

Philippians

Nine Lessons From God's Word

Rejoice in the Lord Always!

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Introduction

God's word is perfect, but men are fallible. If you find any errors in these lessons or have suggestions to improve them, please contact me at allan@biblestudyguide.org.

This series of lessons is a general overview of Philippians. My intention in this series is to give a general explanation of the text and some general application. Then, there are questions at the end of each lesson for review and discussion.

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Philippians 1:1-11

Introduction to Philippians

Author: Paul (Phil. 1:1).

Date: Philippians was probably written between A.D. 61 and A.D. 63 during Paul's two-year imprisonment in Rome (Acts 28:11f). Note the references in Philippians suggesting his imprisonment:

- Phil. 1:13 the palace guard.
- Phil. 1:7, 13-14, 16 chains (imprisonment).
- Phil. 4:22 Caesar's household.

Philippi: Philippi was a principle city of Macedonia (Acts 16:12) located on the banks of the Gangites River about ten miles from Neapolis. The city was founded by Philip of Macedon (father of Alexander the Great) which he named for himself.

The church in Philippi: The church began during Paul's second missionary journey during which he and Silas were imprisoned in Philippi (Acts 16:16-29). Before their imprisonment, Lydia and her household were baptized (Acts 16:15). After their imprisonment, the jailer and his household were baptized (Acts 16:33).

Central theme: Rejoice (Phil. 3:1; 4:4). See notes Phil. 3:1.

Paul's purpose in writing this epistle:

- Phil. 1:9-11 instructions about spiritual growth.
- Phil. 1:12-26; 4:10-20 communicate his present condition of imprisonment and thank them for their gifts.
- Phil. 1:27-2:11 instructions about unity and striving together.
- Phil. 2:12-18 command obedience.
- Phil. 2:19-30 commend Timothy and Epaphroditus.
- Phil. 3:1-4:12 instructions about joy, peace, and pressing toward the goal.

Greeting

Paul and Timothy served Christ (Phil. 1:1). All Christians are servants of Jesus Christ (Rev. 1:1; 2 Tim. 2:24; cf. 1 Cor. 4:16; 11:1).

The epistle was written to saints in Christ Jesus (Phil. 1:1; cf. Phil. 4:21). A saint is one who has been sanctified, set apart from sin and consecrated to God (i.e., holy). Saints are those who believe (2 Th. 1:10).

Saints are in Christ. We enter into Christ through baptism (Rom. 6:3; 1 Cor. 12:13; Gal. 3:27).

Among the saints were bishops and deacons (Phil. 1:1). The only two offices in the church are bishops and deacons. Men holding these positions must meet specific qualifications (1 Tim. 3:1-13; Tit. 1:5-11). A church with any other church offices is not the Lord's church but a man's church (cf. Col. 2:16-23).

God's grace and peace upon the saints (Phil. 1:2). Note:

- Phil. 1:1 Saints are in Christ.
- God's grace is in Christ (2 Tim. 1:9; 2:1, 10).
- Phil. 4:4-13 Saints have the peace that surpasses understanding through prayer, moral thoughts and living, and strength through Christ.
- Peace is the result of being in contact with God's grace (cf. Phil. 4:5-7, 8-9).

Prayer for the Saints

Paul and Timothy prayed for them all the time (Phil. 1:3-4). This is a reminder for us to be prayerful for the saints. Although Paul was distressed by imprisonment, his heart was filled with joy as he prayed for them (cf. Phil. 4:4-9, 12-13; 1 Th. 5:16-18).

Paul's prayerful joy resulted from their fellowship with him (Phil. 1:5) and his confidence in prayer (Phil. 1:6; cf. Phil. 2:12-13; 1 Jn. 5:14-15). We can be joyous in prayer for the same reasons Paul was joyous (cf. Phil. 4:4-9; 1 Th. 5:16-22; Ja. 5:13).

The Philippians had fellowship in the gospel with Paul (Phil. 1:5). Their fellowship (participation) in the gospel with Paul was through their financial support (Phil. 4:14-18). They also had further fellowship with Paul and all the apostles as they continued steadfastly in the apostles doctrine (Acts 2:42; 1 Jn. 1:1-3, 6-7).

God had begun the work at Philippi and would complete (perfect) it until the day of Christ (Phil. 1:6). God's fellow workers plant and water the seed, but He gives the increase (1 Cor. 3:5-7; cf. Matt. 13:1-23). Therefore, God begins and sustains the work (cf. Phil. 2:13).

God continues His work until the day of Christ (1 Tim. 2:3-4; 2 Pet. 3:9). The day of Christ is the day in which Jesus appears and the saints appear with Him (Col. 3:1-4; 2 Th. 1:6-10).

The Philippians were partakers with Paul of grace (Phil. 1:7). In general, they partook (shared, had fellowship) with Paul's grace in preaching the gospel (Eph. 3:8; Phil. 1:5) and in salvation (Eph. 2:8-10; 2 Tim. 2:1, 10).

Paul longed for them with the affection of Jesus Christ (Phil. 1:8). Jesus' affection toward us is His sympathetic care and concern for our souls. He died on the cross (Phil. 2:5-8) and serves as our Advocate upon God's throne (1 Jn. 2:1-2). Therefore we should have affection toward one another and thus serve one another (Rom. 12:9-16; 15:1-6) being unified in the same mind (Phil. 2:1-4; Rom. 15:6; Eph. 4:1-6;

5:15-21).

Love abounds in knowledge and all discernment (Phil. 1:9). Love, in Phil. 1:9, is the *agape* love (doing good toward another from a mental conviction). Here, knowledge is *top-knowledge, exact knowledge, full knowledge*. Discernment is *perception, discernment, judgment*.

Love abounds more and more as we grow in knowledge through God's word and as we exercise discernment between good and evil. We grow through proper application of God's word (1 Th. 5:21-22; 1 Tim. 4:7; Heb. 5:14) becoming skilled in the word of righteousness (cf. Heb. 5:13-14).

The result of having a love that abounds more and more (Phil. 1:10-11):

- Phil. 1:10 We approve the things that are excellent (cf. Phil. 1:27; 4:8-9) having tested them with godly knowledge and discernment.
- Phil. 1:10 We remain sincere and without offense till the day of Christ through godly knowledge and discernment. We remain faithful until death (Rev. 2:10).
- Phil. 1:11 We are filled with the fruits of righteousness (cf. Ja. 3:18). The fruits of righteousness are the things which we approve through godly knowledge and discernment (cf. Gal. 5:16-26; Eph. 5:6-12).
- Phil. 1:11 Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, we glorify and praise God (Phil. 2:11; 4:20). When filled with the fruits of righteousness, our conduct is worthy of the gospel of Christ (Phil. 1:27).

Study Questions

1. Who did Paul and Timothy serve? Who should we serve?
2. To whom did Paul write the epistle? Who is a saint and how does he become a saint?
3. What church offices are approved by God? Who may fill the offices?
4. Who has God's grace and peace? How and why does he have them?
5. What can we learn about prayer from Paul's prayer for the Philippians?
6. What fellowship did the Philippians have with Paul? How do we have fellowship with the apostles today?

7. What is the day of Jesus?
8. How were the Philippians partakers of grace with Paul? How are we partakers of God's grace?
9. What is the affection of Jesus Christ? Should we have the affection of Jesus Christ toward one another?
10. How does love abound more and more?
11. What is the result of having a love that abounds more and more?
12. What are the fruits of righteousness? How are we filled with them? Why is God glorified when we are filled with the fruits of righteousness?

Philippians 1:12-30

Paul's Preaching

I want you to know brethren (Phil. 1:12-14):

- the things that happened to me turned out for furtherance of the gospel.
- it became evident to all that my chains were in Christ.
- most brethren became confident by my chains.

Paul exemplifies the good which comes from suffering (Rom. 8:28; cf. Phil. 1:29-30). The gospel is often furthered through our suffering providing an opportunity to spread the gospel and encourage brethren. Our example of patiently enduring trials encourages confidence and boldness among brethren resulting in the preaching and teaching of truth without fear (cf. Phil. 1:28; Matt. 10:27-31).

Two motives of people preaching Christ (Phil. 1:15-17):

- envy and strife, selfish ambition, and insincerity.
- good will and love.

Paul rejoiced in the preaching of Christ (Phil. 1:18). Whatever the motive for the preaching of Christ, Paul rejoiced (even at the cost of personal harm). Likewise, we too should rejoice in trials when suffering (Rom. 5:1-5; 8:28; Ja. 1:2-5; 1 Pet. 3:14; 4:12-19).

Paul's Expectation and Hope

Paul's expectation and hope were of salvation (deliverance, Phil. 1:19-20). Living faithfully in Christ, we have one hope upon which every decision and desire is based - eternal life (Tit. 1:2; 3:7-8). Thus, Christ was magnified in Paul's body since he was faithfully living in Christ.

"Magnify" (exalt) means *to enlarge*. Paul magnified (i.e., enlarged, showed forth) Jesus Christ and His gospel in every situation.

We have been crucified with Christ (Gal. 2:20; cf. Gal. 5:24; 6:14). Christ lives in us through faith in Him (Gal. 2:20; cf. 2 Cor. 5:7). Therefore, we magnify Christ in our body (cf. 1 Cor. 6:15-20) by faithfully living in Him (cf. Lk. 1:46; Acts 19:17).

Paul's Conflicting Desires

To live is Christ, to die is gain (Phil. 1:21-23). By living, Paul magnified Christ to the people of the world. But, in death Paul would gain the attainment of perfection, the prize, and thus no longer have to

press on through the struggles of mortal life (Phil. 3:12-14; cf. 2 Cor. 5:6-10; 2 Tim. 4:6-8).

The choice (life or death) would be difficult if Paul was faced with making it for himself. Fortunately, none of us are faced with deciding whether to continue working on earth or going to be with the Lord.

By continuing to live in the flesh, Paul would continue to be fruitful in his labor. Therefore, it was needful for him to remain in the flesh (Phil. 1:24).

To remain in the flesh is more needful (Phil. 1:24-26). Other people benefitted from Paul's life in the flesh. This is true for all who faithfully live in Christ since we all have work to do (Eph. 4:16).

