

Supplemental Notes:

*The Book
of
Philippians*

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Acknowledgments

These notes have been assembled from speaking notes and related materials which had been compiled from a number of classic and contemporary commentaries and other sources detailed in the bibliography, as well as other articles and publications of Koinonia House. While we have attempted to include relevant endnotes and other references, we apologize for any errors or oversights.

The complete recordings of the sessions, as well as supporting diagrams, maps, etc., are also available in various audiovisual formats from the publisher.

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The Book of Philippians Session 1

Introduction

Philippi

Philippi was founded by the great Macedonian king whose name it bears. It is on or near the site of ancient wells or fountains known as “Crenides.”

Its natural advantages were considerable: it was in the neighborhood of gold and silver mines, which were exhausted in early times by the Phoenicians and Thasians. They passed successively to the hand of the powers of civilized Europe: the Athenians, the Macedonians, and the Romans. During the Roman occupation we read little of them.

The plain on which it was situated was remarkable for its fertility. However, its primary importance was its strategic geographical position commanding the great road between Europe and Asia. The almost continual mountain barrier between the East and West has a depression here which forms a gateway for this thoroughfare between the two continents. It was the advantage of this position that led Philip the Macedon to fortify the site of the ancient Crenides.

It was this which marked out the very battlefield where the destinies of the Roman Empire were decided, and which led the conqueror to plant a Roman colony on the scene of his triumph.

Philippi was the scene of the decisive battle ending the Roman republic in 42 B.C. Brutus and Cassius, murderers of Julius Caesar in 44 B.C., were defeated by the combined forces of Mark Antony and Octavian, *who later became Emperor Augustus*. Because of Philippi’s assistance, Augustus granted Roman citizenship to these Philippians when he became emperor.

Augustus founded at Philippi a Roman military colony with the label, “Colonia Augusta Julia Philippensis.” He conferred upon it the coveted privilege of “Italic right,” giving its inhabitants the same rights as if they were living in Italy. (We will sense this when we explore Acts 16:21.)

The First Church in Europe

Paul’s first visit to Philippi is recorded with a minuteness that has few parallels in Luke’s history. Luke joined Paul just as he crossed over into Europe, and he was with him during his stay in Philippi. He seems to have remained there for some time after Paul’s departure—the first person plural is dropped at Philippi (Acts 17:1) and resumed in the same place after a lapse of six or seven years (Acts 20:5).

This combines to make the visit to Philippi among the most striking and instructive passages in Luke’s narrative.

Acts 16

- 5] And so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily.
- 6] Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia,

The Roman Province of Asia (the region where the seven churches of Revelation 2 & 3 are located).

- 7] After they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them not.

Towards the north, but blocked. Bithynia SE shore of Sea of Mamora, S. Shore of Black Sea.

- 8] And **they** passing by Mysia came down to Troas.

Note the third person, “they.” Alexandria Troas, a port on the coast of Mysia, 30 miles S of the Dardanelles.

- 9] And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us.
- 10] And after he had seen the vision, immediately **we** endeavoured to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them.

Notice the “we” by Luke. Some suspect that *he, Luke*, was the man in the vision!

- 11] Therefore loosing from Troas, we came with a straight course to Samothracia, and the next *day* to Neapolis;

When Paul and his gang crossed the Dardanelles, they changed the whole course of Western Civilization!

“...Samothracia”: highest in elevation of northern Aegean islands, midway between Troas and Philippi.

“...Neapolis”: harbor of Philippi, 10 mi. inland (favorable wind: two days; later it took five days).

- 12] And from thence to Philippi, which is the chief city of that part of Macedonia, and a colony: and we were in that city abiding certain days.

Paul always focused on strategic centers. He arrives about 20 years after the foundation of the Church at Jerusalem.

- 13] And on the sabbath we went out of the city by a river side, where prayer was wont to be made; and we sat down, and spake unto the women which resorted *thither*.

The story of two women: Lydia and a channeler! There was no synagogue (which requires 10 adult men); simply a women’s prayer meeting that would become the first church in Europe.

- 14] And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshiped God, heard *us*: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul.

A sales rep. The celebrated purple dye was made from the murex, a shellfish. (Ref. by Homer.) Inscriptions of the guild of dyers have been found at Thyatira. (Thyatira was one of the cities Paul had to omit on his way to Troas.)

- 15] And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought *us*, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide *there*. And she constrained us.

“...constrained”: only here and at the end of the Emmaus Road.

- 16] And it came to pass, as we went to prayer, a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination met us, which brought her masters much gain by soothsaying:

“...divination”: πύθων *python*; in Greek mythology the name of the Pythian serpent or dragon that dwelt in the region of Pytho at the foot of

Parnassus in Phocis, and was said to have guarded the oracle at Delphi and been slain by Apollo. Origin: from Putho (the name of the region where Delphi, the seat of the famous oracle, was located).

The priestess at the famous temple at Delphi was called the Pythoness; the term Python became equivalent to a soothsaying demon. She was, thus, Apollo’s “channel.” [There’s nothing “new” about the “New Age”!]

- 17] The same followed Paul and us, and cried, saying, These men are the servants of the most high God, which shew unto us the way of salvation.

The occult is always motivated by *self*-interest. Even “truth” is used to “suck them in”; soon it is mixed with error.... On each previous occasion (Mark and Luke), Jesus commanded the acknowledging demon to silence.

- 18] And this did she many days. But Paul, being grieved, turned and said to the spirit, I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And he came out the same hour.

- 19] And when her masters saw that the hope of their gains was gone, they caught Paul and Silas, and drew *them* into the marketplace unto the rulers,

If infiltration doesn’t work, then direct oppression. Outright violence demonstrates that one of the enemy’s strongholds was being attacked (Cf. 2 Cor 10:4; Eph 6).

- 20] And brought them to the magistrates, saying, These men, being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our city,

- 21] And teach customs, which are not lawful for us to receive, neither to observe, being Romans.

The pride and privilege of Roman citizenship confronts us at every turn. This is the sentiment which stimulates the blind loyalty of the people “by advocating customs unlawful for us Romans to accept or practice.” This will be the basis of the redress and forces an apology in vv.37-39.

- 22] And the multitude rose up together against them: and the magistrates rent off their clothes, and commanded to beat *them*.

- 23] And when they had laid many stripes upon them, they cast *them* into prison, charging the jailor to keep them safely:

- 24] Who, having received such a charge, thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks.

- 25] And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them.

Adoration and worship. (Not, “deliver your servants,” etc.) Cf. Ps 113; 115:11; 116:3,4,15,17; 118:6,29; 114:7.

The concert was so successful that it brought the house down! Other prisoners were “attentively listening...”

- 26] And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one’s bands were loosed.
- 27] And the keeper of the prison awaking out of his sleep, and seeing the prison doors open, he drew out his sword, and would have killed himself, supposing that the prisoners had been fled.

He was accountable to pay their debts if lost. [Cf. *Tetelestai*: “paid in full” as the completion of their “certificate of debt.”]

- 28] But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm: for we are all here.
- 29] Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas,
- 30] And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved?

Good question. We all need to be certain of the answer.

- 31] And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.

“...and thy house”: a prophecy, not a doctrine. The first male convert in Europe.

- 32] And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house.
- 33] And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed *their* stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway.
- 34] And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house.
- 35] And when it was day, the magistrates sent the sargents, saying, Let those men go.
- 36] And the keeper of the prison told this saying to Paul, The magistrates have sent to let you go: now therefore depart, and go in peace.
- 37] But Paul said unto them, They have beaten us openly uncondemned, being Romans, and have cast *us* into prison; and now do they thrust us out privily? nay verily; but let them come themselves and fetch us out.

Whoops! They had a jurisdiction problem! Valerian Law: no Roman should ever be bound: this was considered to be an offense against the empire. Pocian Law forbade any Roman to be flogged.

Magistrates were at substantial risk themselves! I love the way Paul “rubs their noses” in it!

- 38] And the serjeants told these words unto the magistrates: and they feared, when they heard that they were Romans.
- 39] And they came and besought them, and brought *them* out, and desired *them* to depart out of the city.

Oh, please, would you be so kind as to leave quietly! This aspect will also be important for us to remember when we turn from Luke’s narrative to Paul’s letter to the Philippians. Addressing a Roman colony from the Roman capital, writing as a citizen to citizens, he returns in his thinking to the political franchise as an apt symbol of the higher privileges of their heavenly calling, to the political life as a suggestive metaphor for the duties of their Christian profession:

Conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ...

Philippians 1:27

Our citizenship is in heaven.

Philippians 3:20

- 40] And they went out of the prison, and entered into *the house of* Lydia: and when they had seen the brethren, they comforted them, and departed.

Three Very Different Converts

Neither Jew or Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus

Galatians 3:28

The Purple-Dealer and Proselytess of Thyatira: an Asian; engaged in an important and lucrative business; devoted to the truths of the Old Testament.

A Girl with the Divining Spirit: a Greek; treated by the law as mere chattel without any social or political rights, employed by her masters to trade upon the impressionable ignorant; bearing the name of the Pythian god, the reputed source of Greek inspiration, represented the equivalent what is presently called the New Age.

The Roman Jailer: equally removed from both, held a subordinate office under government; whose worship was likely essentially political in tone.

First the proselyte, next the Greek, and lastly, the Roman: they would seem to symbolize the progress of Christianity throughout the world. They also illustrate the two great social revolutions Christianity has affected: the amelioration of woman, and abolition of slavery (Cf. Acts 16:13; 17:4; 17:12). Cf. The solicitation of peace between Euodia and Syntyche (Phil 4:2-3). This is also the first recorded instance where whole families are gathered into the fold. Lydia and her household and the jailer and all belonging to him are baptized into Christ.

As in ancient days, the patriarch was the recognized priest of his clan, so in the Christian church the father of the house is the divinely appointed center of religious life to his own family: the church in the house of Philemon grew into the church of Colossae (Philemon 2); the church in the house of Nymphas becomes the church of Laodicea (Colossians 4:15); the church in the house of Aquila and Priscilla becomes the churches of both Ephesus and Rome (1 Corinthians 16:19; Romans 16:5).

The history of Paul's connection with Philippi assumes a prominence quite out of proportion to the importance of the place itself.

The persecutions which the apostle endured here were more than usually severe and impressed themselves deeply on his memory, for he alludes to them again and again:

But even after that we had suffered before, and were shamefully entreated, as ye know, at Philippi...

1 Thessalonians 2:2

Having the same conflict which ye saw in me, and now hear to be in me.

Philippians 1:30

His marvelous deliverance is without a parallel in his history before or after, and his labors surpasses his earlier and later achievements. The unwavering loyalty of his Philippian converts is the constant solace of the apostle in his numerous trials. They are his "joy and crown," his "brothers ... whom I long for" (Phil 4:1). From them alone he consents to receive gifts of money for the relief of his personal needs (Phil 4:15); to them alone he writes in language unclouded by any shadow of displeasure or disappointment.

(This is only paralleled with Jesus' letter to Smyrna (Rev 2:8-11); more of the possible parallels will be explored later!)

In fact, Paul's first visit to Philippi ended abruptly in the middle of the storm of persecution; the apostle left behind a legacy of suffering to this newborn church. The afflictions of the Macedonian Christians, and of the Philippians particularly, are more than once alluded to in Paul's letters (2 Cor 8:2; cf. notes on Phil 1:7, 28-30).

Application

"Why doesn't God guide us today like in the Book of Acts?"

Paul must have been puzzled:

- Quarrelling with Barnabas, he parted from him;
- He wanted to preach the Gospel, so he passed through Syria and Cilicia, and came to Derbe and Lystra, and there he met Timothy.
- He wanted to go on to proconsular Asia, and he could not do it: He was sick; an infirmity of the flesh was upon him and he could not go on. It was necessary to that he should take another direction and he went into Galatia and preached there.
- Then he turned back again. There was no reason that he could understand. It was a picture of cross currents, of difficulty, perplexity and darkness.
- Then he felt the lure of Bithynia; he would go there. No, he must go west and on he went, perplexed.
- Then came the vision of the man of Macedonia (...and when he talked it over with Luke in later days, Luke would write the story with hindsight.)

The Spirit forbade him preaching in Asia. The Spirit of Jesus drove him ever and ever on toward Troas. The guidance of the Holy Spirit is validated by the results: Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, Athens, Corinth.

The guidance of the Spirit was subsequently recognized by these men:

...not always by flaming visions;
...not by words articulate in human ears;
 but by circumstances,
 by commonplace things,
 by difficult things,
 by dark things,
 by disappointing things.

