

PHILIPPIANS
COLOSSIANS
PHILEMON

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BIBLE STUDY TEXTBOOK SERIES

PHILIPPIANS-COLOSSIANS
PHILEMON

A New

- Commentary
- Workbook
- Teaching Manual

Wilbur Fields

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TO LOUISE

PREFACE

This book is written to help
MAKE YOUR BIBLE PLAIN!

and

MAKE YOUR BIBLE COME ALIVE!

To help you have a plain clear understanding of the Bible, this book provides the following:

(1) *Helpful introductory studies* of Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon. These give the facts about the recipients of the books, the background of each book, and outlines of each book.

(2) *A clear new translation and paraphrase* of Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon. This is first of all a literal translation of the Greek text. Then helpful words have been added to relate the verses together more clearly, and make the original meaning as complete as possible. The words that are added (the paraphrase) are enclosed in parentheses.

(3) *Notes on every phrase in every verse.* The learning and wisdom from many commentaries has been gleaned to make these notes reliable.

To help your Bible come alive to you this book provides the following:

(1) *Many devotional and practical thoughts* and exhortations within the notes.

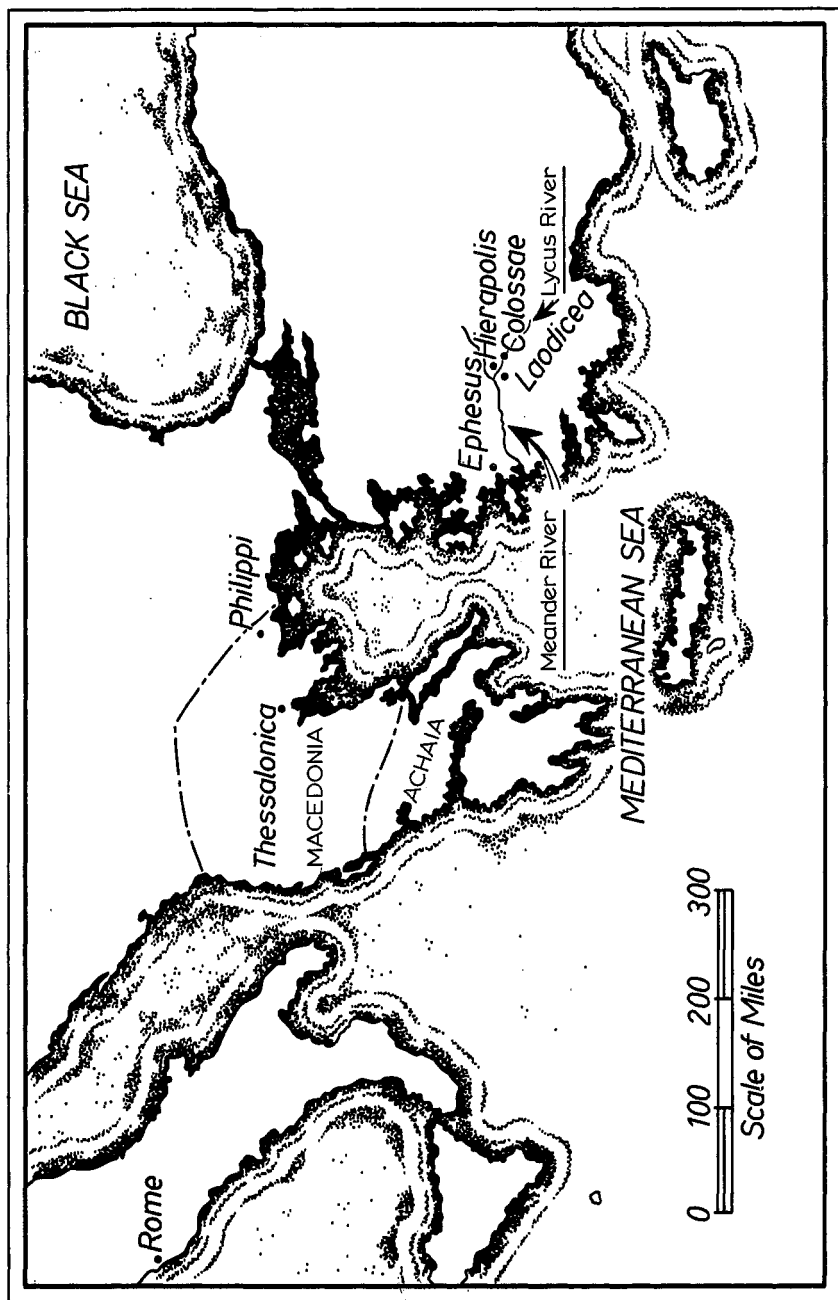
(2) *Questions at the end of each section* of the outline. Answering these will compel you to think about the text and direct you to the main ideas.

