is He Who energizes us to do the things that are His will, the things in which He

takes pleasure. To please Him should be our goal, not to please ourselves (this age).

II. BY DECLARING OUR WITNESS THROUGH A BLAMELESS LIFE (14-16)

PROHIBITION OF A COMPLAINING SPIRIT (14)

Leprosy for Miriam Numbers 12:1, 10

Death for Korah Numbers 16:1,3,31,32

Plague for Israel Numbers 21:5,6

“So work together cheerfully and agreeably.” “Without grumbling and disputing”

POSITIVE RESULTS (15, 16)

Lights that shine (15) Blameless - nothing to criticize (in a “twisted and perverted” generation)

Innocent - simple, unmixed, uncomplicated Romans 16:19

Above reproach - God’s goal for us Jude 24

Labor that is fruitful (16)

14), 15), 16) God’s people are to be busy doing God’s work (“Do” is an imperative verb, a command), and they are to do it without private mutterings or public voicing of discontent.

“Complaining, arguing” will harm the testimony of Christ. Serving Him without those negative things renders a Christian above reproach, enabling him to shine as a bright light in a dark place. *“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works...”* (Matthew 5:16). A task for us Christians is implied in the words, “as you hold out the word of life.” When men find faith in Christ through the life-giving Word, it gives all workers cause to rejoice, now and when Jesus comes again!

III. BY DOUBLY REJOICING - “REJOICE... AND SHARE YOUR JOY” (17, 18)

PARADOX OF SUFFERING AND JOY (17).....2 Timothy 4:6

Not running nor laboring, but being poured out, Be it God’s will, I will rejoice!

PLEA TO ENTER THAT REJOICING (18) You suffer, tooPhilippians 1:29, 30

So, even in your suffering [so much like mine] may you rejoice

17), 18) This book has two concurrent themes, unity and joy. Earlier in the chapter, the emphasis was on unity; here he stresses rejoicing. Do you find it strange that one being “poured out as a drink offering” (the word so translated gives us our word “spent”) would find **that** a cause to rejoice? Our faith is full of such anomalies. And he even commands them with two imperative verbs to join in his rejoicing. Let us also rejoice with them!

“The Personal Touch” - Philippians 2:17-30 (Including a small review of verses 17, 18)

1) *The goal of the Apostle is for the Philippians to **experience** and **express** unity in Christ’s body.*

2) *Personal humility has been shown to be the means of obtaining corporate unity.*

3) *Christ has been set forth as the greatest Example of personal humility, and*

4) *A charge to “Get Together” was given in verses 12-16; now he adds 3 more lesser examples...*

5) *“I can’t come up to the standard set by Jesus...” “Okay, here are some human standards to follow...”*

6) *Here is a story of “tender loving care” at its best - an example for us to follow.*

I. THE CHARACTERS -

PAUL (17, 18) *my possibly being sacrificed brings me joy - you rejoice too!!*

TIMOTHY (19-24) *his confidence in Christ; Timothy’s presence will help Philippi; his report will comfort Paul; others are sadly selfish; Timothy served-like-a-slave with me; I send him soon with news of me (I hope to come)* 1 John 4:14, John 20:21, Isaiah 6:8

EPAPHRODITUS (25-28) *brother, co-worker, fellow-soldier, messenger, sacred minister; He nearly died, but God mercifully spared him; I send him to increase your (and my) joy.*

THE PHILIPPIANS (All through) *they worried about Paul in Jail, Epaphroditus, sick.*

II. THEIR CONCERNS - all about serving others Mark 10:45, 1 Corinthians 10:24, 13:5

Paul - concerned for the Philippians (19, 28) and for Epaphroditus (27)

Timothy - concerned for Paul (with him in his bonds), (22) Timothy naturally cares for them (20)
Epaphroditus - concerned for Paul (there 25, 30),
Knowing you knew he was sick, he had a heavy heart, longed for you (26);
Philippians - concerned for Paul (1:12, 2:23), Epaphroditus (2:26, 28)

III. THE COMMAND

STATED - *"Rejoice, rejoice with me" (18)*

"Welcome" "Receive" be glad to have him (29)

"Hold such in honor" (29)

IMPLIED - Even as we **esteem** such a "servant-heart," so we should **exemplify** it.

19) Paul is now writing to the church at Philippi from an imprisonment in Rome. He no doubt wished he could visit them, but it was not the Lord's will at that time. How blessed to have a man like Timothy to be able to send in his place. And what a compliment to Timothy to be dispatched to one of Paul's favorite churches.

20) In this chapter, Paul was using Timothy as an example of selflessness in concern for others. It was indeed high praise to be included in the same connection as Jesus. Paul and Timothy were literally "kindred spirits."

21), 22) It must have saddened Paul to say that most people ("everyone" is hyperbole) are self-concerned. To be selfish is to be unlike Jesus; to be selfless is to imitate Him. He was the ultimate Giver of all that He had in dying on the cross. How it must have pleased the Apostle to contrast Timothy with the masses in saying that he is a true servant in the gospel. These people knew Timothy - he had been with Paul on his first journey to Philippi. What a compliment to refer to him as a son with a father. Timothy had earned high praise from Paul

23), 24) Timothy's departure for Philippi would need to wait for a time. It's as if Paul was calling them to be patient so he could send them the latest news with Timothy when he came. His case was pending, and the outcome was as yet uncertain (as men would say). Surely God knew, and Paul not only wanted to send them his trusted aid, he wanted to come himself. Sometimes God showed Paul the future, but this time he could only trust and remain optimistic that God would free him to continue his work. We do well to remember this example and the precept of James to not speak with certainty about our future plans - *"if the Lord wills..."* (James 4:15).