The man the Spirit will guide is the man who is in an attitude in which it is possible for the Spirit to guide him...an attitude of life; of loyalty to the Lord, faith in the guidance of the Spirit, and constant watchfulness.

It is the watcher for the Lord who sees the Lord.

How God Guides

Understanding doctrine:	Unanimous agreement
No sense of direction:	Persistent obedience
Relations with others:	Responsible concern
Irreconcilable differences:	Cordial separation
Customs, rituals:	Important principle
Directions to take:	Sense of Peace
Major change:	Vision or call

* * *

Later Visits

About five years elapsed between Paul's 1st and 2nd visit to Philippi; but meanwhile his communications with this church seem to be frequent and intimate.

In A.D. 57, when Paul was residing in Ephesus, he dispatched Timothy and Erastus to Macedonia (Acts 19:22; Cf. also 1 Cor 4:17; 16:10; 2 Cor 1:1). It would seem that Timothy did not go with Erastus to Corinth but remained in Macedonia.

Liberal Support

Despite their abject poverty and sore persecution, the Philippian church was foremost in promptness and cordiality of their relief of the needs of their poorer brethren in Judea:

How that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality. For to their power, I bear record, yea, and beyond their power they were willing of themselves; Praying us with much intreaty that we would receive the gift, and take upon us the fellowship of the ministering to the saints. And this they did, not as we hoped, but first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God.

2 Corinthians 8:2-5

Repeated Visits

In the autumn of 57 A.D., Paul, released from his engagements in Asia, revisited his European churches. He visited Macedonia on the way to Corinth (2 Cor 1:15-17; cf. 1 Cor 1:5, 6).

He had intended to sail directly to Israel, but receiving information about a plot against his life, he changed his plans and returned by land (Acts 19:21; 20:1-3). Thus, Macedonia received a double visit. His affectionate relations with Philippi seem to rivet him there. The second letter to the Corinthians and the letter to Galatians were written from here.

Paul at Rome

Paul's appeal challenged the hostility of the greatest power the world had ever seen. The very emperor to whom the appeal was made bears the ignominy of the first systematic persecution of Christians, which raged for several centuries, and which ended in establishing the Gospel on the ruins of the Empire.

And it isn't improbable that Paul foresaw the importance of his decision when he transferred his cause to the tribunal of Caesar. He "must visit Rome" (Acts 19:21); he had "been longing for many years" to visit the imperial city (Rom 1:10-16; 15:22-24, 28); the heavenly vision strengthened his purpose, "You must also testify in Rome" (Act 23:11).

Some scholars believe that Luke "Volumes 1 & 2" (including the Book of Acts) were the legally required pre-trial documents required to precede the appellant before Caesar. (Luke seems to take pains to emphasize that at each uprising it was the Jewish leadership—not Paul and his companions—that were the cause. Also, it is interesting that centurions are always "good guys," etc.)

Paul remained in Rome for "two whole years" (Acts 28:30). However, it didn't seem to impede the progress of his missionary work! He had written to Romans three years before; six full years before the Neronian outbreak.

Paul was a prisoner for 4-5 years (A.D. 58-63); ½ in Caesarea; ½ in Rome. During this period he wrote four letters: to the Philippians, to the Colossians, to the Ephesians and to Philemon, all probably from Rome. (While scholars differ, there seems to be evidence that Philippians is distinctive from the other three, and was the earlier of the series.)

It certainly is distinctively affectionate, intimate, and provocatively *free* of any doctrinal exhortations. There is no appeal to his apostolic authority, and in no letter is his commendations more lavish, or his affection deeper.

There are no misgivings of their loyalty, no suspicions of false play, no reproaches for disorderly living, no warnings against serious sins. (There appears to be one source of strife or rivalry, but these differences seem related to social rather than doctrinal issues.)

Next Session

Study carefully Philippians Chapter 1.

The Book of Philippians Session 2 Philippians 1

Review

Paul was a prisoner for 4-5 years (A.D. 58-63); ½ in Caesarea; ½ in Rome. During this period he wrote four letters: to the Philippians, to the Colossians, to the Ephesians and to Philemon, all probably from Rome. (While scholars differ, there seems to be evidence that Philippians is distinctive from the other three, and was the earlier of the series.)

- 1] Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons:

Timothy

“...Timotheus”: A young convert closely associated with Paul. Eunice (2 Tim 1:5), as well as her mother Lois, had instructed Timothy in Scriptures from infancy (2 Tim 3:15). Two of Paul’s letters are addressed to him: “My own son in the faith” (1 Tim 1:2, 18; 2 Tim 1:2).

In six of Paul’s Epistles, Timothy joined in salutation. Timothy was with Paul on his second missionary journey...at Ephesus during the days of strife ...with him on last journey to Jerusalem ...with him on his first imprisonment ...Paul sent for him in the loneliness of his second imprisonment.

Paul considered Timothy his son, his child, his comrade in the fight... Paul circumcised him so as not to offend Jewish prejudices (something he would not have done if he were a Gentile, like Titus).

It is distinctive that Paul and Timothy take no official title here: simply the servants (δοῦλος *doulos*, bondslaves) of Jesus Christ (Cf. Ex 21:5, 6; Deut 15:15-17). They, as bondslaves, had renounced all to serve the Lord, as those who are alive from the dead. [No one can become a servant of Jesus Christ until they realize that by nature they are a slave to sin.]

One can become a slave:

by conquest;	Psalm 19:13
by birth;	Psalm 51:5
by debt.	Romans 6:23

One could gain freedom by earning it; by purchase; or as a gift. Only One could pay sin’s price on our behalf.

“...to all the saints”: The saints as a whole are greeted, and the elders and deacons are specially mentioned. This is unusual. It implies a particular sense of obligation to the elders and deacons on the part of the apostles, probably in connection to the assembly’s gifts of support.

“Saints” are simply those “set apart.” “Elders” may, or may not, be official. Those possessing the qualifications listed in the epistles to Timothy and Titus should be sought out to take responsibilities in oversight in the house of God. [To fail to acknowledge such would fail to be in subjection to the Word of God, but a true bishop or overseer would be the last man to insist upon obedience to him. He would rather lead by serving the saints and by the force of a godly example.]

“Deacons” are those who minister in temporal things, chosen for this purpose. The word means “servant”—not a “bondman” but one acting voluntarily in response to the expressed desire of others.

Note the word “all.” It is used very significantly in this epistle to bind all together into one bundle of love, refusing to recognize any incipient division among them.

- 2] Grace *be* unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and *from* the Lord Jesus Christ.

Grace was the general Grecian salutation. Peace, that of the Hebrew. Paul always links them together, and in *that* order (God's order). True peace rests upon the work of the Cross, evident of His precedent Grace (Cf. Luke 2:14; John 14:27; John 20:19; Phil 4:6-7).

3] I thank my God upon every remembrance of you,

[I wish someone could say that about me: I'm afraid any such "remembrances" about me would be a mixed bag at best!] Paul's prayers always begin with thanksgiving...

4] Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy,

"...with joy": Joy is the main theme of this intimate letter. Inner joy occurs 16 times in these four brief chapters.

5] For your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now;

Fellowship is mentioned three times in this epistle: our fellowship with God, our fellowship with the Holy Spirit, and our fellowship in the sufferings of Jesus Christ. Fellowship in the gospel may be exercised in various ways: by prayer; by participation in the public testimony; by furnishing the means to enable the laborer to go forth unhindered by perplexities and anxieties as to necessary means to carry on his work.

Our Security in Christ

6] Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform *it* until the day of Jesus Christ:

This is one of the three great passages which focus on our security in Christ:

And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand.

John 10:27-28

For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 8:38-39

There are other less formal allusions:

The LORD will fulfill his purpose for me.

Psalms 138:8 (NIV)

For by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified.

Hebrews 10:14

...I have loved thee with an everlasting love...

Jeremiah 31:3

We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed... Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you.

2 Corinthians 4:8-9, 14

This assurance is also suggested by the images that are applied to believers throughout the Bible...trees that do not wither (Ps 1:3); cedars of Lebanon, year to year (Ps 92:12); house built on a rock (Mt 7:24); Mt. Zion that cannot be moved (Ps 125:1).

Paul had no doubt as to the final outcome of every true believer. God finishes what He starts. [Has He started a good work in *you*?]

If so, He has saved you *for a purpose* (Rom 8:28ff). And He's not finished with any of us yet.

There is no Christian listening to my voice who will think as well of himself five years from now as he does this morning.

—Donald Grey Barnhouse

7] Even as it is meet for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart; inasmuch as both in my bonds, and in the defence and confirmation of the gospel, ye all are partakers of my grace.

"All" believers included: v.4, 6-7. Lit.: "all of you being participants with me of grace." No room for divisions here.

8] For God is my record, how greatly I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ.

"...I long after you": Longing, not just tolerance.

Paul's Prayer (Cf. Colossians 1:9ff)

- 9] And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment;

We are to be fruitful. Following the familiar Eph 2:8, 9...

*For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: **Not of works, lest any man should boast.***

...is verse 10:

*For we are his workmanship, **created in Christ Jesus unto good works,** which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.*

Ephesians 2:8, 9, 10

God wants productive children.

- 10] That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ;

“...sincere”: Sincere = without wax; translating ειλικρινής *heilikrines*, sun-tested; found pure when tested in sunlight.

Fine porcelain was greatly valued, but it was so fragile that only it could be fired with the greatest difficulty without being cracked. Unscrupulous dealers would fill any cracks with a pearly-white wax which could pass without being readily detected. If held to the light, however, the wax appeared as a dark seam. Honest Latin dealers marked their wares “*sine cera*” (without wax).

- 11] Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.

“...the fruits of righteousness”: Fruitfulness—want to prosper? In Psalm 1, v.3 is *preceded* by v.2.

*Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. **But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.** And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.*

Psalms 1:1-3

Suffering

You can't appreciate the next several verses unless you can put yourself in the shoes of Philippian Christians. It had been at least four years since they had seen Paul; they had heard rumors of the things that had happened to him and they were worried. News had reached Philippi from Rome that their fellow church member, Epaphroditus, had been sick.

The news bearer updated them on Paul also but some time had elapsed. They would be asking serious questions: Was Paul still in chains? Was he sick? Had he already come to trial? Or had he been martyred? ...they had no way to deal with these speculations.

But now they had a letter from Paul! At least he was alive! How eagerly they would have read it. Can you imagine them reading the first eleven verses with references *only to themselves*?

- 12] But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things *which happened* unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel;

At least he was alive! At the time of writing to the Philippians he could have no confidence he would ever be free again.

Things have turned out quite different from what Paul had planned for himself. He had carried the gospel to various parts of the world: Syria, Crete, Asia Minor (what we know as Turkey), and Greece. He planned to go west even to Spain after returning once more to Jerusalem and then to Rome.

Instead, he found himself on trial for his life. He faced entirely false accusations leveled at him by his own people (Acts 21:28). He was nearly lynched by a religious mob and ended up in a Roman prison, having escaped a flogging only by pleading Roman citizenship (22:22ff). His whole case was a mockery of justice: although right was on his side, he could not secure a hearing. He was the subject of unjust and unprovoked insults and shame (23:2), malicious misrepresentation (24:5; 25:6), and a deadly plot (23:12ff; 25:1ff). He was kept imprisoned due to corrupt officials.

Then came the storm at sea, and then to chains in Rome awaiting—for two years—the uncertain decision of an earthly king. Nevertheless, still imprisoned, still chained, still unheard, still uncertain, he looks back and avers, “what happened to me served to advance the gospel.”

All the frustration, all the delays, all overshadowed by the fact that it served to spread the gospel.

[Source: Excerpted from H.C.G. Moule, *Philippian Studies*, Pickering & Inglis, Glasgow, n.d., p.71, 78; q.v. Boice.]

- 13] So that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace, and in all other places;

“...the palace”: *πραιτώριον praetorium*. Originally assumed to refer to a building; however, since the 17th century many ancient manuscripts have been uncovered that mention the Roman Praetorium and in *none* of these manuscripts does the word ever refer to a palace or a building of any kind. In all of them it refers to *people*: to the Praetorian Guard, the official bodyguard of the emperor, which also took charge of all imperial prisoners.

These very soldiers that guarded him were brought to hear the gospel; it is evident that great numbers of them believed (Cf. Phil 4:22). (From Paul’s point of view, the chains were to keep *them* from getting away! Can you imagine being chained to Paul for a full shift?)

- 14] And many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.

And others were not only encouraged; they went from fear to boldness as a result of Paul’s example.

Christian Troublemakers

- 15] Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some also of good will:

There is hardly a problem in the church today that did not exist in some form in the church of the first century. (Corinth being one of the conspicuous examples, but Rome, too.)