(3) *Brief expository outlines of each chapter* at the beginning of the studies on the chapters.

Now we urge you, "Search the Scriptures."

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INTRODUCTORY SECTIONS ON PHILIPPIANS

- A. General facts about Philippians.
- B. The Apostle Paul in Rome.
- C. Philippi and Macedonia.
- D. Paul's experiences with the Philippians.
- E. Critical Questions about authorship.
- F. Outline of Philippians.
- G. Questions over the Introductory Sections.

INTRODUCTION

A. GENERAL FACTS ABOUT THE EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS

1. Philippians was written by the apostle Paul from Rome, 62/63 A.D. Paul was a prisoner at the time of writing. Philippians is one of four epistles written during the first imprisonment of Paul. The others were Ephesians, Colossians, and Philemon.
2. Philippians is probably the most affectionate letter Paul ever wrote. The letter shows Paul's strong attachment to the church at Philippi.
3. Many descriptive expressions have been coined to describe Philippians.
 - a. *The epistle of joy.* Such words as "joy" and "rejoice" occur no less than sixteen times in the letter. (If Paul could rejoice after two years of Roman imprisonment, why cannot we be joyful?)
 - b. *A thank-you letter.* The letter was written to acknowledge a much appreciated gift sent to Paul from the Philippians by the hand of Epaphroditus, one of their members. Phil. 4:18. Interestingly enough the word "thanks" does not occur in the letter. Paul knew how to express thanks without being sickeningly sugary about it.
 - c. *The epistle of excellent things.* Phil. 1:10; 4:8.

The value of thinking on excellent things certainly commends itself to everyone.
 - d. *The epistle of right-mindedness.* There are several references in Philippians to the mind. See Phil. 2:2, 5; 3:15, 19; 4:7-8. Nothing is more important to us than to have the right kind of mind.
 - e. *An epistle of unity.* See 2:1-11; 4:2.

It appears that the possibility of faction, disunity, and contention was Paul's greatest concern for the Philippians. Paul approached this problem by urging them to consider the deepest realities of their faith and the example of Christ.
4. Philippians does not expound on doctrinal issues in the manner used in Romans, or Galatians, or Hebrews. The doctrinal sections in Philippians are presented as matters of allusion rather than as systematic intentional teaching. When the points of doctrine are discussed, they are invariably given with a view to their practical application. Ideally this is the way all Christian doctrine should be presented.

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5. Philippians is very emphatic about holy living, holy thinking, dedication to God—in a word, about Christian ethics. The doctrinal section 2:5-11 was written to enforce the command to have humility. Paul's discussion about justification in 3:8-11 is intertwined with thoughts about our counting everything loss for Christ.
6. In Philippians the gospel is not reduced to a mere code of morals. The living Christ is at its heart. (1:21). Christ is neither a subject of controversy, nor simply a pattern of life. He IS Paul's life. Paul presents himself in the epistle as a disciple of Jesus, who lived only to know Christ and be found in Him, and even to share in His sufferings, becoming like Him in his death.

B. THE APOSTLE PAUL IN ROME

Since Philippians, Colossians, Philemon, and Ephesians were all written from Rome, it is necessary to give the background of Paul's experiences in Rome.