25) Another example of selfless service is set forth for the Philippians in Epaphroditus. There was an urgency in Paul's sending him to Philippi, so he acted without any paralyzing studies and sent their friend with Paul's letter in hand. "Brother" means a fellow-Christian. "Co-worker" suggests they expended energy jointly in serving Christ. They also fought "shoulder-to-shoulder" as soldiers in the Lord's army. Paul uses the word "apostle" in a non-official way here; Epaphroditus was "sent with a message," the basic meaning of the word. He would be hard-placed to send him away, as he had been his personal attendant and assistant in the work of missions.

26) The selflessness of Epaphroditus is illustrated in his reaction to learning that the Philippians had heard he was sick. Instead of being self-absorbed about his own illness, he was distressed that they might be worrying about him. His longing for them was the same as Paul's, same word used in 4:1 of his passionate desire to see them.

27) The report they had of the illness of Epaphroditus was accurate - he had been deathly ill, but he was spared by the mercy of God (meaning his illness should have ended in death). Paul felt that mercy extended to him also, indicating that his death would have been a real blow to the Apostle, that would have added the grief of death and loss to that of illness and suffering of a friend.

28) Since Paul, Epaphroditus, and the Philippians were all suffering anxiety, it seemed good to the Apostle to send him to them as the best way for all to be relieved. How selfless and practical is this great man of God. May God give us others like him in this day of self-seeking and self-absorption.

29) When Epaphroditus came to Philippi, their welcome was to be with great joy in the Lord. What a favor God had bestowed on him and on them in sparing his life in the recent mortal illness! Great respect and esteem is to be given to men of his caliber.

30) To protect himself, Peter had denied his Lord; even at the risk of health and life, Epaphroditus stood up for him. Whether it was because of the danger of association with a capital felon or that he

wore himself out and became sick unto death, the end is the same - he risked his life for Christ. The inability of the Philippians to further minister to Paul in Rome was supplemented by the presence and help of this choice servant. What a man he was!

Honor the servants; be servants; such stooping in service (like Christ, Paul, Timothy, Epaphroditus) will be the humility that is needed to secure unity in the body. Ask God to show you ways you can be a servant to Christ through ministering to others - "As you have done unto these, you have done it unto me" (Matthew 25:40). Christ stooped to die for and save us - has that taken effect yet in your life? Have you trusted Him?

PHILIPPIANS, CHAPTER 3

3:1-9

I Rejoice with You in Christ Who is our LIFE (Philippians, chapter 1)

I Rejoice with You in Christ Who is our EXAMPLE (Philippians, chapter 2)

*I Rejoice with You in Christ Who is our **GOAL (Philippians, chapter 3)***

I Rejoice with You in Christ Who is our SUFFICIENCY (Philippians, chapter 4)

Paul's background was in Judaism -

which had a true form (John the Baptist)

and a false form (Pharisees, Sadducees, etc.).

While he meant well and was sincere in his former religious life, Paul was of this latter false form.

It appears that he had formerly rejoiced in religious pedigree, profession, and performance.

With the new man Paul, **WE MUST REJOICE IN THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.**

I. BY DISTRUSTING THE FLESH (1-3)

Notes

A Caution (1) He had no doubt spoken, and certainly written about adversaries who would creep in. He is not pained by mentioning it again! It will help keep them safe.

The Command (2) "Beware" x 3 - "dogs" Paul turns the Jews' term for Gentiles on the Judaizers "evil workers" these men were active, but their work was evil

"false circumcision" only concerned about externals, not the spirit, internals

The Character of Christianity (3) Using "circumcision" in the sense of a relationship with God

1) "worship...Spirit" - service is heart-felt, Spirit-enabled, not outward rituals of the flesh

2) "glory in Christ" - not in a place, a race, a ritual, but in the person of Jesus Christ

3) "no confidence in flesh" - not trusting in externals, rituals, but in Christ's finished work

1) Practical conclusion begins here: my cautions are safe for you, no grief to me. Keep on finding your joy in Christ - Don't turn to works of the flesh. I'm not reluctant to summarize for your safety what I wrote to Galatians.

2) Keep on the look-out for three detractors: "Dogs" (1)- turnabout use of derisive Gentile tag.

"Workers of evil"(2) - active enough, but in mischievous proselyting from grace to merit. "Concision"

(3) = religious flesh-mutilators, holding surgery as spiritual advantage.

3) New Testament identification with God has different token than fleshly circumcision: ① Spirit-worship (not ritual), heart-felt, spirit-enabled. ② glory in Christ's person, not a place or a race or ritual. ③ Trust for eternal life not in who I am or what I do, but in Christ!

II. BY DISCOUNTING THE PAST (4-6)

Notes

Previous Advantage (4) If they think they can boast in accomplishments, I can outshine them all!