Conduct Worthy of the Gospel

Let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ (Phil. 1:27-28). A Christian's conduct is worthy of the gospel of Christ when he strives (i.e., labors, toils) for the faith of the gospel (Phil. 1:27; cf. Jude 3). Faith comes by hearing God's word (Rom. 10:17) and demands our obedience (Rom. 5:1; 6:17; 16:26; Heb. 5:9; 11:8). When we diligently labor to obey God's word, our conduct is worthy of the gospel of Christ (cf. 2 Pet. 1:3-4, 5-11).

A congregation's conduct is worthy of the gospel of Christ as each member strives together for the faith in one spirit and with one mind (cf. Eph. 4:1-6). Therefore, unity is based solely on God's word since faith comes from hearing God's word (Rom. 10:17) and necessitates obedience (Heb. 5:9; 11:1f).

When our conduct is worthy of the gospel of Christ, we should not be terrified (alarmed) by our adversaries (Phil. 1:28; cf. Eph. 6:10-18; Matt. 10:28-31).

"Terrified" (alarmed) only appears here in the New Testament and is used in secular literature as the terror of a startled horse. The lack of terror (fearful alarm) is proof (i.e., a sign) of our salvation and of our adversaries' destruction. It sends a clear message to Satan, his ministers (cf. 2 Cor. 11:15), and his children (cf. 1 Jn. 3:10). Our strength is from God (Phil. 2:12-13; cf. Rom. 1:17; 1 Th. 2:13; Eph. 3:14-21; 1 Jn. 4:17-5:5).

Granted to believe in Christ and suffer for His sake (Phil. 1:29-30). The grace of God has appeared to all men (Tit. 2:11; Col. 1:6, 23). Therefore, all men are granted to believe in Christ (cf. 1 Tim. 2:3-4; 2 Pet. 3:9).

All who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution (2 Tim. 3:12). Therefore, those who believe are granted to suffer for Christ's sake (cf. 1 Pet. 3:14; 4:12-19).

Study Questions

1. What did Paul want the Philippians to know about his imprisonment? What good did it bring about?
2. What lessons do we learn from Paul's suffering?
3. With what two motives were people preaching Christ? What was Paul's attitude toward their preaching?
4. What were Paul's expectation and hope? What should be our expectation and hope?
5. How was Christ magnified (exalted) in Paul's body? How is Christ magnified in our bodies?
6. Explain, "to live is Christ, to die is gain."
7. What were Paul's conflicting desires? In what way might we have the same conflicting desires?
8. What advantage was there for Paul to remain in the flesh? How is this advantage applicable to us today?
9. How is our conduct worthy of the gospel of Christ - individually and as a congregation?
10. Upon what was the Philippians' unity to be based? Upon what is unity of every church of Christ based?
11. When we are not terrified in any way of our adversaries, what does it prove (i.e., signify)?
12. What did God grant to the Philippians? In what way are we granted the same things?

Philippians 2:1-11

Characteristics of Unity

Therefore (Phil. 2:1): Paul's plea for like-mindedness (unity) is based upon having conduct worthy of the gospel and striving together for the faith (Phil. 1:27). Christians cannot be unified without their conduct being worthy of the gospel of Christ. And, we cannot have a conduct worthy of the gospel of Christ without being unified.

Paul's plea for like-mindedness is based on (Phil. 2:1):

- **encouragement (consolation, exhortation) in Christ.** Christ's example of humble service (Phil. 2:5-8) teaches us humble like-minded service to our brethren (Phil. 2:2-4).
- **comfort (consolation) of love.** The result of love (agape, doing good from a mental conviction) is comfort and consolation. Because of God's love, He sent Jesus into the world for our salvation (Jn. 3:16). Because we love God, we obey Him and do not fear judgment (1 Jn. 4:17-18; 5:3). As brethren, we are unified by having the same love for one another (Phil. 2:2; cf. Rom. 12:10). In all of this, the result of love is comfort and consolation.
- **fellowship of the Spirit.** Fellowship is sharing (joint-participation). Christians jointly participate in the Spirit (cf. Eph. 4:1-6) as they walk in the Spirit thus bearing the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:16-26; Rom. 8:1-17). The Spirit speaks through God's written word (2 Pet. 1:19-21; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; cf. Acts 1:16; Heb. 3:7). Fellowship of the Spirit demands unity as commanded by God in His word.
- **affection and compassion (mercy).** God and Jesus have affection and compassion for us (cf. Phil. 1:8); therefore, we should have affection and compassion on one another with like-minded love (Phil. 2:2; 2 Pet. 1:7).

Characteristics of a unified church are (Phil. 2:2):

- **being like-minded (being of the same mind).** Literally the phrase means, "think the same thing." A group of Christians think the same thing by having the same love for one another and being of one accord (one in spirit). For example, once a lawful decision is made by a congregation, each member abides by the decision without murmuring and disputing (Phil. 2:14).
- **having the same love for each other.** Love here is agape (doing good from a mental conviction). Our conviction must be unprejudicial goodness toward each brother while watching out for each others' interests (Phil. 2:3-4; cf. Rom. 12:9-16; Ja. 2:1f).
- **being of one accord (being one is spirit).** The congregation, as a whole, acts as a single body and spirit (cf. 1 Cor. 1:10; 11:17-19).
- **having one mind (intent on one purpose).** Brethren who think the same thing are of one mind. They are unified in love and spirit; therefore, they work together with singularity of mind.

The Philippians' like-minded unity would fulfill (i.e., complete) Paul's joy.

Each Christian has a personal responsibility to maintain unity (cf. Eph. 4:3, 16). Divisive brethren must be

rejected after the first and second admonition (Tit. 3:9-11; cf. 2 Th. 3:6, 14). Since unity is based upon faith of the gospel (Phil. 1:27), doctrine can never be compromised. Unity resulting from compromised doctrine is secular unity and forbidden by God (cf. 1 Cor. 1:10; 3:1-4; 11:17-19; Col. 2:18-23).

Characteristics of individual Christians are (Phil. 2:3-4):

- **not selfish (selfish ambition, strife, faction).** The literal meaning denotes a person employing factious methods to meet his personal desires. Therefore, this person is selfish, willing to divide the body of Christ for the sake of getting his way. Brethren cannot be selfish and be unified.
- **not conceited (empty conceit).** The literal meaning is vainglory. A person employing factious methods to meet his personal desires is motivated by bringing glory upon himself. Such glory is vain and sinful. Christians glorify God, not themselves (Phil. 1:11; 2:11; 4:20).
- **having humility of mind, esteeming other Christians as more important than self.** Humility is the attitude Christ possessed in coming to earth and dying on the cross (Phil. 2:8). We must be humble to be saved (Ja. 4:6; 1 Pet. 5:5). A humble person considers the welfare of others more important than any personal opinion and would not divide the body of Christ for the sake of getting his own way (cf. Rom. 14:1f; 1 Cor. 10:23f).
- **looking out not only for personal interests, but also for the interests of others.** A Christian with the humility of Christ will look out for the interests of his brethren (Eph. 4:1-3; Col. 3:12-15; cf. Rom. 15:1-3; 1 Cor. 9:19-23; Phil. 2:5-8).

These individual characteristics are necessary for a Christian to be a member of a locally unified congregation. A Christian without these qualities will be divisive; therefore, he will eventually be rejected (Tit. 3:9-11; cf. 2 Th. 3:6, 14).

The first two characteristics are stated in the negative and the last two are stated in the positive. The first two express the opposite of the last two characteristics. A selfish and conceited person does not have a humble mind to esteem other Christians above himself while looking out for the interests of others. We should note that many (if not all) divisions of the body of Christ relate back to brethren not having the proper attitude necessary to preserve unity, namely humility.

Humility

Let this attitude (mind) be in you which was also in Christ (Phil. 2:5). Jesus exemplifies the attitude we must have to be saved (1 Pet. 2:21) and to preserve unity (Eph. 4:1f), namely humble obedience (Phil. 2:8; Heb. 5:7-8, 9; cf. Ja. 4:6; 1 Pet. 5:5).

To obtain and nurture the mind of Christ within ourselves, we must:

- obey God's word (Col. 3:17; 2 Jn. 9). Jesus is God (Jn. 1:1; Phil. 2:6). God's mind is revealed in His word (1 Cor. 2:10-12).
- grow and mature by feeding on God's word (1 Pet. 2:1-3), exercising our senses (Heb. 5:9, 12f), having replaced the old man of sin with the new man in Christ (Eph. 4:17-6:20; Col. 2:11-

4:6; Gal. 5:7-6:10).

- continually grow and mature (Phil. 1:9-11; 1 Tim. 4:7; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; Heb. 5:11f).

Before coming to earth, Jesus was in the form of God and equal to God (Phil. 2:6). Jesus was the Word (Jn. 1:1-2, 14). He is Creator (Jn. 1:3; Col. 1:16-17; Heb. 1:2) and Sustainer (Col. 1:17; Heb. 1:3) of all things. Jesus is the image of the invisible God (Col. 1:15; cf. Jn. 1:18).

Jesus did not consider equality with God a thing to be grasped (i.e., robbery) (Phil. 2:6). Jesus did not consider His equality with God something so important that He would rather grasp it (i.e., not let it go) than come to earth for our salvation. Fortunately, Jesus valued our salvation above being equal with God; thus, He emptied Himself taking the form of a servant in the likeness of a man. This expresses Christ's humility (Phil. 2:8) and His love for sinful man (Jn. 15:13; Eph. 5:2; cf. Rev. 3:19; Tit. 3:4-5).