- 16] The one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds:

“...contention”: Paul speaks of those who preached Christ out of “envy and strife” and “contention.” These were Christians who were trying to get Paul into trouble with their preaching! [Christians are well known for arranging their firing squads in circles!]

He also alludes to this friction in other books: he indicated that most of the Christians had deserted him. It is not generally recognized how poorly Paul had been received in Rome. The pastors were jealous of Paul. They neglected him for that reason. When the pastors forgot their duty, the people followed suit. In time Paul was almost forgotten.

The proof of this lies in the fact when Onesiphorus, a visitor to Rome, tried to find Paul some years later, no one could tell him where Paul was. It was only by a diligent search that he found him (2 Tim 1:16-17).

An Unknown Scandal

Paul is reporting that they preached Christ out of unworthy motives: jealousy, strife, and partisanship. Did you know that Paul very likely lost his life as a result of the trouble caused by the troublemaking *Christians* in Rome?

The information that exists from the early church age about the events that led up to the death of Paul points to this conclusion: envy led some Christians to denounce Paul and, as a result of their denunciation, Paul and perhaps others also, were presumably executed under Nero:

1) We noted that when Onesiphorus arrived in Rome, no one seemed to be able to tell him where Paul was (2 Tim 1:16-17). Then Paul began to make converts through the Praetorian Guard. His views spread through Rome, provoking jealousy among the leaders of the Roman congregation. Paul alludes to that here and in his 2nd letter to Timothy.

2) Suetonius, a Roman historian who wrote the lives of the Caesars, tells us that “since the Jews constantly made disturbances at the instigation Chresus [*Christ*],” thinking that Christ was the ringleader. Claudius expelled them from Rome. This expulsion of both Christians and Jews is alluded to in Acts 18:2.

3) A Roman Christian, Clement, wrote a letter to the believers in Corinth about 90 A.D; in chapters 3 to 6, Clement warns the Corinthians about the bad effects of jealousy which had resulted in suffering and death among God’s people. He alludes to seven examples from the Old Testament, and seven from more recent times, *including Paul*. (1 Clement 5). Jesus warned his disciples that they would betray one another (Mt 24:10).

17] But the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defence of the gospel.

18] What then? notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretence, or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice.

Paul's mind was filled with Christ. (Mentioned 17 times in this chapter alone!) Even the false teachers can serve? [God can use tainted vessels. That should encourage us: we, too, can be on the team!]

No Disappointments

Everything human is stained with disappointment.

- 19] For I know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ,
20] According to my earnest expectation and *my* hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but *that* with all boldness, as always, *so* now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether *it be* by life, or by death.

“...ashamed” = disappointed (in Biblical usage).

...hope maketh not ashamed;

Romans 5:5

and thou shalt know that I am the LORD: for they shall not be ashamed that wait for me.

Isaiah 49:23 (quoted twice in Romans)

God does not disappoint us: three verses, all contain “ashamed”

(#1):

For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

Romans 1:16

(The Gospel is *defined* in 1 Corinthians 15:3-4.)

(#2):

For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.

2 Timothy 1:12

My deposit is safe with Him.

(#3):

According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death.

Philippians 1:20

What scope!

- 1) Paul knew that Christ would ultimately be exalted and rule in power until He had crushed all enemies beneath His feet (Ps 2:1-2; 110:1-7; 1 Cor 15:24-25; Phil 2:9-11).
- 2) Paul knew that God's determination to exalt His son also extends to those who are united to Him by faith [yes, even you and me!]. Thus, Phil 1:6.
- 3) Paul recognized that Christ would be magnified in him *whether he lived or died*.

We tend to live in two worlds: the “sacred” and the “secular.” But Jesus Christ knew no such divisions in His life.

I do always what pleases Him.

John 8:20

So it was with Paul.

Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.

1 Corinthians 10:31

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

Romans 12:1

How? By:

Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;

2 Corinthians 10:5

What is Christianity?

What is Christianity? Christianity is a person:

- 21] For to me to live *is* Christ, and to die *is* gain.

I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

Galatians 2:20

These two verses, one from the early days of his ministry and one from the end, summarize the living essence of Paul's faith: the very heart-throb of his life.

22] But if I live in the flesh, this *is* the fruit of my labour: yet what I shall choose I wot not.

The Christian's Death Benefits

Unfortunately, death holds no benefits for unbelievers. Subconsciously, every non-Christian knows this: death looms large as a dreadful enemy.

Men fear death as children fear the dark.

—Francis Bacon

People know that in death a person must meet his Maker. How grateful Christians can be that Christ came to free us from such terrors!

*Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; **And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.***

Hebrews 2:14-15

23] For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better:

“...depart”: ἀναλύω *analuo*, to break camp. (From which we get the English, “analysis.”) It carried the idea of leaving something permanently behind.

When the Roman army reached the end of a long march, they made camp: and this was a very elaborate affair. An adequate rectangle was paced off, and the entire encampment was secured by a moat and rampart, often to a height of 10-12 ft. The top was reinforced and the corners strengthened. When the camp was struck, the soldiers moved on, leaving behind the fortifications like a discarded chrysalis, mute testimony to the fact that they had been there.

This is what need to do: leave behind all that is not useful: all the sin, all the pain, all the care and anguish of this world.

For the Christian, death is not a gain of the worst in life; *it is an improvement on the best!*

24] Nevertheless to abide in the flesh *is* more needful for you.

He is sticking around for *your* benefit, Philippi!

- 25] And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide and continue with you all for your furtherance and joy of faith;
- 26] That your rejoicing may be more abundant in Jesus Christ for me by my coming to you again.

We have no clear record of whether this desire was fulfilled, but there are early church traditions that it was. We know he was released from his first imprisonment, and allowed to go about in freedom for several years before being again apprehended and martyred for the sake of Christ, following him even unto death.

Christian Conduct

Privilege implies responsibility.

- 27] Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel;

“...conversation”: Conversation was employed by our ancestors as a word of far wider scope that is generally suggested today. It meant not only talk, but included *our entire behavior*; our whole manner of life. But the translation difficulties go deeper. In the NIV, it used six words to translate it: “*conduct yourselves in a manner worthy...*”

πολιτεύομαι *politeuomai*, is based on the noun meaning *city: polis*, and actually refers to citizenship. In the classical age, the *polis* was the largest political unit and the Greek belonged to it as we belong to a country, and in his culture it was the biggest thing in his life. The verb means “to conduct oneself worthily as a citizen of the city-state.” We got a taste of this last time when we reviewed Acts 16:

And brought them to the magistrates, saying, These men, being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our city, And teach customs, which are not lawful for us to receive, neither to observe, being Romans.

Acts 16:20-21

We, however, have our citizenship in heaven:

...from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ:

Philippians 3:20

We are to be a citizen of heaven, like Abraham,

By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles [tents] with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

Hebrews 11:9-10

The emphasis here is to stand *together*. One mind and purpose.

The Christians at Philippi knew what it meant to stand fast as Romans at the frontiers of the Roman world...

Some Christians publicly wash their hands of all involvement in community and national life. No one looked more earnestly for the Lord's quick return than Paul, but it was preeminently Paul who set with all the enthusiasm he could muster to claim the world for Christ!

So must we. We must carry the battle for human souls beyond the confines of our churches to the universities, the law courts, the corporate boardrooms, and the marketplace.

"The early Christians did not say in dismay: "Look what the world has come to," but in delight, "Look what has come to the world."

—E. Stanley Jones

Stand Up and Be Counted

The battle is joined and there will be persecution.

- 28] And in nothing terrified by your adversaries: which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God.

"...perdition": These unholy adversaries read their own doom in the happy fellowship of the saints of God, and see in it proof of the Lord's words,

...upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

Matthew 16:18

This is often misunderstood: it is not the assembly of God that is a city besieged; rather it is Hell—or *Hades*—the realm of darkness that is besieged by the forces of light; it is the forces of light who are carrying on an *offensive* warfare—not *defensive*; and it is to them that

the promise is given that "the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." This is the "perdition" spoken of above.

- 29] For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake;
30] Having the same conflict which ye saw in me, and now hear *to be* in me.

If you squeeze an orange, you should get orange juice;
If you squeeze a lemon, you should get lemon juice.
If you squeeze a Christian, you should get Christ.

* * *

Next Chapter

Remedies for ourselves:

- a) We need to develop a low opinion of ourselves;
- b) We need to have a better opinion of others.
- c) We need to possess the mind of Christ.

Coming: the famed *Kenosis*.

The Book of Philippians Session 3 Philippians 2:1-11

Introduction

Many consider the forthcoming passage as the most sublime mystery in all of Scripture.

But first: *Others...*

The last four verses of Chapter 1 and in the opening verses of Chapter 2, Paul focuses on the relationships among believers.

Only let your conversation [conduct; citizenship] be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel; And in nothing terrified by your adversaries: which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God. For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake; Having the same conflict which ye saw in me, and now hear to be in me.

Philippians 1:27-30

It is a matter of unity. It is a necessity in time of war.

Philippians 2

- 1] If *there be* therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies,

“If...” = “Since...”; intensive form.

Here there are four pillars for Christian unity [NIV]:

- 1) because there is “encouragement”;
- 2) because there is “comfort from His love”;
- 3) because there is “fellowship in the Spirit”;
- 4) because there is an experience of “tenderness and compassion” of God.

“Bowels”

KJV “bowels”: bowels, intestines (and the heart, lungs, liver, etc.) were regarded as the seat of the more violent passions, such as anger and love; but by the Hebrews as the seat of the tenderer affections, esp. kindness, benevolence, compassion; hence, our heart (tender mercies, affections, etc.)

Yet, we are always tempted to divisiveness in ways that injures our witness...

Encouragement

Jesus prayed:

That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.

John 17:21

Some take this to refer only to a spiritual unity that all believers possess, regardless of actual deeds and feelings. Yet, there is a unity that the world can see and on the basis of which people can come to believe in Jesus.

This unity must be expressed in deeds, gestures, and speech: i.e., the way we think about, talk to, and act with other Christians.

Love

Christians have a *duty* to see more than another Christian’s faults. Our love is actually to be an outpouring of His Love through us as we are transformed by the indwelling presence of His Spirit.

A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.

John 13:34

This leaves no room for qualification. [Cf. *The Way of Agape* for practical instruction in this area.]

Christian Fellowship

Not merely human fellowship based on common interests: a fellowship created by God; because by grace we have been made mutually dependent members of Christ’s body.

That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.

1 John 1:3

Mercy of Compassion

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

Romans 12:1

If we have been delivered from the fires of Hell by the mercies of God, how can we fail to show compassion to those who also confess Christ’s name, even though they might have offended us or disagreed with our interpretation of Scripture? Thus,

- 2] Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, *being* of one accord, of one mind.

By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.

John 13:35

“I’m Third”

A mysterious plaque above a desk: God first; Others second; I’m third. It is evident that Christians will never see eye to eye on all points.

We are all influenced by habits, by environment, by education, by the measure of intellectual and spiritual apprehension to which we have attained, that it is an impossibility to find any number of people who look at everything from the same viewpoint. Yet:

- 3] *Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.*
- 4] Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.

Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.

Galatians 6:2

Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another;

Romans 12:10; Cf. Matthew 25:31-46

As Paul admonishes the Philippians to “consider others better than yourselves” and to look “to the interests of others,” he was actually carrying them to the frontier of the great war being waged between the powers of light and darkness. [Preamble: Contrast with the Fall of Satan: Ezek 11-19; Isa 14:12-14.]

Philippians 2:5-11: The *Kenosis*

Kenosis from the Greek, rendered “emptied Himself” or “divested Himself;” here, “made Himself of no reputation.”

The passage of Philippians 2:5-11 is the NT equivalent of the prophecy found in Psalm 110:1

The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.

Psalm 110:1

This verse is quoted, directly or indirectly, 27 times in the NT, and was the verse that Jesus used to confound the Pharisees (Mt 22:41-46). It teaches that the One called David’s Lord, the Messiah, will one day reign over *all* things and that *all* His enemies shall be defeated.

The Attacks of the Enemies (Mt 22)

The Herodians: A political party, tried to trap Jesus by forcing Him to make a political statement that would mark Him as a traitor to Rome. That failed.

The Sadducees: A liberal religious party, tried to trap Him with a ridiculous question regarding the Mosaic Law. That failed.

The Pharisees: A religio-political party, then tried to trap Him. Jesus’ answer puzzled the Pharisees; so

While they huddled again to plan a further strategy, Jesus asked them a question:

While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, Saying, What think ye of Christ? whose son is he? They say unto him, The Son of David. He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool? If David then call him Lord, how is he his son?