Particular Assets (5,6) List of 7 items: 1) "circumcised the 8th day" Godly, law-observant parents

2) "nation of Israel" not a proselyte, not a half-breed

3) "Benjamin" beloved younger brother of Joseph, first king, great warriors, loyal to Judah

4) "Hebrew" not Hellenized, retained traditions

5) "Pharisee" strictest sect, Biblical literalists, supernaturalists

6) "persecutor" energetically opposed enemies

7) "blameless" obeyed the law, brought proper sacrifices for sins

4) Here is a strange thing - in writing to the church in a town that appears to have had no synagogue, which we gather from Acts 16, Paul touts his Jewish pedigree. There we read that on

the Shabbat they went down to the river side, where they met with some Gentile women. This probably meant there was not a large Jewish population locally, and yet in his letter there the apostle Paul enters into a personal defense that consisted largely of listing his Jewish credentials. We are left to conclude that the troubling Judaizers who followed Paul's ministry trying to subvert his converts into Judaistic ritual as essential to the gospel had made their way to Philippi and were confusing believers there.

5) And so he begins to detail his pedigree (as though it really mattered, since his detractors said that it did matter!). As an infant, he was, according to the custom and command, circumcised on day 8 of his life. This meant he had obedient parents. He was a full-blooded Jew, and he hailed from the only tribe that remained true to David's line when the kingdom divided. He spoke Hebrew and followed Hebrew customs, and he had been a member of Judaism's strictest and proudest sect - the Pharisees! This meant that he strictly interpreted and kept the Law.

6) If the Judaizers were zealous about things Jewish, Paul had even been more zealous than they! Before he came to know Jesus as his Messiah, thinking that this sect called "the way," known also as "the church," opposed God and Moses' Law, he persecuted it! The church of Jesus Christ never had a more zealous **opponent** or **proponent** than Paul! When he opposed her, he did it unto death - the deaths of its adherents. When he fell before Jesus on the road to Damascus, Paul became the fiercest advocate of faith in God's Son the world would ever know. His law-righteousness had been faultless, with any failing of his accompanied by the appropriate sacrifice.

III. BY DESIRING CHRIST (7-9)

"I Met the Master"

I had walked life's way with an easy tread.
Had wandered where wealth and pleasures led.
Until one day in a quiet place
I met the Master face to face.

I met him and knew Him and blushed to see
That His eye, full of pity, was fixed on me.
And I cried, "O Lord, make me meet
To follow the steps of thy bleeding feet."

I had built my castles and reared them high,
With towers that pierced the blue of God's sky.
I had sworn to rule with an iron mace,
When I met the Master face to face.

I faltered and fell at His feet that day,
While my castles melted and vanished away.
Melted and vanished, and in their place
Naught else could I see but my Master's face.

With station and rank and wealth from my gold,
Much thought for my body, but none for my soul.
I had entered to win in life's mad race,
When I met the Master face to face.

My thought is now for the souls of men.
I've lost my life to live again,
E'er since that day in a quiet place
I met the Master face to face.

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Notes

Commencement (7) former assets now counted as liabilities; values transformed; new ledger!

Continuation (8) "loss" (twice) "rubbish" **vs.** "surpassing value" "gain Christ"

I keep on counting Egypt's fare as waste for the "higher-held" blessings of Canaan-land

Culmination (9) New possessions accompany new position "found **in Him**"

Once I counted on law-works, self-righteousness, for favor with God

Now I possess faith-righteousness which comes from God in Christ! Isaiah 64:6

7) In the preceding text Paul had given his pedigree in the Jewish religion. In birth, education, position, and activity, he had certainly excelled as a Jew. Now he realizes, and here he states, that all of that was of no value, they were even a liability - for the sake of Christ. To know, love, and serve Christ was all that mattered to him now.

8) He takes it a step further and gathers up all things of this life and world in one bundle and says that knowing Christ is more important than all of them combined. In fact, the knowledge of Christ is so great that the next highest thing by contrast is fit for the rubbish heap. And these things he would cast aside so that they would not impede his progress in his relentless pursuit of Christ. "The things of earth will grow strangely dim in the light of His glory and grace."

9) Paul understood that life's greatest issue was to throw off human works-righteousness, which is no righteousness at all, and to be clothed in the righteousness which God gives as a gift to those who trust His Son, Jesus Christ. We, too, must (if we would go to heaven) understand that faith-righteousness is available and essential. Have you renounced human effort and embraced the finished work of Christ, trusting nothing else, for your salvation?

Jesus encountered a woman at Jacob's well in Sychar when he traveled through Samaria. As they discoursed, she placed emphasis on such externals as liquid water, Mt Gerizim vs Jerusalem.

Jesus turned her attention to internals like owning her sin, living water, worship in the Spirit.

There's a false Christianity and a true one - they are centered on externals vs internals; which is yours? Is your pedigree spiritual, internal, or fleshly, external?

3:10-14

1) Verse 9 says Paul wants to be "found in Him...righteousness" - this is our Christian **POSITION**

2) Beginning at verse 10, Paul speaks of our Christian **EXPERIENCE** - "that I may know Him..."

3) Verse 8 mentioned "that I may gain Christ," the process of doing that Paul addresses in 10-14

4) **HOW CAN I WIN, GAIN CHRIST IN MY CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE?**

I. BY DESIRING TO KNOW CHRIST (10,11) THE GOAL FOR WHICH WE AIM

Notes

Purpose - intimate, experiential knowledge of Christ - "that I may know Him" John 17:3

Power - "dunamis" - "the power of His resurrection"

"The power that wins the war can maintain the vanquished."