To come to earth and save us from sin, Jesus (Phil. 2:7-8):

- **emptied Himself (made Himself of no reputation, nothing).** For Jesus to take the form of a servant and come in the likeness of man, He had to divest (empty, self-empty) Himself of qualities which He had previously possessed as being equal with God. God does not communicate the manner by which Jesus emptied Himself or the specific qualities that were emptied. Hence, speculation of such particulars is vain (1 Pet. 4:11; 1 Cor. 2:10f).
- **took the form of a servant (bond-servant, slave).** Before coming to earth, Jesus was in the form of God. Coming to earth, He took the form of a servant (i.e., slave). Jesus was not literally a slave on earth, but Jesus took on the role of a slave in His service to God (Phil. 2:8) and us (Lk. 22:27; Rom. 15:3; Eph. 5:2; cf. Jn. 13:1f).
- **was made in the likeness of men.** Jesus was "like" men (cf. Heb. 4:15), but He was not exactly the same since He retained His deity (Jn. 8:58; 10:30; 14:20; 17:21) as the Son of God (Matt. 16:16, 27; 26:63-64) while living in the flesh.
- **appeared (fashioned) as a man.** "Fashioned" (appearance) denotes the outward appearance of Jesus - to human eyes He looked like any other man (Is. 53:2).
- **humbled Himself becoming obedient to death, even death on a cross.** Jesus humbled Himself leaving heaven and coming to earth in the form of a servant. Then, he humbled Himself to die a miserable and humiliating death on the cross. At the time of His death, He offered up prayers and supplications, with vehement cries and tears to God (Heb. 5:7). But though He was God's Son, He learned obedience by the things He suffered (Heb. 5:8). He did all of this so that He could become the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him (Heb. 5:9).

It was necessary for Jesus to come in the flesh in order to condemn sin in the flesh and fulfill the righteous requirement of the law (Rom. 8:3-4; cf. Col. 2:13-14) tasting death for everyone (Heb. 2:9). Therefore, we are free from the law of sin and death in Christ (Rom. 8:1-2; cf. Heb. 9:11-22) having a compassionate High Priest (Heb. 4:14-15) who intercedes for us (Heb. 7:25) being the propitiation for our sins (Rom. 3:25; Heb. 2:17; 1 Jn. 2:1-2).

Jesus' attitude in doing all of this was humble obedience (Phil. 2:8). The result of having the same attitude as Christ is humble obedience (Heb. 5:7-8, 9) that abounds more and more in love (Phil. 1:9-11). The result in the church is unity (Phil. 2:1-5).

After dying on the cross, Jesus was given the name which is above every name (Phil. 2:9). Having the name above all others, Jesus has the rights and privileges afforded the One of highest rank. He has all authority (Matt. 28:18). God, having put all things under Jesus' feet, made Him Head over all things to the church (Eph. 1:20-23; cf. 1 Cor. 15:20-28) giving Him authority over judgment (Jn. 5:24-30; 12:48; 14:6; Rom. 14:10; 2 Cor. 5:10).

Therefore, we must obey Jesus (Heb. 5:9; Gal. 6:2; 2 Jn. 9). We only have access to God and eternal life through Jesus (Jn. 14:6; 16:26-27; Eph. 2:14-18; 3:11-12; Heb. 4:14-16).

At the name of Jesus, every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess that Jesus is Lord (Phil. 2:10-11). Bowing the knee denotes proper recognition and respect for authority. Jesus has all authority (Matt. 28:18); therefore, we must obey Him to be saved (Heb. 5:9). Everything we do must be in accordance with His will (Col. 3:17).

God has ordained that Jesus has authority over every realm of existence (Eph. 1:20-23); therefore, every creature in every realm must recognize and respectfully submit (i.e., bow the knee) to His authority.

Confession that Jesus is Lord is admission of His authority. Our submission to the authority which we confess with our mouths is evident in all that we say and do. We must confess Jesus before men to be saved (Matt. 10:32-33; cf. Rom. 10:8-10).

Although many refuse to respectfully submit to Christ's authority on earth, every knee will bow and every tongue shall confess on the day of judgment (Rom. 14:10-12; 2 Cor. 5:10).

Confession that Jesus is Lord glorifies God (Phil. 2:11). When we acknowledge that Jesus is Lord, God is glorified. Such verbal acknowledgment without obedience to Him is vain worship (Matt. 15:8-9).

Study Questions

1. How and why are Christians like-mindedly unified?
2. What are the characteristics of a unified church? Explain each characteristic.
3. What are the characteristics of a Christian who is unified with his brethren? Explain each characteristic.
4. What attitude (mind) should we have? How do we obtain and nurture that attitude?

5. What was Jesus' position before coming to earth? What was His attitude toward His position?
6. What did Jesus do so that He could come to earth and save us from our sins?
7. What attitude (mind) was in Jesus? What is the result of having this same attitude?
8. What was Jesus given after dying on the cross?
9. What does having "the name which is above every name" mean? What does this tell us about Jesus?
10. At whose name should every knee bow? What will every tongue confess? When and where will it happen?
11. Who is glorified by our confession? When is the confession vain?

Philippians 2:12-18

Obey, Work Out Your Own Salvation

Therefore (Phil. 2:12): The importance of working out our own salvation extends beyond the self interest of eternal life. We must also consider the great price Jesus paid to leave heaven, live as a man, and die on the cross as a motivating factor in our obedience (1 Cor. 6:20; 1 Pet. 1:18-19). Therefore, we owe Him our love and devotion (cf. Rom. 12:1-2; 1 Jn. 4:19) knowing that God will take vengeance on those who do not obey the gospel of Christ (2 Th. 1:6-10; Heb. 10:26-31).

Obey, work out your own salvation (Phil. 2:12). To obey, we must work out our own salvation. Although God works in us (Phil. 2:13), we must take personal responsibility for our salvation (cf. Acts 17:11-12) and work through the particulars in our life to obey God. Here, Paul expressly contradicts the doctrines of:

- **salvation by faith only.** This doctrine teaches that no work is necessary to be saved, just faith. If this doctrine is correct, a man does not have to "work" out his own salvation (cf. Jn. 6:28-29; Ja. 2:24, 26).
- **salvation by grace only.** This doctrine teaches that God's grace alone saves and that it is contacted without baptism into Christ. If this doctrine is correct, a man does not have to "work" out his own salvation and be baptized into Christ (cf. Rom. 6:3; Gal. 3:27; 2 Tim. 1:9; 2:1, 10).
- **baptism and prayer for the salvation of the dead.** These doctrines teach that a living person can be baptized for a dead person who is lost. Similar doctrines teach that a living person can pray for the salvation of a dead person who is lost in sin. If this doctrine is correct, a man does not have to "work" out his own salvation but it can be worked out by other people after he is dead.
- **Calvinism (see below).** Four of Calvinism's five doctrines of salvation are disproved in Phil. 2:12.

Doctrines of Calvinism disproved by Phil. 2:12:

- **Unconditional Election (Predestination):** This doctrine teaches that God has predestined (before the foundation of the world) those who will be saved. If this doctrine is correct, a man does not have to work out his own salvation. If God has chosen a person to be saved, he will be saved without having to work out his own salvation.
- **Limited Atonement:** This doctrine teaches that Christ died only for those who had been predestined. If this doctrine is correct, a man cannot work out his own salvation. If God has not predestined him to be saved, it is impossible for him to be saved - no matter what.
- **Infallible Grace (Irresistible Grace):** This doctrine teaches that the Holy Spirit operates directly upon those who have been predestined to convert them. If this doctrine is correct, a man does not have to work out his own salvation. The Holy Spirit works out this person's salvation - the person does not work it out.
- **Perseverance of the Saints:** This doctrine teaches that it is impossible for the elect (the predestined) to fall away once they have been converted. If this doctrine is correct, it does not

matter whether Christians work out their own salvation or not, God will save them anyway.

With fear and trembling (Phil. 2:12): Not terror (Phil. 1:28), but healthy reverential fear and respect in watchful obedience to God (cf. Ec. 12:13-14). Without fear and trembling, we will not have the humble concern (1 Cor. 10:12) and watchfulness (cf. Matt. 24:36-25:46) for our souls to obediently serve God (2 Cor. 7:15; Eph. 6:5; Heb. 5:9).

The result of understanding the vengeful terror of the Lord (2 Cor. 5:10-11; 2 Th. 1:6-10; Heb. 10:26-31) is fear and trembling.

For it is God who works in you (Phil. 2:13). "Work" means *to effectually work, to be active, to produce effect*. God effectually works in us through His word (1 Th. 2:13; cf. Rom. 1:16-17).

God gives us the energy and ability to obey Him. Thus, we have the ability to work out our own salvation (Phil. 2:12). The gospel is God's power unto salvation to everyone who believes (Rom. 1:16-17; cf. 1 Th. 2:13). If we do not obey God, it is not because we do not have the ability but because we do not have a genuine faith working through love (Gal. 5:6, 16-26; cf. Ja. 2:19-26).

The Greek word translated "work" appears only here in Philippians, but note Paul's use of it elsewhere:

- 1 Th. 2:13 The word of God effectually works in us (cf. Rom. 1:16-17).
- Gal. 5:6 Faith works through love.
- Eph. 1:11 In Christ we obtain an inheritance according to the purpose of God who works all things according to His counsel and will (cf. Eph. 3:10-12).
- Eph. 3:20 God is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us. God works in us by strengthening the spirit in the inner man through faith (cf. Rom. 10:17; 1 Th. 2:13), being rooted and grounded in love, and by knowing the love of Christ which passes knowledge (Eph. 3:16-19).
- Col. 1:29 Paul labored, striving according to God's working in Him. Note that God's work in us does not remove our responsibility to labor (cf. Eph. 2:10).

Hold Fast the Word of Life

Do all things without grumbling (murmuring) and disputing (Phil. 2:14-15). Grumbling and disputing are signs of dissatisfaction with God and His work (cf. Ex. 17:1-16; Num. 11:1-5; 16:41; Jn. 7:32). They are sin. They tempt Christ (1 Cor. 10:9-11) and are often apparent during suffering (cf. Phil. 1:29).

"Disputing" does not denote reasonable discussion. It denotes the disputes which arise from doubting God. Such disputes result in grumbling (cf. Jn. 7:32f). Such activity is divisive (cf. Phil. 2:1-4).

That you may be blameless, innocent (harmless), above reproach (without fault), shine as lights (Phil. 2:15). This communicates the importance of doing all things without grumbling and disputing. If we are grumbling and disputing, we are living in sin and not accomplishing God's work in the kingdom.