1. When did Paul arrive in Rome?

He arrived in early spring A.D. 61, following the shipwreck on Melita (Malta). Acts 27:12; 28:1, 11, 16.

Paul's arrival in Rome brought about an inevitable collision between pagan Rome and Christ. Until then Christianity had been persecuted by the Jews, but scarcely at all by the Romans. The Romans had even protected Paul from the Jews. After Paul's arrival in Rome the empire soon became not the ally of the gospel but its enemy. This was not, of course, purely the result of Paul's work. The conflict was inevitable, and just happened to take place at that time.

2. How long was Paul in Rome?

Over two years, Acts 28:30. He evidently left Rome before July 64, for Rome was burned at that time, and a great persecution against the Christians there arose. There is no indication that Paul was present in Rome at that time. Paul probably left Rome late in 63.

3. Under what circumstances had Paul come to Rome?

He was brought to Rome as a prisoner. He had been accused by the Jews in Jerusalem and in Caesarea of raising insurrection among the Jews, of profaning the temple, and of

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being a ringleader of the hated sect of the Nazarenes (that is, the Christians). Acts 21:28-30; 22:30; 24:5-6.

Paul had appealed his case, requesting to be tried before Caesar himself, rather than before the prejudiced Roman governors in Judea, who often sought to please the Jews more than they sought justice. Acts 25:9-12.

Paul had planned and hoped to go to Rome for a long time. Romans 1:10; 15:22-24. Paul concentrated his labors in the important cities of the world, and Rome as the capital city of the empire was the most important city of all.

4. Were there Christians in Rome before Paul arrived there?

Definitely yes. Sojourners from Rome were present in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost when the church began. Acts 2:10. No doubt some of these were converts, and took their new faith home with them.

Paul wrote the lengthy and profound letter to the Christians at Rome before his arrival there. This was probably written from Corinth during his third missionary trip, about 57 A.D.

Christians from Rome met Paul on the road as he approached Rome. Acts 28:14-15.

The epistle to the Romans contains a long list of names of Christians to whom Paul sent greetings. Romans 16:3-16.

5. Where did Paul live in Rome?

He lived in his own rented dwelling. Acts 28:30. This was possibly located somewhere near the camp of the Roman Praetorian guard, because Paul was under the guard of Roman soldiers constantly.

6. Was Paul's situation in Rome comfortable?

Yes and no, probably more no than yes. Paul was a man who could be quite content in any situation. Phil. 4:11. However, he was confined to his house; visitors came to him; he couldn't go to them. Acts 28:17, 30.

He also constantly wore a long chain (an *alasis*, a coupling-chain), which coupled him to a Roman soldier, who was constantly with him. Eph. 6:20; Acts 28:16, 20.

7. Could Paul continue his preaching and teaching in Rome?

Definitely yes. Acts 28:31. His teachings there were so successful that his bonds became manifest in Christ throughout the whole Praetorian guard, and to all the rest. Phil. 1:13. Some of the soldiers guarding him became believers. The word

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of God even spread to Caesar's own household, where some became saints. Phil. 4:22.

8. How did Paul's presence in Rome affect the Christians there?

Most of them became much bolder. Phil. 1:14. However some preachers in Rome became envious of Paul, and tried to bring additional misery upon him. Phil. 1:15.

9. What letters did Paul write from Rome?

He wrote four letters that we know about during the period of his first imprisonment. They are Ephesians, Philipians, Colossians, and Philemon.