Matthew 22:41-45

Verse 44 is quoting Psalm 110 (cf. Prov 30:4)! Every orthodox Jewish scholar interpreted this to refer to the Messiah. Only the Messiah could sit at the right hand of Jehovah God. Jesus believed in the inspiration and accuracy of the Old Testament Scriptures, for He said that David spoke these words “in the Spirit.” [The entire argument hangs on a “yod”: possessive]

As God, Messiah is David’s Lord; as man, He is David’s Son. He is both “the root and the offspring of David” (Rev. 22:16). Psalm 110:1 teaches the deity and the humanity of Messiah.

And no man was able to answer him a word, neither durst any man from that day forth ask him any more questions.

Matthew 22:46

Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.

Matthew 5:17,18

The Great Parabola

This passage is among the most glorious sections of the New Testament. This carries the descent of the Lord Jesus Christ from the highest position in the entire universe down to the death on the cross, and then up again to see Him seated once more on the throne of His glory before which every knee shall bow.

In these few verses we sweep from Christ's life from eternity past to eternity future, and are admitted to the breathtaking purposes of God in human salvation. They teach:

The divinity of Christ,
His preexistence,
His equality with God the Father,
His incarnation and true humanity,
His voluntary death on the cross,
the certainty of His ultimate triumph over evil,
and the permanence of His reign.

Some scholars attempt to dismiss the distinct doctrines of Christianity as late developments in the history of an historically conditioned and evolving church. There was no evolution of the doctrines. There have been attempts to clarify them, and advances toward a fuller understanding of their significance.

- 5] Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:
- 6] Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:

The first view we have of Jesus is in reference to His preincarnate state: in the form of God and as God's equal.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men.

John 1:1-4.

And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.

John 17:5

Philips' paraphrase: "Let Christ Jesus be your example as to what your attitude would be. For he, who had always been God by nature did not cling to his prerogatives as God's equal."

Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.

Colossians 1:15-17

Another parallel passage:

God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;

Hebrews 1:1-3

Jesus cannot be understood on the basis of his earthly life alone. He is a man. He is also God.

There are two key words: μορφή *morphe*, which points both outward to the shape of an object and inward to indicate things that cannot be detected on the surface; and, ἴσος *isos*, equal; such as in an isomer, a molecule having a slightly different structure from another molecule but being identical with it in terms of its chemical elements and weight; *isomorph*, having the same form; *isometric*; in equal measure.

These phrases slash across any lesser confessions of Christ's deity. We are speaking of the unique and eternal Godhead.

The Glory of God

I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.

John 17:4, 5

These verses highlight four aspects:

- 1) Jesus possessed a glory before the incarnation;
- 2) This glory was God's glory;
- 3) He did not have it after the incarnation;
- 4) There is a sense in which He did possess it while on earth for He revealed it by finishing the work the Father gave Him to do.

In the early years of the Greek language—of Homer and Herodotus—there was a Greek verb (δοκεω *dokeo*) from which the Greek noun for "glory," δόξα *doxa*, sprang, meaning "to appear" or "to seem"; and the noun that came from it mean "opinion" (thus, orthodox, heterodox, and paradox).

In time, the verb was used only for having a good opinion about some person, and the noun came to mean the “praise” or “honor” due to one of whom a good opinion was held. It is in this sense that Psalm 24 speaks of God as the King of glory.

This understanding of God’s glory was reinforced in the English language by a word which means almost the same thing: the Anglo-Saxon word “worth.” It refers to intrinsic character. Consequently, when people are engaged in praising God they are acknowledging his worth-ship. Dropping the difficult consonants, this becomes “worship.” Philologically, the worship of God, the praise of God, and the giving of glory to God, are identical.

The *Shekinah*

Along this conception is an entirely different meaning of the word *glory* which entered the Greek language later from its contact with the Hebrew culture: it is the idea of “light” or “splendor” which is found in Greek only after the Septuagint translation of the OT.

Moses:

But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not steadfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be done away:

2 Corinthians 3:7

Cloud that overshadowed the Tabernacle, Ex 13:21, 22; et al; Transfiguration, Mt 17; Damascus Road, Acts 9:3ff.

God is conforming *you* to the image of Jesus Christ:

But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.

2 Corinthians 3:18

7] But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:

The next view we have is in His condescension. He had been above all humans, above all angels. Yet He became lower than both in love for humans and in obedience to His heavenly Father.

For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor; that ye through his poverty might be rich.

2 Corinthians 8:9

Can God become man? Can He enter His creation?

For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given...

Isaiah 9:6

Note the two verbs: Jesus was *always* God’s Son; thus, as a son He was *given*. In the incarnation, He became a man; thus, a child is *born*, not given. And again,

But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law,

Galatians 4:4 (NIV)

Paul uses three different words to describe what it meant for the eternal Son of God to become man:

μορφή *morphe*, which points both outward to the shape of an object and inward to indicate things that cannot be detected on the surface. First used in the very nature of God (v.6); here, the very nature of a servant (v.7).

ομοίωμα *homoionoma*, outward appearance, identity.

σχῆμα *schema*, the habitus, as comprising everything in a person which strikes the senses, the figure, bearing, discourse, actions, manner of life etc.

Christ endured all that we endure in this world: its pressures, its longings, its circumstances, its influences. And He was tempted as we are:

For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.

Hebrews 4:15

Cf. Matthew 4: the three temptations... Physical, spiritual, vocational (Psalm 2 detour?).

And He was even like us with disappointments! He wept real tears over Jerusalem:

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!

Matthew 23:37

The Purpose, and the Tragedy, of all history. Thus,

Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.

Matthew 23:38

But the Triumph of all history follows in the next verse:

For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.

Matthew 23:39

The Nadir of the Parabola

8] And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

The cross is the most important event in the history of the universe. It is the central fulcrum of the entire Bible. 2/5 of Matthew's Gospel is concerned with the final week in Jerusalem. 3/5 of Mark, 1/3 of Luke and nearly 1/2 of John. It was in the initial announcement to Joseph:

And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.

Matthew 1:21

Jesus Himself spoke of the suffering that was to come (Mark 8:31; 9:31; et al), linking His mission to the crucifixion:

*And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. **This he said, signifying what death he should die.***

John 12:32

This was even anticipated in Numbers 21:8, 9, as Jesus explained to Nicodemus:

And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up:

John 3:14

This explanation gave rise to the most famous quote of all:

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

John 3:16

John emphasizes that the crucifixion was the key to the whole program: John 2:4; 7:30; 8:20; 12:23, 27; 13:1; 17:1. Jesus reviewed this by going through the entire OT on that seven-mile Bible study on the Emmaus Road (Luke 24:25-27).

There was no depth to which Jesus did not go. He relinquished His rightful position to become the Saviour of Sinners. But in addition to its theological role in paying our ransom, it also serves as our *example*:

For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps:

1 Peter 2:21

Here, in Philippians, that is the subject: the sufferings of Jesus as an example of the patient endurance under the strictures of Roman rule.

Peter continued:

Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.

1 Peter 2:24

The Sin Bearer

But now he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself.

Hebrews 9:26 (NIV)

On *Yom Kippur*, the Day of Atonement, two goats were chosen, one as a sin offering for the sins of the people and one to fill the role of the scapegoat:

*And Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness: **And the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited: and he shall let go the goat in the wilderness.***

Leviticus 16:21, 22

This was to remove the sins, bearing it on himself. The first was to provide the blood that would be placed on the Mercy Seat, representing the payment for the penalty to satisfy divine justice. All this was anticipated as early as Eden, when God Himself replaced their self-made coverings:

Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them.

Genesis 3:21

... teaching them that by the shedding of innocent blood they would be covered.

Jesus died to remove sin; to satisfy divine justice; *and to reveal God's love:*

Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

1 John 4:10

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

John 3:16

And, thus, our response:

I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

Galatians 2:20

The Apogee Follows

- 9] Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name:

The final picture we have is of Jesus again in heaven. Four times in His ministry, Jesus spoke on this text:

And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be humbled; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted.

Matthew 18:4; 23:12; Luke 14:11; 18:14

He lived the text. The 1st half of each clause has an active verb. The 2nd half of each clause has a passive verb. Everything that is said in the 1st four verses of Philippians 2:5-11 has Jesus Himself as the subject.

His Name(s)

He is the Messiah, the Anointed One. He is the promised deliverer through whom blessing comes to Israel and the Gentile nations, the climax of all history.

Jesus is the Son of Man. This phrase means far more than simply His humanity. It originates in Daniel:

I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.

Daniel 7:13, 14

Jesus is the Son of God. So God Himself declared on two occasions (Mt 3:17; 17:5). Thus, Satan so addressed Him (Mt 4:3, 6). It was the high point of the disciples' confession (Mt 16:16). Thus:

Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God.

1 John 4:15

Jesus also is the great "I AM": His was the voice in the burning bush (Ex 3:14; Jn 8:58).

Seven "I AM" statements punctuate John's Gospel:

I AM the bread of life (John 6:35f);

I AM the light of the world (John 8:12; 9:5);

I AM the door of the sheep (John 10:7f);

I AM good shepherd (John 10:14);

I AM the resurrection and the life (John 11:25);

I AM the way, the truth, and the life (John 14:6);

I AM the vine, ye are the branches (John 15:5).

- 10] That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of *things* in heaven, and *things* in earth, and *things* under the earth;

"...things": The KJV adds the word "thing" in each of the phrases as an added word by the translators even though there is no corresponding word in the Greek. Actually, the three phrases are translations of three *adjectives* in Greek, and may refer to either things or people. It is better

to refer to them as *personalities*: “beings in heaven, beings on earth, and beings under the earth,” and refers to angels, humans, and demons.

Tell ye, and bring them near; yea, let them take counsel together: who hath declared this from ancient time? who hath told it from that time? have not I the LORD? and there is no God else beside me; a just God and a Saviour; there is none beside me. Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else. I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear.

Isaiah 45:21-23

- 11] And *that* every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

There is another “name” that appears to be “above every other name”:
Lord.

Lord

The Greek is κύριος *kyrios*, the title that citizens of Rome used to acknowledge the divinity of Caesar. This title was never used of the emperors until they were thought to be deified through religious ceremony. The test phrase *Kyrios Kaiser* meant “Caesar is Lord.” Christians were executed for not saying these words, insisting that Jesus is Lord, not Caesar, as divine.

The Hebrew term, אֲדֹנָי *adonai*, is even more declarative, since it served to replace the “unpronounceable” name of God, יְהוָה (*Yehovah, Yahveh*, et al.). Even in the written places, the vowel points were altered to remind the reader to say “*Adonai*” instead. Thus, the OT *Adonai* became virtually synonymous with the tetragrammaton in practice.

Thus, when early Christians made their confession, “Jesus Christ is Lord” they were actually confessing that Jesus of Nazareth is the God of Israel, Jehovah, the only true God. Furthermore, the word *Adonai* contains a personal ending: it does not just mean “Lord” or “God”; it means “my Lord” or “my God.” It is the word that Mary used of Jesus in the garden on Resurrection morning. It is the confession of Thomas, made eight days later, that John used to provide a climax to his Gospel. In both cases the words were *personal*.

It is no enough merely to acknowledge mentally that Jesus Christ is God. The devils also do that and tremble (James 2:19). Jesus must be *your* God. He must be *your* Lord.

Jesus Is Coming Again

There is another great truth in the title, “Lord.” It means that Jesus is God. It means that Jesus is sovereign. It also means that Jesus is coming again.

Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him.

Hebrews 2:8

He has yet to return to conquer evil and to establish His righteous will forever. He is not only our Kinsman-Redeemer, He is also our Avenger of Blood.

Have ever notice the names that Paul uses to refer to Jesus in his letter to the Thessalonians? All through his letter he uses the personal, most human name: Jesus.

When he begins to talk about Christ’s return, however, he no longer refers to Jesus as Jesus but to Jesus as Lord. From this point on the name occurs five times:

*For this we say unto you by the word of the **Lord**, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the **Lord** shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the **Lord** himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the **Lord** in the air: and so shall we ever be with the **Lord**.*

1 Thessalonians 4:15-17

Paul associated the second coming with the fact that Christ is Lord. This anticipation is also preserved for us in a prayer in the Aramaic language at the end of 1 Corinthians: *maranatha*. (It is actually composed of two Aramaic words run together: the word of *come* and the word for *Lord*.)

Maran-atha “Our Lord is Coming” (Indicative); *Marana-tha* “Our Lord, Come!” (Imperative). John also includes this idea in the next to the last verse of the Bible:

He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.

Revelation 22:20

Paul is not here—as elsewhere in his epistles—combating an error of faith: he is pleading for a life of love.