The power to raise is saving power.

The power to save is living power.

The power to live, I need!

Partnership - "the fellowship of His sufferings...death"

Suffering and death must precede resurrection and life. Romans 6:5, Galatians 2:20, 1 Cor 15:31

(Phil 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..."

(Ac 9:16) "I will show him how much he must suffer for my name."

Prospect - "will I be in the resurrection?" (11)

1 Thess 4:17 Early in his ministry - Paul was looking to be in the rapture

Philippians 3:11 Mid-ministry - Paul was unsure of whether he would live or die

2 Timothy 4:6 Later ministry - Paul knew death was his path to heaven

Not doubting salvation, but a question of whether he will die and rise, or be raptured without dying.

10) Jesus prayed that men would know God; and Paul now expresses his desire to get to know God's Son better, by personal experience. He wants to experience Christ's resurrection power in his life - power that gives the kind of victory Jesus had (and we need!). Paul knows that resurrection and death are inextricably linked, and that if he would have resurrection power, he must know more about Christ's sufferings and death, too. How about you?

11) Early in his ministry, Paul anticipated that the return of Christ would happen while he was yet alive (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18). At the end of his life, he understood that it was his lot to go to heaven by death (2 Timothy 4:6-8). In this middle era, he didn't know whether he would be snatched away at Christ's return or be a part of the resurrection at Christ's coming.

II. BY DILIGENTLY PURSUING CHRIST (12-14) THE RACE TOWARD THE GOAL

Notes

The Process

I have not gotten where I want to

God isn't finished with me yet, either

He "seized-down upon me - I want to seize-down upon His purpose for me" - Christlikeness

The Pursuit

Singleness of mind - "this one thing I do"

Setting aside the past - "forgetting what lies behind" Like Elisha, not Lot's wife

Striving for the goal - "reaching forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal"

The Prize - *"the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus"*

Chrysostom said, *"Awards for those specially honored in the games were made when the King called the athletes out of the stadium to Himself."* 2 Timothy 4:7,8

12) "God isn't finished with me yet," we hear Paul say. But I am running hard, chasing the goal of getting a grip on that for which Christ took hold of me! I want to win - to reach the goal and stand in the winner's circle, wearing the victor's wreath! Are we running the race with that same goal, persistence and enthusiasm? We should be.

13), 14) "Again, I haven't made it yet, but I am very single-minded in my pursuit. I haven't arrived - I haven't quit!" Paul puts the past behind him in an effort to focus on the future and what he desires to accomplish. One gets the picture of a runner in a race, straining as he leans forward to do his very best in the race of life. Paul has his eye on the prize, and he will not look away nor be deterred from his effort to be as close to Christ as one can possibly get. The race is the calling and the prize is the crown. God will one day call Paul up from the arena into the stands, and there He will place upon his head the victor's wreath for running the race well.

Three things will help us greatly in this quest to know, attain, and please Christ, the King & Judge:

FORGETFULNESS

FORWARDNESS

FERVENCY

This perseverance in pursuit rules out:

Perfectionism

Complacency

Defeatism

I. CALL TO A PROPER WALK (3:15, 16)

Our Position in Christ - means *"complete in Him"* (Colossians 2:10)

Perfect in that we are in Him Who is perfect. Complete in that we have all the parts - now grow!

Our Progress in Christ - *"Have this attitude"* as in 12-14, not complacent, but moving ahead

Our Path With and To Christ - As we have received Him, let us walk in Him (by faith) (Col 2:6)

15) While we are complete in Christ (Col 2:10), none of us is perfect, but hopefully we are maturing. Maturing believers should have a heavenward view (Col 3:1), and if someone's thinking is earthbound, God will help them to change and look up. To the unsaved or carnal mind, thinking of heaven and the prize is not natural; this requires change!

16) We who are saved have a righteous position in Christ. We are seated in heavenly places with Him. We have been made alive, and should no longer be enamored with the things of death. Jesus said of Lazarus, *"Loose him, and let him go!"* (John 11: 44). The cemetery is no place for the living, and graveclothes, no wardrobe! Let us live as those who have been redeemed!

II. CAUTION AGAINST FALSE TEACHERS (3:17 - 19)

The Antidote to False Teachers (17) *"keep on becoming co-imitators of me"* "Pattern" "example"

The Adversity From False Teachers (18) *"enemies of the cross of Christ"*

The Attributes of False Teachers (19)

Their Destiny is Destruction - *"whose end is destruction"*

Their Deity is Their Desire - *"whose god is their appetite"*

They Display Their Degradation - *"whose glory is in their shame"*

They Dote on Drivel (contrast the "upward calling") - *"who set their minds on earthly things"*

17) A believer needs the strength that can be received from the companionship, accountability, corporate worship, and general association with other Christians. The term "brothers" speaks of intimacy, unity, and equality. Paul asks that we keep an eye out for others whose walk is good, and to join them in following his example (and Christ's)

18), 19) He warns them that there are many whose walk is not right, whose minds are not on the heavenly prize, but rather on earthly things. They live to satisfy their fleshly appetites, and they actually take pride in their sin - not unlike our society today. In the name of "tolerance" we give a free pass to wrongs like abortion and homosexuality. Those who practice such things flaunt them, glorying in their shame. Paul, with tears in his eyes and pain in his heart, tells of the end of such

living - destruction. The believer can be an Abraham, who leaves a legacy of faith, or a Lot, whose memory is blotted by his love for this present world. Live the life of faith.