Blameless: *without fault, without blemish.* Blameless Christians have not defiled their garments with sin (cf. Rev. 3:4). They cannot be blamed by others of unfaithfulness to God.

Innocent (harmless): literally, *unmixed.* Innocent (harmless) Christians are guileless, pure, having singleness and simplicity of mind (cf. 2 Cor. 11:3). They are sincerely happy and content to obey God in whatever state they may be (cf. Phil. 4:12-13).

Above reproach (without fault): One who is blameless and harmless is without fault.

Shine as lights: The result of living above reproach in a crooked and perverse generation (Matt. 5:13-16) is shining as lights. The result of being shining lights is the glorification of God (Matt. 5:16; cf. Phil. 1:11; 2:11; 4:20).

In the midst of a crooked and perverse generation (Phil. 2:15): All that is in the world (the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life) are not of the Father. Satan's children love the world and do not practice righteousness (1 Jn. 2:16; 3:10).

The people of the world are crooked and perverse not walking on the straight and narrow pathway of righteousness (cf. Matt. 7:13-14; Heb. 10:26-39; 12:12-17; 1 Pet. 2:21-25). Therefore, Christians shine as lights in contrast to the crooked and perverse world in which they live (cf. Jn. 15:18-21; Eph. 5:8-17).

Hold fast (hold forth) the word of life (Phil. 2:16). One who is blameless, innocent, above reproach, and a shining light is holding fast the word of life.

Hold fast (forth): means *to hold upon, to attend, to retain,* and denotes taking heed (cf. Acts 3:5; 1 Tim. 4:16). We must take heed to live according to the word of life (cf. Col. 2:19) which is the gospel (Rom. 1:16; cf. Ps. 119:50; Jn. 1:1-5; 5:24; 14:6; Acts 13:46, 48; 1 Jn. 1:1). We must obey the gospel to be saved and receive eternal life (Heb. 5:9; 2 Th. 1:8-10; cf. 1 Pet. 1:2, 22).

Also involved in holding fast (forth) is the idea of presenting to others that which is held. One who holds fast the word of life presents it to others, putting it on display as a shining light. Thus, the church is the pillar and ground of the truth (1 Tim. 3:14-15).

That I may rejoice in the day of Christ (Phil. 2:16-17): If the Philippians had not held fast to the word of life, Paul could not have rejoiced with them in the day of Christ. Because, they would have been lost. Hence, he would have labored in vain.

This verse (as well as many others) teaches us that we can be lost after having become a Christian (cf. Phil. 3:12-14; 1 Cor. 9:27; Gal. 5:4; 1 Tim. 4:1-3; 5:15; 2 Th. 2:1-3; Heb. 4:11; 5:12-6:8; 10:26-31; 12:15; Ja. 5:19-20; 2 Pet. 1:5-11; 3:17-18).

Rejoice

You also be glad and rejoice with me (Phil. 2:18). Paul's joy in suffering was the salvation of souls. Thus, he asked them to rejoice with him. Likewise, we rejoice when we suffer knowing that it makes us stronger thus helping us attain to eternal life (cf. Rom. 5:1-11; Ja. 1:2-8; 1 Pet. 4:12-19; Phil. 3:12-14).

Holding fast to the word of life, we should rejoice for ourselves and all who are saved (cf. Phil. 3:1, 3; 4:4).

Study Questions

1. Why should we work out our own salvation?
2. What does it mean to work out your own salvation?
3. Which false doctrines are disproved by Phil. 2:12? Why?
4. What does fear and trembling have to do with working out our salvation?
5. Who works in us? Why and how does He work in us?
6. What results in grumbling and disputing?
7. Why should we do all things without grumbling (murmuring) and disputing?
8. How does Paul describe the world in which we live? What are Christians in the world?
9. When do Christians shine as lights? Explain. What results?
10. What is the word of life? How do we hold fast the word of life? Why is it important?
11. Why will Paul rejoice in the day of Christ? How is this applicable to us?

12. Why did Paul rejoice while in prison? Why should we rejoice when suffering?

Philippians 2:19-30

Timothy

Timothy (Phil. 2:19) was evidently converted by Paul (1 Cor. 4:17; 1 Tim. 1:2). He was an evangelist (2 Tim. 4:5) and traveled with Paul on his second (Acts 16:1-3) and third (Acts 20:4) missionary journeys. While Paul was in prison, Timothy ministered to him in addition to doing the work of an evangelist (Phil. 1:1; 2:19, 23). Timothy was preaching in Ephesus at the time Paul wrote First Timothy (1 Tim. 1:3). Timothy was imprisoned for a while after which he continued his evangelistic work (Heb. 13:23).

Paul planned to send Timothy to Philippi shortly (Phil. 2:19-21). By sending Timothy to Philippi:

- Paul would be encouraged upon Timothy's return to Rome by hearing news about the church in Philippi.
- Timothy would sincerely minister to the Philippians.

Since Paul expected to be encouraged by the news he would receive from Timothy, we see Paul's confidence in the Philippians. He fully expected a good report which would encourage him to endure the trials of imprisonment and his apostleship (Phil. 1:19-26; 2:17; cf. 2 Cor. 6:1-10; 11:22-33). Likewise, we should fully expect faithful brethren to remain faithful to God. And we should be, therefore, encouraged by their faithfulness. Unfortunately, some brethren depart from the faith producing great sorrow among their brethren (cf. 1 Tim. 4:1-3; 2 Tim. 3:1-13; 4:2-4).

Timothy sincerely cared for the welfare of the Philippians (cf. Phil. 1:15-17). He would teach and preach the gospel with no other motive than helping them to grow in the Lord (cf. Phil. 2:21-22). Likewise, we should sincerely care for our brethren's welfare (cf. Phil. 2:3-4).

Most people look out for their own best interests, not those of Christ Jesus (Phil. 2:21). This is true of:

- unbelievers. Unbelievers do not obey Christ (Heb. 5:9; 2 Th. 1:8).
- those who insincerely preach Christ from selfish ambition (Phil. 1:15).
- divisive brethren (Phil. 2:3-4).

Faithful Christians seek the things which are of Christ (Phil. 4:8; Col. 3:1-4, 17), not the things of the world (1 Jn. 2:15-17; cf. 1 Jn. 5:3). For faithful Christians, to live is Christ (Phil. 1:21).

Timothy had proven his worth by serving in the furtherance of the gospel with Paul (Phil. 2:22). We all have important work to do in the body of Christ (Eph. 4:16) for furtherance of the gospel.

The result of faithfully living in Christ is having a proven character and worth (cf. Rom. 12:1-2; 2 Cor. 8:8; 13:5; Gal. 6:4).

Paul trusted in the Lord (Phil. 2:19, 24). Paul planned on sending Timothy to them (Phil. 2:19) and personally visiting them (Phil. 2:24). However, his plans were made trusting in the Lord for His will to be

done (cf. Ja. 4:13-17; 2 Cor. 1:15f; Rom. 8:28; Phil. 4:13).

We can do all things through Christ who strengthens us (Phil. 4:13; cf. Eph. 3:14-21). The result of trusting in the Lord is peace (Phil. 4:7).

Epaphroditus

Epaphroditus (Phil. 2:25) is only mentioned in Philippians (Phil. 2:25; 4:18). The church at Philippi sent Epaphroditus to Rome to deliver their gift to Paul (Phil. 4:18). After arriving in Rome, Epaphroditus became ill as a result of his labor for the work of Christ (Phil. 2:25-30).

Paul describes him as a:

- **"brother"** denoting a Christian, a member of Christ's body.
- **"fellow worker"** denoting his work with Paul in the gospel.
- **"fellow soldier"** denoting his work with Paul in the Lord's army. The corporal dangers of preaching were as great as warfare. They were fighting a war against the rulers of darkness (Eph. 6:12).
- **"messenger."** Epaphroditus had delivered their message and gift to Paul (Phil. 4:18).
- **"minister."** Epaphroditus ministered to Paul's need.

Philippians 2:25f implies that Paul sent Epaphroditus back to Philippi with this epistle.

Epaphroditus was longing for them (Phil. 2:26). He longed to be home with his brethren. He was distressed that they had heard he was sick. Likewise, we should miss our brethren when we are apart. And, we should have deep concern for brethren in their troubles (cf. Phil. 2:3-4; Rom. 12:9-16).

Epaphroditus was sick (Phil. 2:27, 30):

- almost unto death (Phil. 2:27).
- for the work of Christ (Phil. 2:30).

God was merciful to Epaphroditus and Paul by sparing Epaphroditus' life (Phil. 2:27). When God answers our prayers and spares a life:

- He is merciful toward the one who was spared.
- He is merciful to those who prayed for Him to spare the life.
- He is merciful to those who would have grieved at the passing of a loved one.

The Philippians would rejoice when seeing Epaphroditus (Phil. 2:28). Especially when one has nearly died from an illness, brethren rejoice when being reunited. In the case of Epaphroditus, he had been their messenger (Phil. 2:25; 4:18) and nearly died working for the Lord on their behalf (Phil. 2:30).

Receive him in the Lord with all joy (gladness, Phil. 2:29). All rejoicing by Christians is in the Lord (Phil. 4:4). We rejoice having the peace of God and for answered prayers (Phil. 3:1; 4:4-7). The

Philippians' prayers had been answered by Epaphroditus' return; therefore, they should rejoice. Likewise, we should rejoice when God answers our prayers.

Hold Epaphroditus in high regard (in esteem, Phil. 2:29-30). Epaphroditus placed greater value in doing the work of Christ than he placed on his own mortal life. All Christians should have the same dedication (Matt. 16:24-26; Lk.14:26-27, 33) and should be held in high regard.

Epaphroditus worked to supply what was lacking in the Philippians' service to Paul. Although the Philippians had sent gifts to Paul (Phil. 4:14-18), some things could not be supplied without someone physically doing the work (cf. Phil. 2:30). Money alone cannot do the work of Christ.