To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.

Revelation 3:21

Next Session

Study the remainder of Philippians Chapter 2. Be prepared to explain how you will *apply* the lessons of the *Kenosis*!

* * *

The Book of Philippians Session 4 Philippians 2:12-30

Review

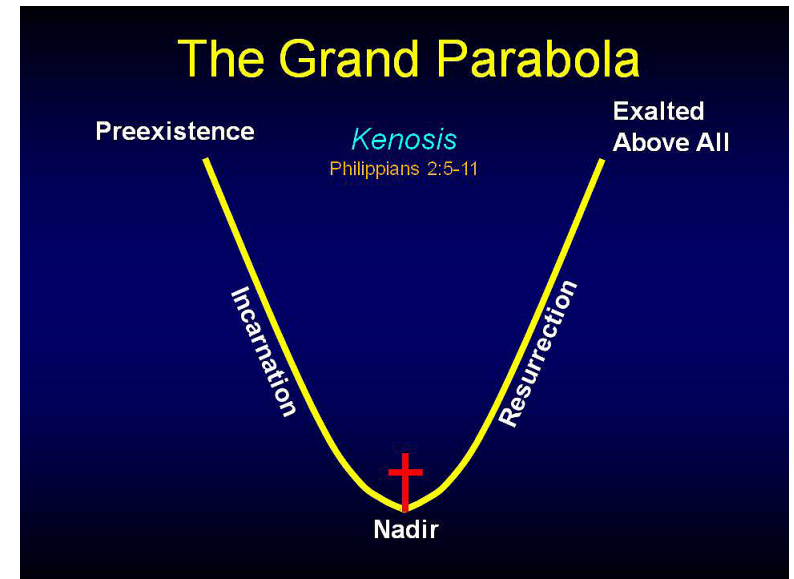
It's not clear who it was who first thought that “being spiritual” means withdrawing from the world. But the idea certainly entered the Church at an early period and has had detrimental effects ever since. There are all kinds of stories of monks and others who resorted to strange and unnatural antics to separate themselves from their mission field. The Bible does *not* support this view of spirituality.

Certainly it is essential to spend time alone with God in prayer. Yet the Bible never allows us to think that meditation has achieved its purpose for us unless it results in *practical application*. There is no value to a mountain-top experience unless it helps us to live in the valleys.

Philippians 2

Call for unity (vv. 1 - 4); then *Kenosis* (vv. 5 - 11). The “Grand Parabola” of the *Kenosis*—the condescension of God to become a man, His sacrificial death, and His ultimate reign over all creation—these sublime doctrines were introduced into this letter, not for their own sakes, but for very practical purposes. They were included for an example for the role of obedience and humility in living the Christian life.

And Paul will include three more very practical examples before we conclude this chapter.



Application (vv. 12 - 30)

- 12] Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.

Notice that Paul uses “wherefore” *twice* in three verses (v.9 and v.12): “because of this...”: two parallel results of Jesus’ conduct—Jesus humbled Himself; and He became obedient to death, even the death of the cross: *therefore* God exalted Him (v.9). Jesus showed the course of humility and obedience, *therefore* the Christian is to work out his or her salvation (v.12).

“...work out your own salvation”: *Not* a self-help salvation. On the contrary, because you are already saved, because God has already entered your life in the person of the Holy Spirit, because you, therefore, have His power at work within you ...because of these things you are now to strive to express this salvation in your conduct.

[It does *not* say “work *for* your salvation,” or “work *toward* your salvation,” or “work *at* your salvation;” it says “work *out* your salvation.]

There is a clear parallel between vv.12-15 and Deut 32. (The words “children,” “blameless, and “crooked and depraved generation” in v.15 also occur in Deut 32:4-5. Paul seems to have had this passage in mind.)

The deliverance of Israel from Egypt was not because they merited it; it was entirely because God loved them. If they had their way they would have stayed there. In fact, they wanted to go back. But God trained them for 40 years and now they were at the Jordan River. Moses knew that he would not be allowed to continue with them. He knew that God had called them and led them and was with them even then. On this basis he argues that they are to possess the land and live there as God's obedient children.

Paul was about to be taken out of this world himself as Moses was. They had been in bondage to sin and God had delivered them, too. So they, too, are to "strive" for the realization of God's love, peace, holiness, goodness, and justice in their lives. [And so are you to!] It is God the Holy Spirit in us who does the working:

- 13] For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of *his* good pleasure.

Adam had lost his free will in his disobedience; he proved it by running away from God when God came to see them in the garden. That genetic defect is now passed on to us. We are helpless but for God's initiatives.

No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him:

John 6:44

The well-known verses in Ephesians speaks *twice* of works:

*For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of **works**, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good **works**, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.*

Ephesians 2:8-10

One kind of work is condemned because it comes out of ourselves and is contaminated by sin. The other kind of work is encouraged because it comes from God as He works through the Christian.

What are *Your* Goals?

Most of the critical skills in life cannot be learned from a book while sitting on the sidelines. That's why we have bootcamps in the military, training camps for sports, and academies for leadership. Most professional activities involve *contrary-to-instinct* behavior. [Scuba diving (embolism) and grand prix driving (oversteer vs. understeer).]

While we are not to be *of* this world, we *are* to be in this world. We live for Jesus Christ in the midst of a wicked and ungodly generation. We are not to retreat from the mission field we find ourselves in.

How can we live for Christ in this world? Don't fret: "What is this world coming to?" But proclaim: "What has come to this world!"

Paul now lists three specific goals:

- 14] Do all things without murmurings and disputings:

"...disputings": *διαλογισμός dialogismos*, from which we get the English word, "dialogue." The concept here is not to be in rebellion against God's will.

- 15] That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world;

We are to be in complete submission to God:

- a) doing all things without complaining or arguing;
- b) our life is to be blameless before other people;
- c) our life is to be blameless before God also.

We are to be like Daniel. He lived in the midst of the fountainhead of ungodliness, Babylon. He didn't hide in a corner: he lived in the king's palace and became his key advisor. His enemies tried to find fault with him, but could only accuse him of his worship of YHWH!

Then said these men, We shall not find any occasion against this Daniel, except we find it against him concerning the law of his God.

Daniel 6:5

We are to live blameless before God. The word here is the same as in Ephesians:

According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:

Ephesians 1:4

This does not mean that we come to the point where we will be without sin. Real sanctification lies in the increasing realization of how sinful we are. We need to be open before Him.

*Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts:
And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way
everlasting.*

Psalm 139:23, 24

This process will continue throughout life. Sounds impossible? Not with God, the God of the Impossible! We, ourselves, are incapable of living out the kind of life that God requires of us. But God is capable of living out that life in anyone who yields to His Spirit. He does for us, and in us, what we cannot do for ourselves. The Bible tells us how this will happen:

I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

Galatians 2:20

Paul now includes three practical examples of what he is talking about.

Example #1: Paul Himself

- 16] Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain.
- 17] Yea, and if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy, and rejoice with you all.

“...offered”: *σπένδω spendo*: to pour out as a drink offering, make a libation, part of a pagan sacrificial offering; following a burnt offering of an animal, the offeror would take a cup of wine and pour it on the altar; it would immediately disappear in a puff of steam.

Paul is a prisoner in Rome and expecting to be offered up upon a pagan altar. When he would be killed it would only be the drink offering poured out upon the far greater offering of their faith. His achievements—even his pending martyrdom—he place very low on the scale. Does our humility among other Christians match his?

- 18] For the same cause also do ye joy, and rejoice with me.

Example #2: Timothy

- 19] But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timotheus shortly unto you, that I also may be of good comfort, when I know your state.
- 20] For I have no man likeminded, who will naturally care for your state.

- 21] For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's.
- 22] But ye know the proof of him, that, as a son with the father, he hath served with me in the gospel.

We learn four things about Timothy:

- 1) Paul had “no one else like him.” In many ways, he was like Paul.
- 2) Timothy was concerned for others; sincerely.
- 3) Timothy put Jesus Christ first in his life.
- 4) Timothy learned to work with others; he had developed a skill of cooperation.

This also says a lot about Paul, as a father and teacher. Served “with” me...jointly.

Our youth now love luxury. They have bad manners, contempt for authority, disrespect for older people. Children nowadays are tyrants. They no longer rise when their elders enter the room. They contradict their parents, chatter before company, gobble their food, and tyrannize their teachers.

—Socrates, 500 B.C.

We must remember we are but *bondslaves*. But we also should express leadership in setting standards and lead by example.

- 23] Him therefore I hope to send presently, so soon as I shall see how it will go with me.
- 24] But I trust in the Lord that I also myself shall come shortly.

Example #3: Epaphroditus

Of all the men Paul honors in this epistle, Epaphroditus gets the most attention. It is a eulogy that builds to a climax.

- 25] Yet I supposed it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother, and companion in labour, and fellowsoldier, but your messenger, and he that ministered to my wants.

“...my brother”: **A brother in Christ** (a new ideal in Paul's day!): Fellowship among guilds, soldiers, etc., was exclusive. The world was polarized into Greeks and Romans; Jews and Gentiles; aristocrats and plebeians; citizens and soldiers, etc. There was nothing exclusive—exclusionary—about the early Christians. [Does that describe the church(es) today?]

“...companion in labor”: Committed, not just “involved.” The church in Ephesus was lauded by Jesus:

And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted.

Revelation 2:3

Despite financial and numerical “success,” the churches in America have increasingly become identified with the popular culture and so have become unable to speak prophetically to it. It has become *complacent* and lost its intellectual and cultural dynamic.

It needs to be reconstituted as a working church:

1) Intellectually: scout the shelves of modern day bookstores and you find a denial of the fundamental doctrines of Christianity. We need clear thinkers, winsome writers, and persuasive apologists to reverse the trends and publish works of real and lasting value;

2) Socially: we need to recapture an active role in addressing the social concerns. (Cf. the earlier abolition of slavery, the child labor laws, etc.)

3) Evangelism: the people need to be won; on a one-to-one basis.

“...fellow soldier”: Epaphroditus fought side by side with Paul.

Romans pioneered shoulder-to-shoulder fighting which led to their successes. The Roman Phalanx were a terror to the ancient world. A wall of shields; esp. the “tortoise” formation, etc.

26] For he longed after you all, and was full of heaviness, because that ye had heard that he had been sick.

Philippi was about 800 miles from Rome, a traveling distance of at least six weeks. The message that he was sick would have made a round trip in no less than three months.

27] For indeed he was sick nigh unto death: but God had mercy on him; and not on him only, but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow.

This is a refutation of the faith healers who insist, like Job's comforters, that sickness is result of sin, a lack of faith, or God's chastening.

28] I sent him therefore the more carefully, that, when ye see him again, ye may rejoice, and that I may be the less sorrowful.

Paul clearly did not teach “healing in the atonement” or that it was a birthright of all Christians. We never read of him or his fellow-laborers being miraculously healed. Sickness is often a badge of honor among God's children.

29] Receive him therefore in the Lord with all gladness; and hold such in reputation:

30] Because for the work of Christ he was nigh unto death, not regarding his life, to supply your lack of service toward me.

Living for Others

The high point of Paul's praise for his friend Epaphroditus was his sacrifices of his own interests for others. Paul was in prison and most of his friends had deserted him. [Cf. our own experience: bankruptcy, earthquakes, etc., accompanied by abandonment of our “Christian friends,” etc.]

The Concept of a Fiduciary

Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men:

Ephesians 6:5-7

Obedience to “masters according to the flesh”; i.e., physical and mental, *not* spiritual or of the conscience. “In singleness of heart” (60 minutes of each hour paid); also, as a *fiduciary*. “As unto Christ”: no distinction between secular and “sacred.”

Some Vocabulary

Faithful (1 Cor 4:2): Firmly adhering to duty; of true fidelity; loyal; true to allegiance; constant in the performance of duties or services; true to one's word; honest; *loyal*.

Fiduciary: The relation existing when one person justifiably reposes confidence, faith, and reliance in another whose aid, advice, and protection is sought in some matter; the relation existing when good conscience requires one to act at all times for the sole benefit and interests of another with loyalty to those interests; the relation by law existing between certain classes of persons (as confidential advisors and the one advised; executors or administrators and legatees or heirs...corporate directors or officers...)

The Sanctity of a Commitment

Society's desperate need: Diligence only when the boss is looking? Slacking off when the boss is away is a form of dishonesty.

A Christian can perform *any* good work as a ministry to Christ... from the heart. *Being* a witness vs. "Witnessing" ["Undercover Christians"...] What if the master is overbearing, abusive, unreasonable? "As unto the Lord" (!) Your wages are only temporal. Our real rewards are from Him.