III. CONFIDENCE IN A GLORIOUS FUTURE (20, 21)

Our Association - "*citizenship in heaven*" (contra "mind earthly things")

Our Anticipation - "*eagerly await*"

Our Alteration - "*Who will transform our bodies*"

20), 21) The 2 great Gentile influences on Paul's world were Greece and Rome. Greece glorified the body in athletics and fitness. Rome made much of her political prowess, and to be "citizen of Rome" was a grand thing indeed! Paul smashed these two icons in this last statement - Christians are citizens of heaven! And from there we await a Savior with greater power than Rome's who will take these bodies of humiliation and remake them like unto His glorious body! The present may seem to belong to man (and Satan), but the future clearly belongs to the children of God! Have you by faith in Christ joined up with the side that will eventually win? If not, why not?

What a glorious future is ours in Christ! So many blessings we enjoy in Him now, and the best is still before us! Let's live in that confidence in a way which reflects that we belong more to the next world than we do to this one.

PHILIPPIANS, CHAPTER 4

I Rejoice with you in Christ Who is our Sufficiency. - Joyful Co-operation (in the local assembly).

Paul says, "Let me tell you about you - who you are from my perspective."

- 1) *You are brothers, you came from the same womb, you have a common birth.*
- 2) *You are beloved, "I wish for you the very best at any cost to me without promise of return."*
- 3) *You are longed for, - "I desire to see and be with you with an intense passion!"*
- 4) *You are my joy, - when I think of you, it causes me to rejoice*
- 5) *You are my crown, - that you are saved is my victor's wreath in life's race, contest.*

Five Crowns the believer may win:

Incarnate Crown (1 Corinthians 9:25)

Crown of Joy (1 Thessalonians 2:19)

Crown of Righteousness (2 Timothy 4:8)

Crown of Life (Revelation 2:10, James 1:12)

Crown of Glory (1 Peter 5:4)

That is who you are. Now this is how you should behave in response to who you are...

I. STAND FAST IN THE LORD (4:1)

"Therefore" looks back to:

position in Christ (15)

protection from heresy (17-19)

prospect of glory (21)

"Stand" Imperative, present tense - this is not an option, we must obey this command!

Used of a soldier in the defense - don't fall, don't flee, but stand fast!

Sphere - "in the Lord" - only ***in Him*** can we stand up in this adversarial world.

II. UNITE IN THE LORD (4:2, 3)

On his knees - "I beg Euodias, I beg Syntyche..." Hints at disharmony - 1:27; 2:2-4, 14

Diversity, yes...Discord, NO! Have the same mind

Unity begins in the inner man - mind 7 times 1:7, 2:2,5, 3:15,19, 4:2,10

A common closeness brings people together (two close to Paul {or Jesus} will be close together)

Book of Life: Psalm 69:28, Philippians 4:3, Revelation 3:5, 13:8, 17:8, 20:12, 15, 21:27

III. REJOICE IN THE LORD (4:4)

Command to have joy - imperative mood

Continuance of our joy - present tense, and "always"

Cause of our joy - CHRIST - "in the Lord"

Luke 10:17, 20 further allusion to names written in the book of life as a basis for joy

4:1), 2), 3) One of the glorious threads woven throughout the tapestry of Philippians is that of **unity**. Paul wishes (and commands!) the believers in this Macedonian assembly to “stand firm in the Lord.” In doing so, they will live out the “oneness” he wrote about to the Ephesians. He cites an example of discord in the church, even naming names! He pleads with each of two ladies that they might literally “think the same in the Lord.” It is Jesus Who is in charge (“Lord”), and if two people think like Him, they will be able to get along - unity is so important. Finally, he challenges some unnamed co-worker to lend a hand to those who shared with Paul in ministering the gospel. He didn’t recall all the names, but he did mention that they are in the Book of Life.

4) Paul is in prison; his readers love him and are worried about him. His head could roll, and they could lose a mentor and friend. Yet he commands them to “Rejoice!” It is not as strange as it seems when we realize that our joy is not in men or circumstances - it is in the Lord. He is constant, unchanging, our joy can only be constant if it finds its source in Him! This is an imperative - “Keep on rejoicing...” Put away gloom and put on gladness!

Happiness versus Joy:

Happiness depends on changing “Happenings” - Joy depends on unchanging Christ

Am I happy that...

Someone I love left?

I lost my job?

My health is not good?

I may be homeless now?

But I am joyful that...

Christ never leaves or forsakes

God will provide for me

My soul has been permanently healed

I have a home in heaven

God’s Antidote to Worry Philippians 4:5-7

*What are some things you worry about? Terrorism, natural disaster, family’s safety, security...? What is worry? Anxious care; paying future bills with current resources, taking the future out of God’s hands. That last characterization of worry seems to put it in the category of sin. **Trust** puts the future in God’s hands - **Worry** takes it out. They are mutually exclusive. Jesus spoke quite a bit about worry in the sermon on the mount in **Matthew 6:25-34**. He said, “Don’t worry!” Here in our text the apostle spells out an effective antidote to worry - we must defeat worry in our lives: WHAT LOAD DO YOU CARRY THAT YOU NEED TO LAY ON JESUS TODAY?*

I. SHOW SWEET REASONABLENESS (4:5) A Command

Let men see something about your life - and they **are** looking. (**1 Timothy 3:3, Titus 3:2**)

“Sweet Reasonableness” is unassertive, doesn’t claim its rights, non-retaliatory, meek when insulted. When we panic, we act as if God is absent - HE ISN’T!