Study Questions

1. Who was Timothy?
2. Why did Paul want to send Timothy to Philippi?
3. What concern did Timothy have for other Christians? If we sincerely care for our brethren, what will we do?
4. How was Timothy different from worldly people? If we are like Timothy, what will be our top priority?
5. What had Timothy proven? What should be proven by every Christian's life?
6. In whom did Paul place his trust? How is this applicable to us today?
7. Who was Epaphroditus? How did Paul describe him? How are these adjectives applicable to Christians today?
8. Why did Paul call Epaphroditus the Philippians' messenger?
9. What was Epaphroditus' attitude toward the Philippians? In what way should we have the same attitude toward brethren?

10. How sick was Epaphroditus? Why was he sick?
11. How was God merciful toward Epaphroditus and Paul? How is this applicable to us today?
12. Why would the Philippians rejoice when seeing Epaphroditus? How is this applicable to us today?
13. How were the Philippians to receive Epaphroditus? How should we receive one another today? Explain.
14. Why were the Philippians to hold Epaphroditus in high regard? Who should we hold in high regard today? Why?
15. Can money alone accomplish the Lord's work? Why?

Philippians 3:1-11

Rejoice in the Lord: Have No Confidence in the Flesh

Finally (Phil. 3:1): This expression is often used by Paul to signal the final exhortations of the epistle (Phil. 4:8; cf. 2 Cor. 13:11; Eph. 6:10). But, when appearing around the middle of the epistle, Paul and Peter use "finally" to identify the central theme of the epistle (1 Th. 4:1; 1 Pet. 3:8).

In Philippians, the central theme is "rejoice" (Phil. 3:1; 4:4). The theme has been developed in Phil. 1:18; 2:16, 17, 18 and specific references to rejoicing from this point forward appear in Phil. 3:3; 4:4, 10.

Rejoice in the Lord (Phil. 3:1). Christians rejoice in respect to the things associated with the Lord including suffering (cf. Phil. 1:12-18; Rom. 5:1-5; Ja. 1:2-5; 1 Pet. 4:12-19).

Rejoicing in the Lord is (Phil. 3:1-11):

- being aware of false teachers and false religions (Phil. 3:2-3).
- not rejoicing (i.e., having confidence) in the flesh (Phil. 3:3; cf. 1 Tim. 6:6-10, 17-19).
- worshiping in the Spirit of God (Phil. 3:3; cf. John 4:24).
- counting all things as loss (Phil. 3:8).
- having the righteousness which is from God through faith in Jesus Christ (Phil. 3:8-10).
- knowing Christ and the power of His resurrection (Phil. 3:10).
- having fellowship with Christ's sufferings (Phil. 3:10).
- being conformed to Christ's death (Phil. 3:10).
- attaining to the resurrection from the dead (Phil. 3:11).

Beware (Phil. 3:2-3): To rejoice, the Philippians must watch out for the members and leaders of false religions. These people are described as:

- **"the dogs"** denoting the Jews who had mingled their Jewish traditions with the gospel.
- **"evil workers."** The work of the Jews was evil.
- **"mutilation" ("false circumcision")** denoting their practice of physical circumcision. They taught that a person had to keep the Mosaic Law (be physically circumcised) to go to heaven. God had changed the law (Heb. 7:12) and no longer commanded physical circumcision but spiritual circumcision (Col. 2:11-12). The Jews who sought righteousness by keeping the Mosaic Law were practicing mutilation (false circumcision).

The Jews and Gnostics had already begun intermingling their traditions and doctrines with the gospel to form different gospels (cf. Gal. 1:6-10; Col. 2:16-23). Paul's epistles to the Galatians, Ephesians, Colossians, and Thessalonians particularly address the false religious doctrines of the day (in addition to other epistles written by him, John, Peter, and Jude).

To rejoice in the Lord, Christians must beware of (i.e., watch out for) the false doctrines and religions that so easily ensnare their victims (cf. Col. 2:8, 18-19, 20-23).

We are the circumcision (Phil. 3:3). "We" denotes Christians (not the Jews).

In this context, "the circumcision" denotes the sons of Abraham. They are the ones who receive the promise. They are God's children (cf. Gal. 3:1-4:7; Col. 2:11-12).

The circumcision (i.e., true circumcision, children of God):

- worship in the Spirit of God (cf. Jn. 4:23-24). These are the ones who have the righteousness which is from God through faith in Christ (Phil. 3:9).
- rejoice (glory) in Christ Jesus.
- have no confidence in the flesh.

The circumcision (Christians) has no confidence in the flesh. "Circumcision" means *a cutting round*. Fleshly circumcision is removal of flesh. Spiritual circumcision is removal of the sinful man (i.e., fleshly man) when buried and raised with Christ in baptism (Col. 2:11-12). Therefore, Christians glory in Christ and have no confidence in the flesh.

Paul presents himself as an example of not glorying in the flesh (Phil. 3:4-7). The areas in which Paul could have gloried as a Jew were:

- **his heritage.** He was circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews.
- **the Mosaic Law.** He was a Pharisee.
- **his zeal.** He persecuted the church.
- **his righteousness under the Mosaic Law.** He was blameless.

Although Paul could have gloried in the flesh according to the Mosaic Law, he would have been lost in sin. He would not have Christ (Phil. 3:7). In order to gain Christ, Paul had to count fleshly things as loss. Jesus taught the same principle saying that we must forsake all, bearing our cross, to be His disciple (Matt. 16:24-28; Lk. 14:26-33; cf. Matt. 10:34-39).

Christians have crucified the old man of sin in baptism (Rom. 6:3, 6; cf. Gal. 2:20; 5:24; 6:14) gaining godliness and contentment (1 Tim. 6:6-8; cf. Phil. 4:4-13). We do not trust in fleshly (i.e., worldly) riches, but store up for ourselves a good foundation for the time to come that we may lay hold of eternal life (1 Tim. 6:17-19; cf. Matt. 6:19-21).

Note on Phil. 3:7: Paul counted all of the fleshly things (plural) as loss (singular, i.e., a single loss). He did not count each aspect of the flesh a separate loss. Likewise, our attitude is to count all fleshly things as a single loss so that we may attain to the excellence of knowing Christ (Phil. 3:7-11).

Rejoice in the Lord: Count All Things as Loss, Know Christ

It is necessary to count all things loss (Phil. 3:7-11):

- **for Christ.** We cannot be Christ's disciple without counting all things as loss (Lk. 9:23-27; cf.

Matt. 19:16-22; Lk. 9:57-62).

- **for the value (excellence) of knowing Jesus Christ.** We rejoice in the Lord (Phil. 3:1, 3) because it is of greater value to know Christ and be saved than to glory in the flesh. Therefore, the loss which we suffer in the flesh is worth the great value of knowing Christ.
- **to gain Christ.** We cannot gain Christ without first counting all things loss by repenting (Lk. 13:3, 5; Acts 2:38; 17:30).
- **to be found in Christ.** We are baptized into Christ (Rom. 6:3; Gal. 3:27) being buried and raised with Him through faith in the working of God (Col. 2:11-12). Having been made alive with Christ (Col. 2:13), our life is hidden with Him in God (Col. 3:1-4; cf. 2 Tim. 4:8).
- **to have the righteousness which comes from God by faith in Christ.** Paul contrasts the righteousness which comes from God with the Mosaic Law (cf. Heb. 7:12; cf. Gal. 6:2; 2 Jn. 9). Jesus nailed the handwriting of requirements (i.e., the Mosaic Law) to the cross (Col. 2:14). We are made righteous when buried and raised with Him in baptism (Col. 1:13-14, 19-23; 2:11-14); therefore, we do not subject ourselves to the things of the flesh (Col. 2:20-23).
- **to know Christ.** To know God is to obey the gospel (2 Th. 1:8; 1 Jn. 2:3-5). To know God is to know Christ (1 Jn. 1:1-7; 2:3-5).

To know Christ is to:

- **know the power of His resurrection.** The greatness of God's power which He exercised in raising Christ from the dead is exercised toward those who believe (Eph. 1:19-20; cf. Eph. 3:14-21; Phil. 2:13; 4:4-9).
- **have fellowship with His sufferings (Phil. 1:29; 2 Tim. 3:12; Heb. 13:12-16).**
- **be conformed to His death (cf. Gal. 2:20; 5:24; 6:14).** We are conformed to Christ's death when baptized (Rom. 6:3f; Col. 2:11f). From that day forward, we must daily put the flesh to death (1 Cor. 15:31).
- **attain to the resurrection from the dead.** Those who know Christ, obey Him. Therefore, they will appear with Him in glory (Col. 3:4; 2 Th. 1:5-10) and receive a crown of righteousness (Phil. 3:12-14; 2 Tim. 4:8).

Study Questions

1. What is the central theme of Philippians?
2. What are the ingredients of rejoicing as communicated by Paul in the second half of Philippians?
3. What does it mean to rejoice in the Lord?
4. Of whom must we "beware" to rejoice in the Lord?

5. Who is the circumcision?
6. What confidence could Paul have had in the flesh? What was Paul's attitude toward fleshly confidence?
7. What confidence could we have in the flesh today? How should we view such confidence?
8. Why must we count all fleshly things as loss?
9. What must we do to gain Christ?
10. What must we do to be found in Christ? What does it mean to be found in Christ?
11. What does it mean to know Christ?
12. In what way do we know the power of Christ's resurrection?
13. In what way do we have fellowship with Christ's sufferings?
14. What must we do to attain to the resurrection of the dead?

Philippians 3:12-4:1

Not Once Saved Always Saved

The apostle Paul knew that he could be lost (1 Cor. 9:27). He had not yet attained to the resurrection from the dead (Phil. 3:11). In this lesson, Paul continues teaching us the proper attitude toward salvation. We must realize that we can be lost; therefore, we must press on toward the goal (Phil. 3:12, 14) by standing fast in the Lord (Phil. 4:1).

Not that I (Phil. 3:12-13):

- **have already attained (obtained).** Paul had not yet obtained salvation (Phil. 3:12, 14) although his citizenship was in heaven (Phil. 3:20).
- **am already perfected.** Paul was spiritually mature (cf. Heb. 5:12f) but not absolutely perfect (cf. Phil. 3:20-21). He had to deal with temptation on a daily basis (1 Cor. 15:31). And, his lowly body had not been transformed into a glorious, spiritual body (Phil. 3:20-21).
- **have apprehended (laid hold).** Paul had not laid hold of eternal salvation as he would upon the transforming of his body by Jesus Christ (Phil. 3:20-21; cf. Phil. 1:23).