An old missionary returning from many years of sacrificial service in Africa was on the same ship with President Theodore Roosevelt, returning from a big game hunt in Africa: When the ship docked, great crowds, press, et al., greeted the President. The old missionary and his wife walked off unnoticed and made their way to a cheap hotel. "It doesn't seem right! We gave our lives in Africa to win souls to Christ and when we arrive home there's nobody to meet us. The president shoots some animals and receives a royal welcome!" the missionary complained. "That's because we aren't home yet," the wife noted.

Addenda:

The Requirements of a Fiduciary

Many forms of conduct permissible in a work-a-day world for those acting at arm's length are forbidden to those bound by fiduciary ties. A trustee is held to something stricter than the morals of the marketplace. Not honesty alone, but the punctilio of an honor the most sensitive, is then the standard of behavior. As to this there has developed a tradition that is unbending and inveterate. Uncompromising rigidity has been the attitude of the courts of equity when petitioned to undermine the rule of undivided loyalty by the "disintegrating erosion" of particular exceptions... Only thus has the level of conduct for fiduciaries been kept at a level higher than that trodden by the crowd.

Justice Cardozo, *Meinhard v. Salmon*

A director of a corporation is in the position of a fiduciary. He will not be permitted improperly to profit at the expense of his corporation. Undivided loyalty will ever be insisted upon. Personal gain will be denied to a director when it comes because he has taken a position adverse to or in conflict with the best interests of his corporation. The fiduciary relationship imposes a duty to act in accordance with the highest standards which a man of the finest sense of honor might impose upon himself... While there is a lofty moral ideal implicit in this rule, it actually accomplishes a practical beneficent purpose. It recognizes

the frailty of human nature; it realizes that where a man's immediate fortunes are concerned he may sometimes be subject to a blindness often intuitive and compulsive. This rule is designed on the one hand to prevent clouded conception of fidelity and a moral indifference that blurs the vision, and on other hand, to stimulate the most luminous critical sense and the finest exercise of judgement uncontaminated by the dross of prejudice, of divided allegiance, or of self-interest.

Justice Shientag, *Litwin v. Allen*

Next Session

Study Philippians Chapter 3. This is probably the most beloved chapter of Paul's letter.

* * *

The Book of Philippians Session 5 Philippians 3

The third chapter of Philippians is probably the most beloved chapter of Paul's letter. It lays out some of the most cardinal doctrines of the Christian life. It also unveils, in stirring language, Paul's own key personal goal: to know and serve the Lord Jesus. His key challenge is to be *joyful!*

[Stop and consider the situation: it was Paul, a prisoner in Rome—and uncertain of his continuing to even be alive in the days ahead—who was encouraging his friends in Philippi, who were free, to be joyful. One would think it should have been the other way around! They should have been encouraging *him*.]

What robs us of our joy? *Things*. Paul will give us a lesson on "How to count."

Verses 1-11: Paul's Past. Paul, the Accountant.

"I count" > New values.

Verses 12-16: Paul's Present. Paul, the Athlete.

"I press" > New vigor.

Verses 17-21: Paul's Future. Paul, the Alien.

"I look" > New vision.

—Wiersbe

Remember, Philippi was a Roman colony, “Rome away from Rome.” In a sense, we, too, are a colony of heaven on earth. Our citizenship is in heaven...Philippians 3:20 (NASB)

The key word in the first 11 verses is “count”: to evaluate, assess.

The unexamined life is not worth living.

—Socrates

Philippians 3

These first three verses emphasize that joy is founded to a large degree on sound doctrine.

- 1] Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you, to me indeed *is* not grievous, but for you *it is* safe.

“Finally...” = yet two more chapters! What Paul really means is, “For the rest...”; in contrast to his “finally” in 4:18.

“...rejoice in the Lord”: Jesus promised joy for those who followed Him. This was announced from the very beginning:

And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

Luke 2:10-11

Joy is the birthright of all true believers. Jesus declared:

These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.

John 15:11

Jesus prayed to the Father:

And now come I to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves.

John 17:13

- 2] Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision.

“Beware of dogs”: The orthodox Jew would call the Gentile a “dog,” an unclean animal; but here Paul calls the orthodox Jews “dogs”! He

isn’t just calling names: he is comparing these false teachers to the contemptible scavengers.

The Advent of the Judaizers

From the very beginning, the Gospel was sent “to the Jew first” (Acts 3:26; Rom 1:16). The first seven chapters of Acts deals only with Jewish believer, or Gentile proselytes to Judaism (Acts 2:10). In Chapter 8 the message went to the Samaritans—the “part-Jew.”

When Peter was called to open the Gospel to the Gentiles—*without first becoming Jews*—it created an uproar that was ultimately confronted at the Council of Jerusalem in Acts 15. Paul was specifically sent out by the Holy Spirit to minister to the Gentiles (Acts 13:1-3; 22:21).

But the dissenters did not desist: they followed Paul everywhere, stirring up trouble as they went. (Luke Volume 2, the Book of Acts, makes the responsibilities for the uprisings quite clear.)

The Book of Galatians specifically addresses these issues, and it is these very “Judaizers” that Paul is addressing in these first two verses here.

“Evil workers” were teaching that salvation was by faith + works, especially the works of the law. Paul is indicating that their “good works” were really evil works because they were of the flesh and not the spirit, and were an *incumbrance* to salvation.

For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.

Ephesians 2:8, 9

For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

Titus 3:3-7

“...beware of the concision”: *κατατομή katatome*, to cut up; mutilation. A pun on “circumcision.” The Judaizers taught that circumcision was essential to salvation (Acts 15:1; Gal 6:12-18). Paul sees it, in itself,

as only a mutilation. Even in the OT, true circumcision is always of the heart (Deut 30:6).

The true Christian has experienced a spiritual circumcision in Christ:

In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ:

Colossians 2:11

3] For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.

“...no confidence in the flesh”: Cf. Rom 2:25-29. We are His workmanship (ποίημα *poema*, from which we get “poem”; Eph 2:10). Dismiss the common claim, “The Lord helps those who help themselves.” Not so. This is just as wrong today as it was in Paul’s day. *The Lord helps those who come to the end of themselves!*

Happiness vs. Joy?

Every Christian virtue has its worldly counterpart:

<u>World</u>	<u>Christian</u>
Sex	Love
Security	Trust
Self-gratification	Peace
Happiness	Joy

Happiness is our translation of the Latin word *fortuna*, which is closely related to chance. Happiness is circumstantial; joy is not. Joy is a supernatural inner quality of delight in God. How does one get *this* joy?

- 1) Becoming a Christian. Understand who you really are, and the program God has provided for you, and lay aside any self-effort, trusting Christ for it all.
- 2) Obtain a mature knowledge of God’s Word.

The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes.

Psalms 19:8

I have rejoiced in the way of thy testimonies, as much as in all riches.

Psalms 119:14

If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father’s commandments, and abide in his love. These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.

John 15:10-11

Cf. Exodus 13:9; Deut 6:4-8; 11:18.

This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.

Joshua 1:8

3) Pursue a life of righteousness and peace.

For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

Romans 14:17

Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

Philippians 4:6, 7

Paul’s Balance Sheet

Human ruin (Sermon on the Mount):

Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.

Matthew 5:48

A chain is ineffective if just one link breaks. One sin shatters any claim to the righteousness of God’s standard. Human righteousness—at its best—is still inadequate to qualify for the destiny God has in mind for us. Paul illustrates this from his own experience:

4] Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more:

Paul fills out his “balance sheet”:

- 5] Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, *of* the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee;

“...the stock of Israel”: An Israelite—Israel was the *covenant* name of God’s people, just as the word “Jew” emphasizes their racial origins.

“...tribe of Benjamin”: Benjaminite origin was source of pride: Benjamin and Joseph were Jacob’s favorite sons. They were born to Rachel, Jacob’s favorite wife. Israel’s first king came from the tribe of Benjamin. Benjamin was the one tribe that remained loyal to Judah when the civil war divided Judah from Israel after the death of Solomon.

“...a Pharisee”: The Pharisees were the most faithful of all the Jewish sects in their adherence to the Law, and regarded as the summit of religious experience.

Paul was personally taught by the great rabbi Gamaliel (Acts 22:3), and his career was a promising one (Gal 1:13-14); yet he gave it all up to become a member of the hated “Christian sect.”

- 6] Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.

Paul’s zeal in defending orthodoxy included zealous attacks on the followers of “that deceiver” (Mt 27:62-66), and participation in the stoning of Stephen (Acts 7:54-60). Cf. Acts 22:1-5; 26:1-11; 1 Tim 1:12-16.

Seven achievements: some inherited; some earned. These “assets” were actually liabilities: they kept him *from* God:

Losses Result in Gains

It would seem, on the surface, that Paul is boasting in the flesh. But actually, he is demonstrating precisely what *needs to be avoided!* He is, autobiographically, an ideal example:

- 7] But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.

“But”: perhaps the most important word in this chapter! What is impressive from a human point of view is quite different from God’s point of view.

Paul had enough morality to keep him out of trouble, but not enough righteousness to get him into heaven! He was spiritually bankrupt! Paul had to lose his “religion” to find salvation...

How could anyone go so wrong? *By using the wrong measuring stick.* Like the rich young ruler (Mark? re: Mark 10:17-22) or the Pharisee in Christ’s parable (Luke 18:10-14), Saul had been looking at the *outside* rather than the *inside*.

[Jesus, in the Sermon on the Mount, emphasized *attitudes* and *appetites* as well as actions.]

- 8] Yea doubtless, and I count all things *but* loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them *but* dung, that I may win Christ,

It would be difficult to find a more forceful refutation of human effort to please God than what Paul has presented here. (Four Greek particles, ἀλλὰ μενοῦνγε καὶ, *alla menoun ge kai*, introduce the strong statements of v.8.)

Paul’s confrontation on the road to Damascus caused him to see everything in his life quite differently! (Cf. Acts 9:1-21).

This did not make him repudiate his heritage: He did not become *less* a Jew; it made him a *completed* Jew—one who had found his Messiah! It is this *personal relationship* that is paramount; That is what Jesus prayed for with His Father:

And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.

John 17:3

Two Kinds of Righteousness

Works righteousness (vv.1-6) and faith righteousness (vv.7-11)

- 9] And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:

This verse is a summary of the Book of Romans: the heart of salvation in one verse. All are classified within three spiritual types:

- Romans 1:18-22, Self-justified; Paul indicts in vv.21-28.
- Romans 2:1-16, the Moral Person, who still falls short of God’s requirements.
- Romans 2:17-29, the Religious Person, but God looks at the heart (1 Sam 16:7).

All are short of God's requirements. That's God's amazing predicament. How can a just God forgive sins? The Answer: by an amazing gift! The gift of His Son, to pay the price, and thus enable the Redemption of those who would accept God's program.

Gaining the righteousness of Christ: the technical term is *imputation*: to put to one's account. Cf. Romans 4:1-8 carefully. [Our sins had, conversely, been put on *His* account!] Romans 9:30-10:13 is the parallel passage that deserves our careful study.

The only barrier to truth is the presumption that you already have it.

Fellowship with Christ

One of the misconceptions we see promoted today is the celebration of a "decision for Christ" as some kind of climax or ending. *It should be seen as only a beginning—a launching.*

You say you are saved? *What have you done with it? What fruit has it yielded? . . .*

Faith is not an instantaneous event: it is a path of growth. Abraham is a prime example. God called him out of the Ur of the Chaldees; but he didn't fully respond until his father died! He simply moved up river for a spell (Acts 7:2-4). But his pilgrimage is a journey of growth (Heb 11:8,9). By the time you get to Genesis 22, his faith included the ostensible resurrection of Isaac! (Heb 11:17-19; Rom 4:20-21).

The Ultimate Goal

The ultimate goal, of course, is fellowship:

- 10] That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;

"...fellowship": *κοινωνία koinonia*, partnership; participation. Paul exchanged a set of rules—the Law—for a Friend, Master, Companion.

Often, the ultimate intimacy is arrived at, ironically, through what some have called, "The Dark Night of the Soul," when even God seems to have isolated us from Him—no matter how much we pray, etc. This is the subject of our book, *Faith in the Night Seasons*, a practical guide to the really dark times which God uses to draw us to deeper intimacy with Him.

"...and the power of His resurrection": The sufferings here are *not* the substitutionary sufferings on the cross. Only Christ could qualify for those. Paul did aspire to participate with Christ in suffering for the sake of righteousness. (God had used Ananias to tell Paul what he would do as a servant of Christ, cf. Acts 9:16). The Apostle did, indeed, suffer for Christ because he represented Him so openly and truly (cf. Rom 8:36; 2 Cor 4:10).