“The Lord is near” - ...in place (**Luke 19:11**) ...in time (**Mark 13:28**) In my life and coming again

“Jesus is near to comfort and cheer, just when I need Him most.” (**James 3:17, Psalm 46:1**)

II. STOP WORRYING (4:6a) A Command

“Stop being torn apart, drawn in different directions; stop practicing anxious care”

Anxious care chokes us into unfruitfulness (**Matthew 13:22**) same word!

Jesus used forms of this word 6 times in **Matthew 6:25-34**, all saying DON’T DO IT!

Worry doesn’t fix problems, it creates them. Worry pushes trust out of our hearts.

Martha was anxious (**Luke 10:41**) same word! Jesus told her Mary’s pursuits were better.

“Nothing” is worth worrying about. No load is too large when Christ’s hands hold us up.

III. START PRAYING (4:6b) A Command -

(**1 Peter 5:7**) says to cast ALL your care upon Him; no item too small to carry to Christ.

“What a privilege to carry EVERYTHING to God in prayer.” “O, what peace we often forfeit, O, what needless pain we bear, all because we do not carry EVERYTHING to God in prayer.”

Prayer - Devotional prayer; never a petition; just getting with God;

"Prayer of quiet trust in which we do not so much seek as cleave." Alexander Maclaren
Supplication - The difficult crisis need; desperation prayer; the sinking Peter! **Matthew 14:30**
Thanksgiving - Thank Him for past favors, and, in faith, for this one!

"Bless the Lord O my soul, and forget not all His benefits"

Requests - Name your specific need; simply ASK God!

"Let them be made known to God!" Reasonableness known to men; requests known to God.

IV. SECURE PEACE (4:7) A Promise

A Consequence - PEACE - Peace **with** God; the Peace **of** God.

Drugs and alcohol don't bring peace, just brief escape, compounded problems.

Burying self in work, entertainment don't bring peace; just a momentary distraction

Not indifference, apathy, but PEACE! It escapes our comprehension, not our apprehension.

We cannot **perceive** it, but we can **receive** it. AFFECTED by problems - PROTECTED by peace.

It garrisons our hearts, minds with absolute protection. Stands sentry at our hearts. (**2 Cor 11:32**)

5), 6), 7) Paul leaps from joy to peace. In verses 5-7 he tells us how to have the peace of God.

Peace with God comes through our relationship with Christ and justification in Him (Romans 5:1).

That is a harmonized relationship with God. This, the peace of God, is a harmonized relationship with life's circumstances, and three things must happen if we are to have it:

(1) we must show moderation - because Christ is near (His watchful eye, nearness to help, and coming again), we can be calm in any circumstance, part one of the way to peace.

(2) Part two is to stop worrying. We are commanded to cease being anxious about anything! Worry never solved a problem, and it betrays a lack of faith in God. It can choke us into unfruitfulness (Matthew 13:22).

(3) Last, we must start praying. Worry about nothing - pray about everything. Four types of prayer here - devotional prayer, just being with God, talking. Desperation prayer - crying out to God in a crisis; He hears! Thanksgiving - expressing gratitude to God for past favors, and in faith for this one we seek. Requests - just asking God for what we need. We make our reasonableness known to men (5) and our requests to God (6). When we've done all that, God promises us peace.

The trusting heart to Jesus clings, Nor any ill forebodes;

But at the cross of Calv'ry sings, "Thank God for lifted loads."

Singing I go along life's road, Praising the Lord, praising the Lord.

Singing I go along life's road, For Jesus has lifted my load.

*What load can Jesus take from you today? You can't bear it anyway! Why not turn it over to Him?
Farmer sitting on friend's wagon, but shouldering his load, "I can't ask you to carry my corn, too."*

1) Review - *I rejoice with you in Christ, Who is our Life* (1), Example (2), Goal (3) Sufficiency (4)

2) In Chapter 4, God's peace is available by:

(1-4) Joyful Co-operation (5-7) Prayer (8, 9) Right Thinking and Actions

3) Verses 5-7 end with God's peace standing sentinel over our minds and hearts.

4) Now Paul adds that we must play a part in keeping our minds, as well.

5) "You may not be what you think you are, But what you think, you are." "As a man thinketh..."

TRANSFORMED MINDS LEAD TO TRANSFORMED ACTIONS.

I. THE REQUIRED THINKING (8) Unlike 3:1, this time he is really winding up!

Characteristics of things worthy to think about

True - that which conforms to reality - not living in a fantasy world

(Ephesians 4:25) Jesus is the Truth; God's Word is truth - meditate on them!

Honorable - noble, grave, valuable, not the cheap; *Barbarians who broke into Roman Senate were awed into silence and flight by the August assembly.*

Right - our duty to God and man - will the thing we think of honor God and help men?

Pure - Morally chaste, religiously sacred and holy; think on things that are pure, not settling for things "mostly good" or "not so bad." Will it in any way defile me?