Since we have not already attained (obtained), been perfected, or apprehended (laid hold), we must stand fast in the Lord (Phil. 4:1). Else, we will fall away and be lost.

Note these Scriptures teaching that once we are saved, we can again be lost in sin (1 Cor. 9:27; Gal. 5:4; Col. 2:4, 18-19; 2 Th. 2:1-3; 1 Tim. 4:1-3; 2 Tim. 3:1-13; Heb. 3:12; 4:11; 6:4-6; 10:26-31; 12:15; Ja. 5:19-20; 2 Pet. 2:1-3, 18-22; Rev. 3:4-5).

Pressing Toward the Goal

Press on (Phil. 3:12, 14): "Press on" is metaphorically used of a foot race; therefore, it denotes *persistent pursuit* (cf. Rom. 9:30; 14:19; 1 Cor. 14:1; 1 Th. 5:15; 1 Tim. 6:11).

It is necessary to "press on":

- so that we may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of for us (Phil. 3:12-14).
- to obtain the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus (Phil. 3:14).

To "press on" we must:

- forget those things which are behind (Phil. 3:13).
- reach forward to those things which are ahead (Phil. 3:13).
- fix our aim on the goal (Phil. 3:14).

That I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me (Phil. 3:12-14): Jesus laid hold of Paul, calling him into His service (Acts 9:1f; cf. Gal. 1:15-16). Upon obedience to the Lord's command to be baptized washing away his sins (Act 22:16), Paul was saved. But, he had not fully attained (obtained) eternal life (Phil. 3:12-14). Therefore, Paul had to press on in pursuit of perfection in attaining to the resurrection of the dead (Phil. 3:11, 20-21).

Like Paul, we are saved when we are baptized, washing away our sins (Acts 22:16; cf. Acts 2:38; 1 Pet. 3:21). And, we must daily press on to the prize of the upward call of God in Christ - eternal life.

Forgetting those things which are behind (Phil. 3:13): Paul did not dwell on the past whether good or bad (cf. Lk. 9:62). We should not be paralyzed by remorse for past sins that are forgiven. And, we cannot count our past work for the Lord as credit for today's work. We must forget the past and do our best every day in service to God.

Reaching forward to those things which are ahead (Phil. 3:13): Paul continues the athletic metaphor. The athlete presses on in strenuous pursuit of the prize. He reaches (stretches) forward with all his strength to win the race and lay hold of the prize (cf. 1 Cor. 9:24-27). For us, the things that lie ahead include our future service to God and eternal life (Phil. 3:14; cf. 2 Tim. 4:7-8; Heb. 12:1-2).

I press toward the goal (Phil. 3:14). "Goal" is literally *a mark upon which one would fix his eye*. A runner runs toward a specific mark to win the race. And, a shooter aims at a mark. A Christian's mark is eternal life (i.e., the prize of the upward call of God in Christ). Our aim is fixed on Jesus who is seated at God's right hand (Heb. 12:1-2).

For the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus (Phil. 3:14): The prize is eternal life (Phil. 3:20-21; cf. 2 Tim. 4:8) to which God calls us through the gospel (2 Th. 2:13-14).

Let as many as are mature (perfect) have this attitude (mind, Phil. 3:15). The attitude of mature Christians is to humbly press on (Phil. 3:12, 14; 2:5f). Thus, they continually grow spiritually (Heb. 5:12f; 1 Pet. 2:2-3) and receive the prize in the end (Phil. 3:12-14).

If in anything you have a different attitude (i.e., think otherwise), God will reveal even this to you (Phil. 3:15). If in any matter they did not have the attitude of humbly pressing on to grow spiritually and reaching forward to things which are ahead, God would reveal that their attitude was improper. In such matters, they lacked maturity and were in danger of eternal damnation (cf. 1 Cor. 10:12).

How would God reveal this to them?

- At the time Paul wrote to the Philippians, God worked miraculously through the Holy Spirit. Thus, it could have been revealed to them miraculously by apostles, prophets, teachers, through gifts of knowledge, wisdom, tongues, or interpretation (cf. 1 Cor. 12:4-11, 27-30). God's will was revealed through the oral and written word (2 Th. 2:15).
- Today, miraculous gifts have ceased (1 Cor. 13:1-13). Therefore, this attitude is revealed in the word of God (Phil. 2:5; 3:12-16; cf. Rom. 1:17; 10:17; 1 Th. 2:13; Heb. 5:12-14; 1 Pet. 1:2, 22-2:3; 2 Pet. 1:3).

- Then and now, God providentially corrects His children by chastening them (Heb. 12:3-11) when they are ensnared in sin (cf. Heb. 12:1-2) and falling short of His grace (Heb. 12:12-15).

Keep living by the same rule (standard) to which we have already attained (Phil. 3:16). No matter where we are in spiritual growth and development, we must continue to move forward (not backward). We must live by the standard to which we have attained and press on reaching for the things which are ahead. We must not draw back (i.e., backslide) to perdition (Heb. 10:39) but gain in strength (Heb. 12:12; Phil. 2:13; cf. Rom. 1:16; 10:17) making our path straight (Heb. 12:13-15).

Note (Observe) Those Who Walk According to the Apostolic Pattern

Join in following my example (Phil. 3:17). We are commanded to follow (imitate) the apostles (cf. 1 Cor. 4:16; 11:1). We must withdraw from Christians who do not imitate the apostles by keeping the apostolic traditions (2 Th. 3:6, 14).

Observe (note, mark) those who walk according to the pattern you have in us (Phil. 3:17). In imitating the apostles, we must observe (i.e., note, mark) faithful Christians who are walking according to the apostolic pattern (cf. Phil. 1:10). In harmony with the athletic metaphors Paul has been using (Phil. 3:12-14), we learn from the godly example of more mature Christians as an athlete learns from watching and associating with more advanced athletes in his sport.

We are also commanded to note (keep our eye on) those who cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine of Christ (Rom. 16:17). Therefore, every Christian must be marked (noted, observed) for his good example (Phil. 3:17) or his bad example (Rom. 16:17).

Paul states two reasons for the importance of observing (marking, noting) those who walk according to the apostolic example.

- There are many enemies of the cross of Christ (Phil. 3:18-19).
- Our citizenship is in heaven (Phil. 3:20-21).

For many are enemies of the cross of Christ (Phil. 3:18-19): We must observe (note, mark) the Christians who are walking according to the apostolic pattern because there are many who walk as enemies of the cross (cf. Phil. 1:15-16; Gal. 2:4-5; 2 Pet. 2:1-3). Everyone who is not marked as walking according to the apostolic pattern is an enemy of the cross.

Characteristics of an enemy of the cross (Phil. 3:19):

- Their end is destruction (i.e., eternal damnation; 2 Th. 1:6-9; 2 Pet. 3:16).
- Their god is their belly (cf. Rom. 16:17-18). They are idolaters (cf. Col. 3:5; 2 Tim. 3:1-9).
- Their glory is their shame (Rom. 1:22-32; 1 Cor. 1:18-2:5).
- Their minds are set on earthly things (cf. Phil. 4:8-9; Col. 3:1-4).

Our Citizenship is in Heaven, Stand Fast in the Lord

For our citizenship is in heaven (Phil. 3:20): We must observe (note, mark) the Christians who are walking according to the apostolic pattern because our citizenship is in heaven. Our citizenship is in heaven because we are in Christ and members of the household of God (cf. Gal. 2:20; Col. 3:3; Eph. 2:19-20; 1 Tim. 3:15). We have come to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem (Heb. 12:22; Gal. 4:26). Our names are written in the Book of Life (Phil. 4:3).

As citizens of heaven, we contrast ourselves with the enemies of the cross. Our end is eternal life, not eternal destruction. Our God is the God of heaven, not earthly idols. Our glory is in Christ. It is not shameful. Our minds are set on heavenly things, not on things of the earth.

From which we eagerly wait for the Savior (Phil. 3:20): Jesus is in heaven, seated at the right hand of God (Heb. 8:1). We eagerly wait for the Savior from heaven according to our earnest expectation and hope (Phil. 1:20; cf. Col. 3:1-4; 2 Th. 1:5-10).

Jesus will transform our lowly body into conformity with the body of His glory (Phil. 3:21). We eagerly wait for Jesus to change our lowly, fleshly bodies into a glorious, spiritual body (cf. Rom. 8:10-11; 1 Cor. 15:35-58; 2 Cor. 5:1-8; Col. 3:4; 1 Jn. 3:2; Matt. 22:30).

By the exertion of His power (i.e., according to His working, Phil. 3:21): Jesus will transform our lowly bodies into glorious, spiritual bodies by the power He exerts to subdue (subject) all things to Himself (1 Cor. 15:24-28; Eph. 1:19-23; Col. 1:16-18; Heb. 1:3; Rev. 5:1-7; 19:11-21).

Therefore, in this way stand firm (stand fast) in the Lord (Phil. 4:1). We must stand fast in the Lord to be saved (cf. Phil. 3:19, 21; 1 Cor. 15:57-58). We must stand in the gospel (1 Cor. 15:1; cf. 2 Th. 1:8), holding fast to the word of life (Phil. 2:16) and to Christ (Col. 2:19).

To stand firm in the Lord:

- our love must abound more and more in knowledge and all discernment. We approve the things which are excellent, we are sincere, and we are filled with the fruits of righteousness (Phil. 1:9-11).
- our conduct must be worthy of the gospel of Christ (Phil. 1:27-28). We are not terrified by our adversaries.
- we must be unified with faithful brethren (Phil. 2:1-4).
- we must have an attitude of humility (Phil. 2:5-8).
- we must work out our own salvation in fear and trembling (Phil. 2:12).
- we must hold fast to the word of life (Phil. 2:16).
- we must rejoice in the Lord - not the flesh (Phil. 3:1-8).
- we must be found in Christ, having the righteousness which is from God through faith in Jesus Christ (Phil. 3:9-11).
- we must press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ (Phil. 3:12-14).
- we must follow the apostolic example (Phil. 3:17-19).