- 11] If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.

Cf. Eph 1:15-23; 3:13-21 for the forecast of what it can do in *your* life!

The word translated "resurrection" is a unique translation of *ἐξανάστασις exanastasis*, a word used nowhere else in the NT. It means a partial resurrection out from among other corpses; literally an "out-resurrection."

Why? Did he doubt he would be raised from the dead? Hardly. Some suspect that he was using this word to refer to the *αρπάζω* *harpazo*, or Rapture, thus expressing the hope that the Lord would return during his lifetime.

In Philippians 3, Paul is giving us his spiritual biography:

- His past: "Paul, the Accountant" vv. 1-11
- His present: "Paul, the Athlete" vv. 12-16
- His future: "Paul, the Alien" vv. 17-21

In the previous session we encountered "Paul, the Accountant," revising his evaluations since discovering Jesus Christ. We will now encounter "Paul, the Athlete," pressing toward the finish line with renewed spiritual vigor. Then we will also see "Paul, the Alien," having expatriated his citizenship to heaven.

It is interesting to see Paul draw upon illustrations from the military ("the whole armor of God", Eph 6:10-18); from architecture ("you are the temple of God", 1 Cor 6:19, et al); from agriculture ("what a man sows, that shall he reap," Gal 6: 7-9); and from athletics (in the verses that follow).

An ideal: "Something that everyone is expected to honor but nobody is expected to attain." Some view Christian discipleship this way. That's

tragic but unfortunately prevalent. Paul does not allow this kind of thinking to continue. In verse 10, Paul had expressed his lifelong goal:

That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;

Philippians 3:10

But Paul also recognized that many of his readers would dismiss this as an idealistic impracticality and unattainable. So Paul continues:

Winning the Race!

- 12] Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.

This is the declaration of a Christian who never permitted himself to be satisfied with his spiritual attainments. A sanctified dissatisfaction is the first essential to progress in any race or serious undertaking.

“...perfect”: Here it really means completed, mature. We are continually warned against a false estimate of our spiritual condition.

The church at Sardis had “a name that thou livest and art dead” (Rev 3:1). They had a reputation without reality. The church at Laodicea boasted that it was rich but was actually “wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked” (Rev 3:17).

[It is sobering to realize that *each* of the representative seven churches in Revelation 2 & 3 were *surprised* at their report card! That should give us all pause for reflection...]

We are also reminded of Samson who thought he still had his old power, but in reality it had departed from him (Judg 16:20).

Verse 12 is not only a statement of the demands of discipleship, it also is an announcement of the principles by which this calling should be realized:

- 1) He acknowledges that he was *called by* Christ Jesus;
- 2) God had a *purpose* in calling him;
- 3) He acknowledges that this puts an *obligation* on himself—an obligation to follow after Jesus.

We are called—by the God the Universe—we didn’t choose Him: He chose us:

No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.

John 6:44

Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.

John 15:16

Did Abraham chose God? Hardly. He was perfectly satisfied where he was in the Mesopotamian river valley in a pagan, idol-worshipping culture—but God called Him to be the vehicle for His plan of redemption for mankind.

Moses likewise. David, the youngest of seven sons of Jesse. John the Baptist—*before he was born!*

Paul was in the process of persecuting Christians... In each case, it was God’s initiative. And so it is with you and me. And, in each case, it was for a specific *purpose*.

And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

Romans 8:28

[And there’s more:]

For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

Romans 8:28-30

- 13] Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but *this* one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before,

Paul was certainly not complacent: he was intensely committed to winning the race of life; of maximizing his opportunities. [Cf. Benjamin Franklin’s pursuit of virtues: *Ben Franklin’s Almanac...*]

“One thing”: an important flag phrase for each of us:

- “One thing thou lackest,” Jesus said to the self-righteous rich young ruler (Mark 10:21);
- “One thing is needful,” Jesus explained to busy Martha when she criticized her sister (Luke 10:42);
- “One thing I know!” exclaimed the man who had received his sight by the power of Christ (John 9:25);
- “One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after,” testified the Psalmist (Ps 27:4).
- One of the secrets of discipline is to concentrate on “one thing.”

No athlete succeeds by doing everything; he succeeds by *specializing*. Ben Franklin’s famous admonition is usually *misquoted*: “Jack of all trades and master of one.” [*not* “none”!] For the Christian, the “one” *must* be the Bible. And he let’s nothing distract him:

A double minded man is unstable in all his ways.

James 1:8

Forgetting the Past

When the children of Israel were delivered from the bondage of the world [Egypt] they repeatedly yearned for the earlier, more familiar, life.

We remember the fish, which we did eat in Egypt freely; the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlic: But now our soul is dried away: there is nothing at all, beside this manna, before our eyes.

Numbers 11:5, 6

“Forgetting those things...” Paul simply means that we need to break the power of the past by living for the future:

And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.

Luke 9:62

[As the race driver said, as he ripped out his rear view mirror: “What’s behind us doesn’t matter!”] We don’t want to be a leeks-and-garlic Christian!

“...reaching forth”: literally, “stretching as in a race.”

14] I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

“I press!” This is the same verb translated “I follow after” in v.12. It conveys the idea of intense endeavor.

It is important for us to realize that Paul is *not* telling us how to be saved. That would be by works and self-effort, and would contradict what he wrote in the first 11 verses—as well as most of the rest of his epistles!

In order to participate in the Greek games, the athlete *had to be a citizen!* He did not run the race to gain his citizenship. (In v.20, he will emphasize that “our citizenship is in heaven” [already].) But since we are already the children of God through faith in Christ, we have the responsibility of “running the race” and achieving the goals that God has set for us.

[Rewards; Cf. 1 Cor 3:11-15, using an architectural illustration, etc. For an excellent discussion, see our *The Kingdom, Power & Glory* book.]

Finishing Well

15] Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you.

“...perfect”: Here again, “perfect” really means completed, mature. We are continually warned against a false estimate of our spiritual condition.

How can you know God’s will? How is it possible for someone to know the mind of God? If God has a plan for your life, how does he reveal it to you?

Paul, here, focuses his readers on this issue: “And if you think differently about anything, God will show you how to think.” (1sv)

God is committed to guiding us. Not necessarily more than a step at a time. Just like an aircraft flying on instruments. It works because it is trusted. God is committed to revealing His will to us. There are a number of principles to apply to this crucial area:

- 1) We can have this assurance because of the nature of God. God made the world to reveal Himself to those who would ultimately live in it.

For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:

Romans 1:20

2) We must be walking by God's Word.

If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.

John 7:17

Nothing can be the will of God for you that is not in accordance with His Word. His will for nonbelievers is also clear:

And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.

John 6:40

If you are not a Christian, God is not interested in telling you whether or not you should accept that job at (company X); or whether you should marry Sally or Mary (or Henry or John); or whether or not to enlist in the military, etc. He is interested in whether or not you will believe in Jesus Christ and receive Him as your personal Savior. God's will for you starts at this point.

If you *are* a Christian, there is clear insight:

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

Romans 12:1, 2

Thus, anything that contributes to your growth in holiness is an aspect of God's will for you.

God's will for your work:

And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ.

Colossians 3:23, 24

Further,

Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart;

Ephesians 6:5, 6

“With singleness [sincerity] of heart”: as in a *fiduciary* relationship... What about the detailed events in one's life: how does one know whether to go to certain movies, making friends with people at work, social drinking, et al? Another predictable factor:

Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you.

Philippians 4:8, 9

3) Another principle is daily fellowship with the Lord. He has assured us that,

I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye.

Psalms 32:8

To “guide you with His eye” He must first catch our eye! And you must remain “eye-to-eye” with Him. We can't know His will for us without a knowledge of God's Word.

Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.

Psalms 1:1, 2

Peter said that we are:

...born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.

1 Peter 1:23

Has the Word of God penetrated *your* heart? Nothing else will do it: not the word(s) of a person, not philosophy, not history, not science.

That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

John 3:6

This is the first great blessing of Bible study. The second is our sanctification.

Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.

John 17:17

It is through study of the Bible and fellowship with God that we are increasingly as He would have us to be. Unfortunately, Christians often seek holiness anywhere but by God's Word. They seek it through reading other literature, by attending religious conferences, by emotional experiences, even mysticism.

Do you want to know how relevant the Bible can be to *your* life and how God can use it to reveal His will to you? *Then you must spend time reading it daily.* If you are a Christian, God has a specific path marked out for you.

You will find it only as you discover His will for you *through Scripture.*

- 16] Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing.

This typically requires us to reverse our standards to His. In the Navy, they call that a "Turn 18." We call that "conversion."

There were many in the Bible who began showing great promise, but failed at the end because they disregarded God's rules. They did not lose their salvation but they did lose their rewards (1 Cor 3:15).

Lot (Gen 19);
Samson (Judg 16);
Saul (1 Sam 28:31);
Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5).
...and it can happen to us.

Living in the Future Tense

- 17] Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample.
18] (For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, *that they are* the enemies of the cross of Christ:

"...even weeping": How strange, in a letter devoted to joy, to find Paul *weeping!* Not for himself, not for his treatment by the Romans, but for others. He was heartbroken over the way some professed Christians are living, people who "mind earthly things."

- 19] Whose end *is* destruction, whose God *is* their belly, and *whose* glory *is* in their shame, who mind earthly things.)

Aliens in a Foreign Land

- 20] For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ:

As we discussed in an earlier session, the Greek word, *πολίτευμα* *po-liteuma*, translated "conversation" means "citizenship;" it is the word from which we get the English word, "politics."

As we mentioned earlier, Philippi was particularly fond of its privileged status as if on Roman soil. Just as Philippi was a colony of Rome on foreign soil, so the church is a "colony of heaven" on earth. I like the way Donald Barnhouse summarized us:

A group of displaced persons, uprooted from their natural home, and on their way to an extraterrestrial destination; not of this planet, neither in roots nor in its ideals.

Donald Grey Barnhouse

Because Abraham looked for a city, he was content to live in a tent:

For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God....These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city.

Hebrews 11:10, 13-16

Paul concludes this chapter with a glimpse at *eschatology*: Our Blessed Hope.

- 21] Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.

“Vile”: ταπεινώσις *tapeinosis*: lowness; humiliation; low estate.

The body of glory:

For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven:

2 Corinthians 5:2

“House”: οἰκητήριον *oiketerion*: a dwelling place, habitation; of the body as a dwelling place for the spirit. The only other place in the New Testament that this word is used is in Jude:

And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.

Jude v.6

...which refers to the fallen angels in Genesis 6 who “disrobed” from their previous existence to indulge in the mischief producing the *Nephilim*.

Another insight into the *hyperspace* that will be involved with our resurrection bodies is given to us by John:

Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

1 John 3:2

Which means that we won’t simply be treated to a “3-dimensional” representation of a higher dimensional being: we will enjoy the *same* dimensionality—“we will see Him as He is!”

More to come...

Study Philippians Chapter 4. Review the final practical suggestions concluding this intensely personal epistle.

* * *

The Book of Philippians Session 6 Philippians 4

Review

In Chapter 3, Paul highlighted the conquests that Christ has made for those that trust Him.

- 1) Christ died to bring us salvation and the righteousness that comes by faith (3:9);

Our sins were removed and punished:

As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.

Psalm 103:12

And I will remember their sins no more.

Hebrews 8:12; 10:17

- 2) He lives that we might enjoy the power of His resurrection (3:10, 11).
- 3) He has promised to reveal His will to us (3:15), and His rules of conduct (3:15-19).

Philippians 4

- 1] Therefore, my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, *my* dearly beloved.

These words bridge the great doctrinal statements of the previous chapter with the intensely practical chapter that concludes Paul’s epistle.

“...stand fast.” A military term. Holding the ground that He has conquered!

Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness... etc.

Ephesians 6:11-14

A Glimpse of Unseen Warfare

Then the king of Syria warred against Israel, and took counsel with his servants, saying, In such and such a place shall be my camp. And the man of God sent unto the king of Israel, saying, Beware that thou pass not such a place; for thither the Syrians are come down. And the king of Israel sent to the place which the man of God told him and warned him of, and saved himself there, not once nor twice. Therefore the heart of the king of Syria was sore troubled for this thing; and he called his servants, and said unto them, Will ye not shew me which of us is for the king of Israel? And one of his servants said, None, my lord, O king: but Elisha, the prophet that is in Israel, telleth the king of Israel the words that thou speakest in thy bedchamber. And he said, Go and spy where he is, that I may send and fetch him. And it was told him, saying, Behold, he is in Dothan. Therefore sent he thither horses, and chariots, and a great host: and they came by night, and compassed the city about. And when the servant of the man of God was risen early, and gone forth, behold, an host compassed the city both with horses and chariots. And his servant said unto him, Alas, my master! how shall we do? And he answered, Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them. And Elisha prayed, and said, LORD, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the LORD opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha.