10. What guests and companions did Paul have in Rome?

Epaphras from Colossae came. Col. 4:12. *Luke*, the beloved physician, was there. Col. 4:14; II Tim. 4:11. Also *Demas*, who later forsook Paul. Col. 4:14; II Tim. 4:10. *John Mark* was present for a time. Col. 4:10. *Tychicus* came from the province of Asia (the area around Ephesus in Asia Minor), and carried back the letters to the Ephesians and the Colossians from Paul. Col. 4:7-8; Eph. 6:21. *Onesimus*, the runaway slave of Philemon, met Paul and was sent back with Tychicus to his master Philemon in the city of Colossae. Col. 4:9. *Timothy* was with Paul. Phil. 1:1; Col. 1:1. *Aristarchus* of Macedonia (Thessalonica) was there. Col. 4:10; Acts 20:4. Perhaps *Priscilla* and *Aquila* were still in Rome when Paul came there. A congregation of Christians in Rome had met in their house for a while. Rom. 16:3-5.

Paul had relatives in Rome, *Andronicus* and *Junius*, who probably visited him, if they were not themselves detained as prisoners. Romans 16:7.

11. How did Paul get along with the Jews in Rome?

Not very well. When Paul arrived many non-Christian Jews visited him and heard him. They had had no word from Judea about the accusations against him, but after hearing him they disagreed among themselves concerning him and departed. Acts 28:21-28. They would have listened to the claims of a false Messiah, but not the apostle of the true Messiah. It is barely possible that the people to whom Paul refers in Phil. 1:15-17 as being those who preached Christ in such a way as to deliberately bring affliction to Paul were Judaizing Christians, that is, Jewish believers in Christ who taught that we must keep the law of Moses as well as have faith in Jesus.

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Col. 4:10-11 indicates that only three of the Jewish Christians with Paul—Aristarchus, Mark, and Jesus called Justus—remained faithful with Paul. This has a sad sound to it.

12. Who ruled Rome when Paul was there?

Nero was emperor A.D. 54-68.

13. What was Nero's character?

He started his rule very well, but ended as one of the most monstrous, cruel, extravagant, and insane rulers in all history.

He became emperor through the scheming of his mother, Agrippina, when Claudius died.

Two good counsellors—Seneca, the Stoic philosopher who had been his tutor as a boy; and Burrus, the firm but fair Praetorian prefect (commander of the Praetorian guard)—guided Nero well during his first eight years.

Nero poisoned his step-brother in 55 A.D.

He became associated with a shameless woman named Poppaea. Agrippina and Poppaea fought for control of Nero and Poppaea won. Nero divorced and later put to death another wife, Octavia. Agrippina also was slain.

Burrus died in 62 (Paul was then in Rome), and Seneca was forced into retirement. Seneca was later put to death because Nero suspected him of a plot. Without the restraint of these wiser and better men Nero rapidly became an unrestrained tyrant.

Nero taxed the people heavily. He gambled at 100,000 sesterces a throw of the dice. He played musical instruments, and people flattered and applauded his playing out of fear for their lives.

After her earlier shameless career Poppaea later became a convert to Judaism! She successfully argued the causes of the Jews several times before her husband. Later Nero killed Poppaea in a fit of rage. Poppaea's being a Jewish proselyte certainly did not make Paul's position more favorable.

In A.D. 64 two-thirds of Rome burned, while Nero (according to tradition) played the fiddle. He himself may have had the fire started. The Romans became suspicious and angry toward Nero after the fire. To shift blame from himself Nero accused the Christians ("Atheists!") of this crime, and slew thousands of them, covering them with pitch and then burning them as human torches, and throwing them to the lions in the Coliseum.

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Nero's persecution was the first of ten great persecutions instigated by Roman emperors against Christians.

Heavy taxation and misgovernment caused a revolt against Nero. Roman troops from Spain under Galba led the revolt and marched on Rome. When Nero's bodyguard joined the rebels, he fled to the country and committed suicide. A brief civil war followed his death.

Not even a hint of the scandals and cruelties of Nero's reign appears in Paul's epistles. If Paul could live in Rome, where he could not have been unaware of the evils of the court of Nero, and still write a letter like Philippians, he truly was in the world, but not of the world.