The result of standing fast in the Lord is having an earnest expectation and hope of eternal life (Phil. 1:20);

Tit. 1:2; 3:7).

Study Questions

1. Did Paul believe that once he was saved he was always saved?
2. Did Paul believe that he could be eternally lost even after being an apostle?
3. What should our attitude be toward salvation?
4. What does it mean to "press on?" Toward what was Paul pressing on? How does this apply to us?
5. What did Paul forget? To what did he reach forward?
6. What attitude (mind) should mature (perfect) Christians have? What will God reveal to Christians who did not have this attitude? How?
7. What does it mean to keep living by the same rule (standard) to which we have already attained?
8. Who does Paul tell us to note (observe)? Why?
9. What are the characteristics of an enemy of the cross of Christ? What is his end?
10. Where is our citizenship? How are the citizens of heaven contrasted with the enemies of the cross?
11. For whom and what do we eagerly wait?
12. What does it mean to stand firm (stand fast) in the Lord? Why is it important?

Philippians 4:2-9

Live in Harmony

Euodia and Syntyche (Phil. 4:2-3): We know nothing about these two women except what is written here. Paul urged (i.e., implored) them to live in harmony in the Lord. They probably exemplified the problem about which much of this epistle addressed (cf. Phil. 2:1f).

Live in harmony (i.e., be of the same mind) in the Lord (Phil. 4:2; cf. Rom. 12:16). When we rejoice in the Lord (Phil. 4:4) we live in harmony with our brethren because we are gentle, not anxious, and live in peace (Phil.4:5-7). We cannot rejoice in the Lord without living in harmony with our brethren.

True companion (Phil. 4:3): There has been much speculation about whom this companion may have been. Some have speculated that it was Paul's wife which would be impossible according to his own teaching (1 Cor. 7:5, 7-9). Others have speculated that it is Epaphroditus, Lydia, or another Philippian.

Paul asked his true companion to help the women who had labored (i.e., struggled) with him in the gospel along with Clement and the rest of his fellow workers.

Clement (Phil. 4:3): There has been much speculation as to the identity of this man named Clement. Historical evidence points to Clement of Rome or a pupil of an apostle. But since "Clement" was a common name, his identity is uncertain.

Book of Life (Phil. 4:3): This book is a record of the names of the saints (Rev. 3:5; 13:8; 17:8; 20:12; 21:27; cf. Is. 4:3). It is located in heaven (Lk. 10:20; Heb. 12:23). A saint's name is blotted out if he sins and does not repent (Rev. 3:5; Ex. 32:32; Ps. 69:28).

At the final judgment, anyone whose name is not written in the Book of Life is thrown into the lake of fire (Rev. 20:15).

Rejoice in the Lord

Rejoice in the Lord (Phil. 4:4). Here, the central theme of the epistle is reiterated and emphasized (cf. Phil. 3:1f). Paul explains in this context that rejoicing in the Lord yields:

- gentleness (Phil. 4:5).
- freedom from anxiety (Phil. 4:6).
- the peace of God (Phil. 4:7).

Gentleness

Let your gentleness (gentle spirit) be known to all men (Phil. 4:5). Rejoicing in the Lord yields gentleness. A gentle person is equitable, fair, mild, moderate, and forbearing (cf. 1 Tim. 3:3; Tit. 3:2; Ja. 3:17) in contrast to a harsh and unreasonable person (1 Pet. 2:18).

The Lord is near (at hand, Phil. 4:5). The Lord is near by. He watches over us and protects us (Ps. 145:17-20; Rom. 8:28-39; Eph. 6:10-19). With this confidence, we have the meekness and gentleness of Christ (2 Cor. 10:1; cf. Phil. 2:5f).

Freedom from Anxiety, The Peace of God

Be anxious for nothing (Phil. 4:6). "Anxious" in this verse denotes *the unease of mind resulting from being consumed with worldly care*.

Rejoicing in the Lord yields freedom from anxiety.

- We rejoice in the Lord seeking first God's kingdom and His righteousness. We do not worry (are not anxious) about tomorrow (Matt. 6:24-34).
- We are confident of the Lord's abiding care (Phil. 4:6-7; 1 Pet. 5:6-7; Rom. 8:28f).
- Therefore, we are free from anxiety having the peace of God (Phil. 4:6-7).

In everything, let your requests be made known to God (Phil. 4:6). Anything that causes anxiety should be made known to God in prayer. Having humbly and confidently cast our anxiety (care) upon Him (1 Pet. 5:6-7), we have peace (Phil. 4:7).

We make our requests known to God:

- **by prayer.** "Prayer" is a general address to God. A prayer can include one or more supplications.
- **by supplication.** "Supplication" is a specific entreaty. A prayer can be composed of a single supplication, but supplications are not necessarily in every prayer.
- **with thanksgiving.** Our prayers should include thanksgiving for answered prayers and for our blessings (cf. 1 Th. 5:18). Thankfully naming our blessings in prayer causes us to rejoice (Phil. 4:4-7; 1 Th. 5:16-18).

The peace of God (Phil. 4:7): "Peace" denotes *the state of tranquility* (cf. Phil. 1:2; 4:9). We have peace with God having been justified by faith through Jesus Christ (Rom. 5:1; 6:17; 16:26). Then, walking by the Spirit we live in peace (Gal. 5:16-25) though the world around us might be filled with turmoil (cf. Rom. 5:1-4; Ja. 1:2-8).

The peace of God is the peace that only comes from God and is the cure for anxiety. Having humbly and confidently cast our cares upon God (1 Pet. 5:6-7), we live at peace with God, ourselves, brethren, and mankind.

The peace of God surpasses all comprehension (understanding, Phil. 4:7). Man with his carnal-fleshly-mind cannot comprehend the peace that only comes from God (cf. Rom. 1:28; Eph. 3:19; 4:17; Col. 2:18; 1 Tim. 6:5; 2 Tim. 3:8; Tit. 1:15). Human reasoning is inadequate to understand the peace of God since the highest spiritual blessings cannot be understood with a carnal mind (1 Cor. 1:18f; 3:1-4; Eph. 4:17-23; Col. 2:2-3).

As Christians, we believe in God's promise of peace (cf. Rom. 8:28f). But we cannot comprehend it until experiencing it in our lives (cf. Eph. 3:20).

The peace of God guards our hearts and minds in Christ (Phil. 4:7). "Guard" is a military term meaning *to keep by guarding, as a garrison stands watch over a city* (2 Cor. 11:32; cf. Acts 9:24). The peace of God guards our hearts and minds against anxiety. Therefore, we tranquilly (i.e., peacefully) deal with life's difficulties (cf. Rom. 5:1-4; Ja. 1:2-8; Eph. 6:10-18).

Dwell on These Things, The Peace of God Will Be With You

Finally (Phil. 4:8): See notes on Philippians 3:1. Here, the word "finally" denotes that Paul is beginning his final exhortations.

Dwell (think, meditate) on these things (Phil. 4:8): These are the things we should continually dwell upon. Our mind is busy thinking upon godly things leaving no time or disposition to entertain evil thoughts. The result of godly thoughts is godly actions (cf. Matt. 15:17-20).

Dwell on:

- **whatever is true.** God's word is truth (Jn. 17:17). All of our thoughts must be solely based upon the things authorized by God's word (cf. Col. 3:17; 1 Pet. 4:11). God's word is the only determining factor in whether a thing is honorable, right, pure, lovely, of good report, virtuous, or praiseworthy.
- **whatever is honorable (noble).** We must conduct ourselves honorably and with dignity (1 Tim. 3:8, 11; Tit. 2:2). Our thoughts must be upon things that are honorable so that our actions are honorable (Matt. 15:17-20).
- **whatever is right (just).** People who are "right" are called righteous and just (1 Jn. 2:29; 3:7; 1 Pet. 3:12). Righteous people live by faith (Rom. 1:17; 2 Cor. 5:7; Gal. 3:11). Faith comes by hearing the word of God (Rom. 10:17). The things that are revealed in His word are "right" and should be dwelled upon by the righteous.
- **whatever is pure.** "Pure" comes from the same root as "holy." "Pure" means *undefiled, uncontaminated, chaste*, (2 Cor. 11:2), and *free from sin* (1 Tim. 5:22; cf. 1 Jn. 3:3). Wisdom from heaven is pure (Ja. 3:17) in contrast with demonic wisdom (Ja. 3:14-16).
- **whatever is lovely.** "Lovely" means *pleasing and acceptable*. Things that are pleasing and acceptable to God are the things that are pleasing and acceptable to Christians (cf. 1 Tim. 4:7-8).

- **whatever is of good repute (good report).** "Good repute" literally means *sounding well*. These are things which are pleasant and gracious to the ears of the godly.
- **everything that is virtuous (excellence).** "Virtue" is *moral excellence* in harmony with God's word (cf. 2 Pet. 1:5).
- **everything that is praiseworthy.** "Praiseworthy" denotes *things which are worthy of commendation* in harmony with God's word (Rom. 2:29; 1 Cor. 4:5).

The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things (Phil. 4:9): Paul broadens the scope of their thoughts by urging them to imitate (practice) his manner of life (cf. Phil. 3:17; 1 Cor. 4:16; 11:1; 2 Th. 3:6) - the things they had learned, received, heard, and seen. By practicing these things, the peace of God would be with them.

Today, we learn of the apostles' manner of life which we must imitate (1 Cor. 4:16; 11:1; 2 Th. 2:15; 3:6, 14) through study of God's word (Rom. 1:16; 10:17; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:3). By living according to the apostolic pattern and traditions, the peace of God is with us.

Study Questions

1. Who were Euodia and Syntyche. What did Paul urge (implore) them to do?
2. What is the connection between living in harmony in the Lord and rejoicing in the Lord?
3. Who was Paul's true companion in Philippians 4:3? What did Paul ask him to do?
4. Who was Clement?
5. What is the Book of Life? Whose names are written in it? Whose names are not written in it? Whose name is blotted out?
6. What will happen to the people whose name is not written in the Book of Life?
7. What does rejoicing in the Lord yield?
8. Why does rejoicing in the Lord yield gentleness?