2 Kings 6:8-23

Ephesians 6:13-20

- 13] Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

“...whole armour...”: Be *completely* armed ἀνθίστημί *anthistemnai*, “to withstand or stand against” (cf. Jam 4:7; 1 Pet 5:9).

Paul’s Armament List

Paul’s detailed description of the armor may stem from being chained to a Roman soldier while in prison awaiting trial (Acts 28:16, 20). Actually, the Holy Spirit is consistent in His use of idioms: these same elements are alluded to in the Old Testament (cf. Isaiah 59:16,17).

- 14] Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;

“What is Truth?” the famed Roman procurator asked cynically. Truth is *our most precious treasure* to be coveted. Truth is the key to success,

fulfillment, victory, or achieving any worthwhile goal. The pursuit of truth is our greatest challenge in any of our endeavors.

“...loins girt about with truth”: The Roman belt was 6-8 in wide; all the body armor and weapons were attached to it. Definition of truth: “when the Word and Deed become one.” The ultimate truth is the fulfillment of God’s promises in His Messiah (Jn 14:6). It was prophesied of Christ that righteousness should be the girdle of his loins and faithfulness the girdle of his reins (Isa 11:5).

“...having on the breastplate of righteousness”: What is your most important stewardship? *Your heart!*

Roman breastplate: Bronze, backed with leather. The breastplate secured the vitals. The breastplate covered *the heart* (Rom 6:13; 14:17; Isa 59:17; James 4:7). *A blow through this was usually decisive.*

- 15] And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;

“...feet shod with the preparation of the gospel”: Shoes, or greaves (often of brass or the like), were part of the military armor. The use of them was to defend the feet against the gall-traps, and obstructions (cf. 1 Sam 17:6). And when you are fighting with swords, your first slip is usually your last! Preparation is the prerequisite to success in any endeavor.

- 16] Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.

“...taking the shield of faith”: Roman shield was 4 ft. x 2½ ft., overlaid with linen and leather, to absorb fiery arrows. The integrity of the shield was essential. The time to plug any holes was *before* the battle. Diligence was the key to proper maintenance.

- 17] And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God:

“...take the helmet of salvation”: The helmet provided protection for the head. The Believer knows ultimate victory is sure. His *assurance* is a critical blessing. One of the most important aspects of our defense against Satan’s most vicious attacks is our firm faith in eternal security—sealed and guaranteed by the Holy Spirit.

“...and the sword of the Spirit”: The Roman *machira*: only 24 in. long, sharpened on both sides. With this revolutionary innovation, they

achieved legendary victories. However, it required *special training* and *extensive practice!* The more typical sword of that day was longer, sharpened on only one edge. It had to be used with cocked arm in a chopping motion. With the doubly sharpened short sword, the Roman legionnaire could duck, catch his enemy off balance, and thrust or cut from any position, winning the engagement at close quarters.

Christ employed this Sword three times when tempted by the devil (Mt 4:1-11). Being hid in the heart (Ps 119:11), God’s Word will preserve us from sin, and will mortify and kill those lusts and corruptions which are latent there.

The Heavy Artillery

One of the most important factors in a military engagement is proper ground support: interdiction, flanking fire, and direct assaults. This goes beyond personal armor. Now we focus on the heavy artillery—with action-at-a-distance—*prayer!*

18] Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;

“Praying always”: As with any supporting fire, coordination is vital! We all need to be supported by Prayer Warriors. In the Greek, “all” occurs four times in this verse. Prayer should be continual, not sporadic: Like reliable soldiers, we are to be keeping diligent, literally, “in all persistence.”

Habitual:	public	&	private
	deliberate	&	spontaneous
	supplication	&	intercession
	confession	&	humiliation
	praise	&	thanksgiving

19] And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel,

20] For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

“...that I may open my mouth boldly”: This recalls Paul’s lengthy discussion of this “mystery of the gospel” (Eph 2:11-3:11). For this reason Paul was an ambassador in bonds (Acts 28:16, 20; Eph 3:1; 4:1; Phil 1:7, 13-14, 16; Col 4:3, 18; Phile 1, 9-10, 13).

Getting Along (with Christians)

“Are all people members of God’s family?” No (cf. John 8:31ff).

The worst kind of lie: self-delusion.

“We be Abraham’s seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, ye shall be made free?”

John 8:33

Never in bondage? Egypt, 400 years; Philistines, Ammonites, Syrians, Babylonians; and Rome, as they spoke... [Parentage? *“We be not born of fornication...”* John 8:41?!]

“Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.”

John 8:44

For God’s children, however, God commands a visible, earthly, unity. Paul’s ultimate example, was, of course, the *kenosis*, that we studied in Chapter 2:5-11.

Philippians 4

2] I beseech Euodias, and beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord.

These two women had been at odds with one another and the disagreement threatened the unity and effectiveness of the church.

3] And I intreat thee also, true yokefellow, help those women which laboured with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and *with* other my fellowlabourers, whose names *are* in the book of life.

“True yokefellow” is masculine in form; probably a reference to Epaphroditus, who has already been described as “my brother, fellow worker, and fellow soldier” (2:25) and who would now carry the letter to Philippi from Rome.

4] Rejoice in the Lord alway: *and* again I say, Rejoice.

“Rejoice”: In addition to working together, we are also commanded to “re-joyce” in the Lord. (We, too often, rather spend our time nitpicking...)

“Rejoice” is a variant of the word “joy,” one the great Christian virtues, a supernatural fruit of the Spirit of God. It is in contrast to “happiness” which is a virtue of the world, entirely external, and circumstantial. Joy issues from the nature of God.

5] Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord *is* at hand.

“...moderation”: “Forbearing” (NASB); “Gentleness” (NIV).

The Meaning of Prayer

Few doctrines are more generally misunderstood than true prayer. Does prayer change things? Does God change His mind as the result of believing prayer? Or does God move us to pray?

What does it mean “to pray without ceasing?” Who can pray? How do you pray? Any why should a person pray anyway? [In any gathering of God’s people, these questions are likely to generate different and even contradictory answers!]

Prayer is talking with God. It is exclusively for believers only. The only prayer God hears and answers is one that is made through His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ:

Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

John 14:6

He is not one way among several: He is the *only* way. As in all conversations, we must know people well before our conversations can really flow freely. Learn about Him. Spend time with Him.

Barriers to Prayer

Clinging to some sin in your heart:

If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me:

Psalm 66:18

Behold, the LORD’S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.

Isaiah 59:1, 2

Too soiled to present yourself before the throne? Remember the “Christian’s Bar of Soap:”

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

1 John 1:9

Pray for *others*: it is called “intercession.” It is the heavy artillery in the armory of God.

We never know when the Spirit may move us to hold up a brother or sister in time of need. And we are inevitably astonished to discover the implications of what may seem but a whisper before the Throne Room of the Universe...

[Trish, a neighbor who was visiting New Zealand, during the Sunday church service became overwhelmed with the need to pray for my wife Nancy. When returning to the U.S., and comparing notes with her, we realized that during that church service in New Zealand, it was 5 P.M., Saturday, August 1, in the U.S.: *the very time that our firstborn son, Chip, died from a stroke while jogging....*¹]

A must verse for memorization:

6] Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.

“...careful”= anxious. This is God’s cure for anxiety. Experts tell us that stress is one of the most destructive forces in the human predicament.

“Worry is assuming a responsibility that God didn’t intend for you to have.”

“Worry is a trickle of fear passing through the mind which soon cuts a crevice so deep that it drains all other thoughts away.”

“Every thing”= there is nothing trivial between you and your Father.

7] And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

That doesn’t promise that we will receive what we ask for. God knows our real needs better than we do. We must remember to praise God for the prayers that He *doesn’t* answer! (That is often one of the more dramatic discoveries we make during a high school reunion...!)

And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

Romans 8:28

Remember Paul's prayer in Romans 15:

That I may be delivered from them that do not believe in Judaea; and that my service which I have for Jerusalem may be accepted of the saints; That I may come unto you with joy by the will of God, and may with you be refreshed.

Romans 15:31, 32

Paul was in Corinth and was about to go on to Jerusalem with the collection from the Gentile churches. After that he had planned to travel to Rome as an ambassador for the Gospel. And he asked for three things:

- 1) "That I may be delivered from them that do not believe in Judaea";
- 2) "That my service which I have for Jerusalem may be accepted of the saints";
- 3) That I may come unto you with joy by the will of God, and may with you be refreshed."

Were these requests fulfilled? Not as he expected.

- 1) He was delivered—and then protected—with a two-year imprisonment at Caesarea.
- 2) His reception in Jerusalem was hardly what he had hoped for.
- 3) His joyous journey to Rome was at government expense as a prisoner in chains. It was with joy and by the will of God; but he was hardly refreshed by the reception of the believers there. But he *did* have the peace of God as promised.

God's Rules for the Doubtful Things

Can a Christian drink alcohol or not? Can a Christian go to a dance? Can he enter politics? Can he work for a company that manufactures war materials? To what extent can a believer adopt the standards of his times and society? There are three principles which should assist in 99% of the situations:

- 1) Avoid Legalism:

For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.

Romans 6:14

Even Peter fell into this trap; Paul remonstrated him (Gal 2:11-14); and he later defended the case for liberty at the Council (Acts 15:10-11). At the same time, avoid the error of license (Rom 6:15); grace leads to holiness (6:22).

- 2) All Things are Not Expedient:

All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.

1 Corinthians 6:12

All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not.

1 Corinthians 10:23

That does not require us, however, to attempt to live our entire lives on what some others may say or think. That will lead to hypocrisy, schizophrenia, and madness. And, here, Philippians 4:8:

- 3) The Better Things

- 8] Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things *are* honest, whatsoever things *are* just, whatsoever things *are* pure, whatsoever things *are* lovely, whatsoever things *are* of good report; if *there be* any virtue, and if *there be* any praise, think on these things.

What makes this verse remarkable is the virtues mentioned here are *pagan* virtues! These words do not occur in the great lists of Christian virtues: love, joy, peace, patience, et al. They are taken from Greek ethics and from Greek philosophers. Fellowship with God does not *necessarily* exclude the best values the *world* has to offer. We *can* thrive on beauty in music, art, architecture, literature, etc.

- 9] Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you.

"...do": That's a personal imperative!

A Church Concerned

- 10] But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at the last your care of me hath flourished again; wherein ye were also careful, but ye lacked opportunity.

After a lapse of 10 years, their loyalty to Paul again results in their giving—despite their own meager resources. Epaphroditus was dispatched to Rome with their gifts.

11] Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, *therewith* to be content.

[Which proves Paul is not a Texan.]

12] I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.

Doing whatever it takes.

13] I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

14] Notwithstanding ye have well done, that ye did communicate with my affliction.

15] Now ye Philippians know also, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only.

“...but ye only”: How illuminating it is to observe from where our real loyalties endure...

16] For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity.

17] Not because I desire a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound to your account.

18] But I have all, and abound: I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things *which were sent* from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, wellpleasing to God.

The God Who Provides

The Precious Promises!

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

John 3:16

And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

Romans 8:28

I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.

John 10:9

My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.

John 10:27-28

Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

Philippians 4:6,7

And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us:

And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.

1 John 5:14-15

and, here, Philippians 4:19:

19] But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

My God. All your need. Greatest need? Forgiveness. And Fellowship.

20] Now unto God and our Father *be* glory for ever and ever. Amen.

21] Salute every saint in Christ Jesus. The brethren which are with me greet you.

22] All the saints salute you, chiefly they that are of Caesar's household.

“...they that are of Caesar's household”: That's revealing! We can only speculate on this one. Certainly a significant percentage of the Praetorians that were chained to Paul for an entire shift at a time! Can you imagine!

23] The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you all. Amen.
<To the Philippians written from Rome, by Epaphroditus.>

Apparently as an amanuensis: use of professionals...

Epaphroditus devoted himself to the ministry beyond his physical powers; the exertion was too great and he lost his health and almost his life. His convalescence was succeeded by homesickness. He was depressed by the thought that the Philippians would have heard of his critical state, and was anxious to return to allay their fears (Phil 2:25-30).

[He is not to be confused with Epaphras (Col 1:7; 4:12; Phil 23) for although the names are the same, one was a native of Philippi, the other of Corinth.]

Paul is believed to have visited more than once to Philippi and his other Macedonian churches in the interval between his first and second captivities (1 Tim 1:3).

* * *

Notes:

1. Noted in our book, *Faith in the Night Seasons*.

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