14. Why was Paul's trial in Rome so long delayed?

Paul's accusers from Jerusalem do not seem to have shown up in Rome. They may never have arrived. As long as Paul was detained far away from them in Rome they were to a degree satisfied. Also there may have been a backlog of cases before the Roman court that delayed Paul's hearing.

15. What was the outcome of Paul's trial, or hearing?

Apparently he was released. He surely should have been. The Roman army officer in Judea had no real charge against him. Acts 23:29. Neither did the governor nor King Agrippa. Acts 25:25; 26:31.

Paul expressed optimism to the Philippians that he would soon be released. Phil. 2:24; 1:19. Then he would have opportunity to visit them.

16. What happened to Paul after his release?

Only traditions and implications from the epistles to Timothy and Titus give us information about this. Paul and Titus made a trip through the island of Crete. Titus 1:5. Paul perhaps visited Philippi and Colossae. Phm. 22; Phil. 2:24. He seems to have visited Spain. Apparently he returned to Rome about A.D. 67, was rearrested, and beheaded.

"For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." Phil. 1:21.

C. PHILIPPI AND MACEDONIA

1. Philippi was a city in northern Greece, the area called Macedonia in Paul's time. Philippi lay near the seacoast, eight miles inland from its seaport, Neapolis. Acts 16:11-12. It was on a

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plain to the north of a ridge of hills, and east to Mt. Pangaeus. Its site lay between the rivers Strymon and Nestus .

2. The position of Philippi in the plain dominated the road system of northern Greece. It commanded a pass on the road from Europe to Asia (the Via Egnatia). Paul generally chose such strategic locations as centers for his work, although, of course, he went to Philippi as the result of a divine call. Acts 16:6-10.
3. In ancient times the site of Philippi was called Krenides, which means "little fountains," from the numerous springs which arose in the mountains on the north, and ran into the neighboring marsh.
4. The mountains adjoining Krenides once contained rich deposits of gold and silver. However the gold and silver mines were mostly depleted before Paul's time.
5. In the earliest times of history Macedonia was part of Thrace, which was regarded as comprising all of Europe north of Greece. Ancient Macedonia did not reach to the sea, and its language was not Greek. By the seventh century B.C. various areas of Macedonia had fused and Edessa had become its center.
6. An exiled family of Greeks took over Macedonian rule about 520-500 B.C. They conquered to the coast of the Thermaic Gulf.
7. Philip of Macedon, father of Alexander the Great, assumed the throne in 360 B.C. He conquered several places, among them Krenides. He introduced colonists into the city and renamed it Philippi, after himself. Philip received an annual revenue of a thousand talents from the gold mining industry in the area.
8. The Romans defeated the Macedonians in 197 B.C. and again in 168 (at Pydna). Macedonia was subjugated and the whole country divided into four districts.
9. After a revolt against the Romans in 146 all Greece south of Macedonia and Epirus was formed into a Roman province named Achaia. Macedonia and Epirus were merged into a province called Macedonia.
10. Philippi became involved in the power struggle within the Roman empire during the first century B.C. The battle of Philippi (42 B.C.) was a decisive battle of history. Here Mark Anthony and Octavian (Augustus) defeated Brutus and Cassius and decided the future history of the Roman empire.
11. Octavian (Augustus) constituted Philippi a Roman *colony*,

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housing there partisans of Mark Anthony. He regarded these men as being undesirable in Italy. Acts 16:12.

12. Cities like Philippi which became Roman colonies were miniatures of Rome, using Roman coin, laws, and customs. They spoke Latin. They were self-governed, their affairs being regulated by their own magistrates. They were peopled by Roman army veterans on pensions and their families.

Note the eagerness of the Philippians to declare, "We are Romans." Acts 16:20-21.

13. Philippi flourished under the Romans. While Amphipolis was the capital, Philippi outstripped its rival and became the first city of the district. Acts 16:12. This happened in spite of the fact that the Romans never got as much from the mines around Philippi as the Macedonians had.
14. The number of Jewish residents in Philippi was small. There was no synagogue, only a place of prayer by the river. Acts 16:13. The residents regarded Jews as outsiders and trouble-makers. Acts 16:20.
15. There was a school of medicine in Philippi. This is interesting since Luke, the physician who wrote the gospel of Luke and the book of Acts, seems to have lived in Philippi.
16. The name Philippi has now disappeared from the location, and most of the old city is only ruins.