Lovely - Things attractive to a holy soul; things that *call forth* and *tend to* love;

Does it help you get along with people in peace, or does it promote strife?

Of good repute - Gives us our word “euphemism.” Things fit for God to hear.

“Would you talk about these things in the presence of your mother?”

Excellent - (items 1-4) Greeks were big on “virtue,” Paul used their word, lifting it higher

Praiseworthy - (items 5,6) Things approved as worthy for praise.

Command to think about them - So we **can** have a measure of control over our thoughts!

“taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ” (2 Corinthians 10:5)

II. THE RESULTING ACTIONS (9) He commands that which will naturally follow right thinking

Actions follow thoughts as surely as thunder follows lightning.

The Example - the two little words, “in me” Paul is a sterling example to follow

Learned - akin to “disciples” they had personal instruction from Paul

Received - they eagerly grasped these things from him, now they were to do them!

Heard - they listened to Paul, faith comes by hearing the Word of God

Seen - “While I was in Philippi, you saw Christianity in action.” Life corresponded to truth.

The Exhortation -

“Do” “Practice” “Put into practice”

It is only a start to receive truth into our minds and hearts; we must then put it in shoe-leather.

The best believing is demonstrated in right living. **“THINK and DO”**

The Effect

“God of peace will be **with you**” Omnipresence Psalm 139;

Indwelling John 14:23; Special presence (here)

“With, but a step behind” This gives the best position for seeing would-be adversaries, attackers.

8), 9) 5-7 told us how enjoy the presence of the peace of God. 8 and 9 instruct us how to have the presence of the God of peace. It is as simple as “Think and Do!” Paul gives 8 characteristics of things that make them worthy of our thought life. (

1) True - that which conforms to reality; don’t live in a fantasy world!

(2) Noble - serious, valuable, honorable, grave; avoid the flippant, light, and cheap thoughts in life.

(3) Right - Will it honor God? Will it help man? Does it conform to the holiness of God which we should reflect?

(4) Pure - this speaks of things morally chaste and religiously sacred.

(5) Lovely - is it winsome, lovable, attractive to a holy soul?

(6) Admirable - well-spoken, fit for God to hear.

(7) Excellent - is it a virtuous thing?

(8) Praiseworthy - is it approved as worthy of praise?

You **can** govern your thought life; here are guidelines for so doing. Paul had in 3:17 urged men to follow him. Here he expands on that: “If I taught it to you, and you grasped it, if you saw me do it, or heard that I did it, follow that.” What a confident testimony Paul had! Let us so “think and do.”

1) *To think the lofty and do the worthy takes a transformed mind.*

2) *Hellians could not enjoy heaven & would wish to return home. The Great Divorce by C. S. Lewis*

3) *Our thoughts are earthbound as a stone is pulled down by gravity*

4) *A stronger force must step in and pull us up - Enthroned Christ!! Trust Christ!! Think on Christ!!*

Phil 4:10-12 Contentment in all Circumstances

Changing circumstances can certainly change feelings that are circumstance-based - like happiness. Happiness is not content in all circumstances - it likes for things to go well all the time.

Joy is able to withstand adversity (and handle abundance) because it is based on unchanging values. Paul sits in jail, completely dependant on others for his care - an offering comes from Philippi. As he thanks them for his gift, he seems to stumble in his words - his struggle is because it more awkward to receive a gift than to give one.

Out of his thank-you note flows a brief discourse on contentment. See 1 Tim 6:6,8 & Heb 13:5.

I. REJOICE OVER GENEROSITY OF FRIENDS (10)

He Practices His Preaching (from Philippians 4:4) Can we?

God often puts to the test what we proclaim from the pulpit.

They Gave Sacrificially to Missions - Can we?

A tree in Spring blossoms out - or it's dead!

II. REFUSE TO PLEAD HARD TIMES (11a)

I'm not reduced to Penury (Luke 21:4)

Don't think of me as "poor old Paul"

"Don't paint a picture of a sinking ship."

III. REST IN CONTENTMENT (11b)

Two kinds of contentment:

1) Content when things are good

Anyone can have this, tho' some don't

2) Content whatever the circumstances

This is the secret contentment - Paul had it - Do we?

Ability to cope with circumstances;

Divinely bestowed sense of sufficiency;

Calm acceptance of my lot.

IV. RECEIVE WHATEVER GOD GIVES (12)

3 couplets in contrast:

1) Humble means and Prosperity

2) Filled and Hungry

3) Abundance and Need

1 Corinthians 4:11, 2 Corinthians 11:27

More difficult to handle prosperity properly - in adversity we know to seek God and pray. But compare with Revelation 3:17.

We must be taught this - "I know because I have been instructed" Psalm 25:14

Practical expression of contentment, to be able to say "I Am Satisfied"

10) Finances are a difficult subject for the preacher, but Paul handles himself with poise. He thanks the Philippians for the gift they sent by Epaphras. He understood that they had not had the opportunity to send until Epaphras came.

11) His reference to money, he explains, was not because he was in financial straits. God had taught him the secret of contentment in any circumstance. May God bless us with the ability to accept what comes from His hand as being all that we need at the time. Such an attitude will make us rich indeed, for we will want what we have, and that is true wealth.