9. Why does rejoicing in the Lord yield freedom from anxiety? What is the cure for anxiety?
10. What is the difference between prayer and supplication?
11. Why should we express thankfulness in our prayers?
12. What is the peace of God? Why does it surpass all comprehension (understanding)?
13. What results from the peace of God guarding our hearts and minds?
14. What should we dwell (think, meditate) on? Explain each.
15. What must we practice in order for the peace of God to be with us?

Philippians 4:10-23

Paul's Rejoicing, the Philippians' Care

I rejoiced in the Lord greatly (Phil. 4:10). The Philippians' benevolence resulted in Paul's rejoicing. Paul, therefore, exemplifies rejoicing that results from benevolence. He was not greedy for more (Phil. 4:11, 17), but he was thankful for what he had received (Phil. 4:20). He knew that he would be able to manage in whatever circumstance he lived (Phil. 4:11-13).

Whenever we are benevolent toward brethren, the result is rejoicing and glorification of God (cf. Phil. 4:19; 2 Cor. 9:2, 12-15) from thankful and trusting hearts (cf. Phil. 4:11-13; Matt. 6:24-34). Whenever we receive benevolence from brethren, we should not be greedy for more but thankful for what we have received (cf. 2 Cor. 9:12-15; 1 Tim. 6:6f).

Your concern (care) for me has flourished (revived) again (Phil. 4:10). The Philippians had previously sent financial support to Paul (Phil. 4:15-16). They were continually concerned about Paul. But, they did not have an opportunity to send another financial gift until the one delivered by Epaphroditus (Phil. 4:18).

Contentment, Strength Through Christ

I have learned to be content (Phil. 4:11). "Content" literally means *self-sufficient*. The Greek word only appears here in the New Testament and is a favorite word of the Stoics (cf. Acts 17:18). It expresses the Stoic's doctrine of man's self-sufficiency which results in inner-contentment (similar to twentieth century doctrines of Humanism).

Paul, on the other hand, contradicts the Stoic doctrine of contentment by confessing that Jesus Christ is the source of his contentment (Phil. 4:13). True contentment cannot be achieved without having the peace which comes from God (Phil. 4:7, 9). Therefore, only Christians can be content. They rejoice in the Lord (Phil. 3:1f; 4:4f) being content in whatever circumstance they live (Rom. 5:1-4; Ja. 1:2-8).

Contentment must be learned through study (2 Tim. 3:15-17; 1 Pet. 2:1-3) and application of God's word (Heb. 5:12-14; 1 Tim. 4:7-8; 1 Th. 5:21-22). If we do not mature to having an attitude of being content with just food and clothing (1 Tim. 6:6-8), we are in danger of wandering away from the faith because of a love of money (1 Tim. 6:9-10).

To be content we must (Phil. 4:12):

- know how to get along with humble means (be abased).
- know how to live in prosperity (abound).
- learn the secret of being filled and going hungry.
- learn the secret of having abundance (abound) and suffering need.

As Christians, we must learn how to live godly whether we are rich, poor, full, or hungry. Although our work in the Lord can change as our circumstances change, our attitude toward God should not change (1 Tim. 6:6-19).

I can do all things through Christ (Him) who strengthens me (Phil. 4:13). Christ was the source of Paul's strength; therefore, he could do all things. He could live in any circumstance (rich, poor, full, or hungry) and be content.

Christ is also the source of our strength as God works in us (Phil. 2:12) through Jesus (Eph. 3:16-20; cf. Phil. 2:13, 12, 16):

- Christ lives in us by faith (Gal. 2:20; cf. Rom. 10:17; 1:16; 2 Tim. 3:15-17; 1 Th. 2:13).
- Our faith works through love (Gal. 5:6).
- Therefore, Christ strengthens us to faithfully accomplish God's will, in all things, with contentment (cf. Rom. 5:1-10; 8:28-39).

Financial Support of Gospel Preachers

You have done well to share with me in my affliction (distress, Phil. 4:14). The Philippians had shared in Paul's affliction by financially supporting him. Thus, they removed a portion of Paul's affliction and placed it upon themselves (cf. Gal. 6:2).

We have fellowship (share) with those who preach and teach the gospel by sharing in the work through financial support (Phil. 1:5; 4:10-18; cf. Gal. 6:6; Eph. 4:16), by prayers (Phil. 4:19; Eph. 6:18-20), by moral support (Acts 27:3; 28:15; Phl'm7), and by helping with the associated physical labor (cf. Phil. 2:29-30).

Generally speaking, we share in our brethren's afflictions when we take some of their burdens and place them upon ourselves (cf. Gal. 6:2). This could take place through any means to relieve physical, emotional, or financial burdens (cf. Phil. 1:5, 29-30; 2 Cor. 8:9-15).

After leaving Macedonia, no church shared with me but you (Phil. 4:15). Paul preached in Philippi (a city of Macedonia) resulting in the beginning of the church in that city during his second missionary journey (Acts 16:12). After departing from Macedonia, Philippi was the only church to financially support Paul.

While at Corinth, Paul supported himself (Acts 18:3) until Silas and Timothy came from Macedonia at which time he devoted himself completely to the word (Acts 18:5) as a result of the Philippians' gift (2 Cor. 11:8-9).

Even in Thessalonica you sent a gift (Phil. 4:16). Thessalonica was a city of Macedonia where Paul preached after preaching in Philippi (Acts 17:1). While preaching in Thessalonica, Paul had to support himself much of the time (1 Th. 2:9; 2 Th. 3:8).

Considering that Paul wrote this epistle while imprisoned in Rome, the Philippians financially supported Paul to preach in Thessalonica, Corinth, and Rome. They may have supported Paul to preach other places that are not revealed in the Scriptures.

Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the profit (fruit) that increases (abounds) to your account (Phil. 4:17). More important than the Philippians' gift of financial support was the spiritual profit from participating in the gospel with Paul. They were storing up treasure in heaven (Matt. 6:4, 6, 18, 19-21; 1 Tim. 6:17-19) to the glory of God (Phil. 4:18-20; cf. Matt. 5:16).

In respect to benevolence, we must remember that the spiritual profit we receive and the glorification of God is more important than the temporal blessings we give and receive.

Their gift was a fragrant (sweet smelling) aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well-pleasing to God (Phil. 4:18). "Fragrant aroma" is *the smell of a pleasing sacrifice to God* (2 Cor. 2:15-16; Eph. 5:2; Heb.13:16; 1 Pet. 2:5).

As holy priests of God (1 Pet. 2:5), we are living sacrifices (Rom. 12:1f) pleasing God in every respect (Col. 1:10). As each Christian does his individual part in the body of Christ (Eph. 4:16), we all share in the preaching of the gospel and conversion of lost souls to Christ.

God Will Supply all Your Needs

God will supply all your needs (Phil. 4:19). God gives seed to the sower enriching us with the ability to liberally share with those who are in need (2 Cor. 9:8). Those who sow sparingly will reap sparingly and those who sow bountifully will reap bountifully (2 Cor. 9:6-11; cf. Gal. 6:6-10).

The financial blessings benevolently passed from one Christian to another come from God. Therefore, God should receive the glory and thanks (Phil. 4:20; 2 Cor. 9:12-15; cf. Matt. 5:16).

Glory to God

To our God and Father be the glory forever and ever. Amen (Phil. 4:20). As sweet-smelling, living sacrifices (Phil. 4:18), we glorify God in all that we say and do (cf. Col. 3:17; 2 Tim. 3:15-17; 1 Pet. 4:11). If we are not living in obedience to God (Phil. 2:12-13), we are not sweet-smelling sacrifices and we bring reproach upon Him and His word (cf. Rom.2:24; 1 Tim. 6:1; Tit. 2:5, 10).

Greet Every Saint

Greet every saint. The brethren who are here with me greet you (Phil. 4:21-22). "Greet" *means to salute, to wish well, to pay respect, to welcome, to bid farewell.* A greeting could be salutatory in a letter or by a customary embrace. Christians are to greet every saint. Discrimination among saints is unlawful (Ja. 2:1f; Gal. 3:11f).

The Grace of Jesus be with Your Spirits

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirits (you all, Phil. 4:23). This is a typical salutation with which Paul closes his epistles (cf. 2 Cor. 13:14; Col. 4:18; 2 Th. 3:18; 2 Tim. 4:22).

God's grace has appeared, bringing salvation to all men (Tit. 2:11). It is contacted in Christ (2 Tim.1:9; 2:1) through baptism (Rom. 6:3; 1 Cor. 12:13; Gal. 3:27). Therefore, every blessing (including salvation) enjoyed by Christians is associated with God's grace toward us through Christ (cf. Rom. 6:23; Eph. 1:3).

Thankful appreciation for God's grace through Christ results in having the same gracious attitude of Jesus (Phil. 2:5f) with abiding strength (Eph. 3:14-21) and peace (Phil. 2:12-13; 4:4-9) from a gentle spirit (Phil. 4:5). God's grace is in us; therefore, we treat others as Christ has treated us (2 Cor. 9:13-14; cf. 2 Cor. 8:8-9; Rom. 15:1-3; Col. 3:12-15).

Study Questions

1. Why did Paul rejoice in the Lord greatly?
2. What results from Christians being benevolent toward brethren?
3. What had Paul learned? Having learned this, what did he know?
4. How do we learn to be content? Why should we be content?
5. Why could Paul do all things? How is this true for us?
6. How had the Philippians shared in Paul's affliction (distress)?

7. How do we have fellowship with men who are preaching and teaching the gospel? How can we share in a brother's affliction?
8. How long had the Philippians been financially supporting Paul? Where did he preach while receiving their financial support?
9. Paul received their financial support. But, what was he seeking?
10. What does Paul call their financial support?
11. What would God supply the Philippians? Why?
12. Why does God enrich us financially? What are our responsibilities concerning financial blessings?
13. How do we glorify God?
14. How do we greet the saints? Which saints should we greet?
15. What does it mean for the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ to be with our spirits?