12) He uses repetition as a tool in this important instruction, making reference again to contentment. Like Jesus, Paul had been wealthy and poor. Jesus, rich in heaven and poor on earth. Paul was wealthy as a young man, doing without many things later as a minister of the gospel. In either circumstance, God granted him contentment.

Philippians 4:13-23

I rejoice with you in Christ, Who is our...

(1) *Life* - "for to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."

(2) *Example* - "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus..."

(3) *Goal* - "That I may know Him, in the power of His resurrection, the fellowship of His sufferings"

(4) *Sufficiency* - "I can do all things through Christ, which strengthens me"

*We come to the last paragraph in Paul's letter to Philippi - a letter of **joy** in Christ, **unity** in the church*

I. ASSISTING STRENGTH (13) Isaiah 40:29-31

The strength I need for adjusting to heights and depths comes to me from Christ

13) In the context of God's will for your life, you can do anything you need to, survive any circumstance you may encounter. How is this so? Because Christ strengthens us through His resurrection power (3:10) that Paul wished for and had come to know. With Him, all things! Without Him, nothing (John 15:5)! He, our Strength!

II. APPRECIATED SHARING (14-17) Hebrews 13:15

(14) He elevates the act of giving to fitting level of honor; not crass materialism, but a good deed.

(15) He never forgot that they alone supported his ministry when he headed southwest from there.
(16) Even at his very next stop, Thessalonica, they sent **two gifts** to enable his ministry.
(17) The higher issue than **his aid** is **their account** in heaven becoming more abundant.
“The difficulty of expression here is owing to the delicacy of the subject. The aversion to hearing about finances is only exceeded by the preacher’s desire not to speak to the subject. Yet it must needs be so.” -**RLP**

14) Graciously, Paul acknowledges that Christ had used the Philippians as a resource to help meet his needs.

15) Philippi had been Paul’s first European stop. When he left there moving out from Macedonia, they were the only church to send him any offerings to assist his ministry. This gift was not their first; they were faithful givers.

16) Paul had not gotten 100 miles away before they began sending gifts. He received two financial offerings from them while he was still in Thessalonica. Their generosity had never left his mind and heart, nor their own.

17) The difficulty of expression here is because of the delicacy of the subject. People wish to hear of money no less than preachers wish to speak of it. Paul wanted not the gift, but he did want them to have the fruit of giving.

III. ACCEPTABLE SACRIFICE (18) Leviticus 2:9, 17:6, Ephesians 5:2

The gift Paul received (fell into hands of **gratitude**, not **greed**) from Philippi was not just horizontal. Vertically, it was a sacrifice to God, one that received a 3-fold thumbs-up from Paul!

- fragrant aroma - sweet smelling incense offering to God
- acceptable sacrifice - not like Cain’s rejected offering
- well-pleasing to God - not just pleasing, but “well-pleasing”

18) The language here clears Paul of any charges of greed. He received their gift almost unwillingly, and assures them he now has all that he needs. Their gift was a sacrifice whose sweet fragrance reached and pleased God.

IV. ABUNDANT SUPPLY (19, 20) Proverbs 11:25, Malachi 3:10

The promise of the Apostle is that the needs of the sacrificing Christians at Philippi will be met and filled up to overflowing through **his** God, Who is also **their** God. This vibrates with the ring of personal experience. From this confession flows a doxology, a word of praise: **“May this providing Father-God be praised eternally!”** We must recognize and declare God’s perfections to others, unceasingly.

19) And they would not go lacking because they sacrificed to supply Paul’s needs. God would take care of their every need out of the endless riches that are available to us in Christ Jesus. Notice “in Christ,” and “Needs.”

20) Praise flows from the provision of our God. Glory = recognition of, declaration of God’s perfections in providing for the needs of His children!

V. AFFECTIONATE SALUTATION (21-23) Philemon 23–24, Romans 16:16, 2 Corinthians 13:13, Hebrews 13:24

Cilician Jew, Macedonian Greeks, Proud Romans - all exchanging greetings as fellow-saints!

21), 22) There is no lack of personal interest on the part of the Apostle - it isn’t all doctrine and duty. He truly cares about people, and he expresses that care with greetings all around. He calls them “saints,” people set apart to God. Here is a declaration (you are holy), a summons (be holy), and a promise (you will be made perfectly holy one day). People in Rome and Philippi who have never met each other exchange greetings (they have all met in heaven now!). Some of those may have been paupers, and others were of Caesar’s household. There is no rich or poor in Christ, only brethren.

23) Like Galatians 6:18 and Philemon 25, Paul wished Christ’s grace upon their spirit. The Spirit dwelled within them, and the Spirit moved Paul as he wrote the letter. The same Spirit enlightened them as they read it. He closes the epistle demonstrating the prominence of grace, the source of all good things. This grace is demonstrated to us in the work of Christ on our behalf.

Gift - for Paul

Gracious supply - for Philippians

Glory - for God

Greeting - for all

Grace - for all

God's flowers blossomed in Caesar's dunghill. Caesar's palace, infested with sin's profligacy, had now been infected with God's life-giving message. Paul's chains did not impede the progress of God's Word and work!

No study of any other book of the Bible has given me as much pleasure and challenge as the study of Philippians. Thank you for joining me in the great exercise of digging into God's Word to let it transform our mind and guide our lives.

- R. Lindsay Poteat