D. PAUL'S EXPERIENCES WITH THE PHILIPPIANS

1. Paul first came to Philippi about 52 A.D., during his second missionary trip. Acts 16 relates the story of this visit to Philippi. Philippi has the distinction of being the first city in Europe where Paul preached.
2. Paul came to Philippi with Timothy, Silas, and Luke.
3. Lydia was Paul's first convert in Philippi. Later at Philippi Paul cast out an evil (python) spirit from a girl. This touched off accusations against Paul, which were aggravated by local prejudice against Jews. Paul was beaten and imprisoned, but following an earthquake his jailor was converted. He was released the next day.
4. Paul's converts in Philippi reached into three levels of society: the lowest, the slave girl; the middle class, the jailer; the upper, Lydia.

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5. After Paul's departure the Philippian Christians experienced persecutions, as Paul had. Phil. 1:7, 28-30.
6. During his third missionary trip Paul revisited Philippi and other churches in Macedonia. This was about five years after his second trip. Luke rejoined Paul then, Acts 20:1-6.
7. A deep and true affection grew up between Paul and the Philippians, closer than that between him and any other church. Paul calls them, "My beloved, my joy and crown." Phil. 4:1.

This church supported Paul financially on numerous occasions, even when he went to Thessalonica just after leaving Philippi the first time. Phil. 4:15-16; II Cor. 11:9. They had a reputation for liberality, even though they and their land were in deep poverty following the civil wars. II Cor. 8:1-5.

8. Acts 20:6 is the last Biblical reference to Philippi until Paul's imprisonment, and the dispatching of the letter to the philippians.
9. The Philippians sent Paul another offering while he was in Rome, sending it by the hand of one of their members named Epaphroditus. Apparently they intended that Epaphroditus should remain with Paul in Rome to minister unto him. However, Epaphroditus became deathly sick in Rome, and only recovered because of God's mercy. Phil. 2:25-27.

The Philippians heard of his sickness, and Epaphroditus heard that they had heard of it. This worried him, for he feared they would worry over him.

This chain of events was the immediate occasion of Paul's writing Philippians. Epaphroditus was sent back with the letter, which included a gracious explanation as to why Paul had sent him back. Phil. 2:25-30.

E. CRITICAL QUESTIONS ABOUT AUTHORSHIP

1. What has been the prevailing view as to the authorship of Philippians?

It has been generally accepted as a genuine epistle of Paul, even by the critics who would question Paul's authorship of Ephesians.

2. What section of the letter has caused some questions about the unity of the letter?

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There is a sharp break in the tone of the letter at 3:2. Paul jumps from the reassuring news in chapter two into a stern condemnation of "dogs" and evil workers. This has caused some to say that the letter as we have it is really a composite of two ancient letters by Paul.

However, this is only a guess, and is not a necessary conclusion. The informal and unsystematic character of the letter helps to explain the sudden change of tone in it. Perhaps as Paul was writing it over a period of several days, bad news about these "dogs" in Philippi came to Paul, and the change in tone in the letter reflects a change in his own feelings.

3. What did the ancient Christian writers indicate about the authorship of Philippians? They indicate an acquaintance with it and an approval of it.

Polycarp's letter to the Philippians (about 120 A.D.) appeals to the epistle or epistles of Paul to the Philippian church.

Philippians is included in the Syriac New Testament called the Peshitto, of about 175 A.D. Also it is in the Old Latin version, about 200 A.D.

It is included in the list of Bible books accepted by Marcion about 150 A.D. (although Marcion admittedly was a heretic), and by Hippolytus (about 230 A.D.). It was used at the close of the second century by Irenaeus, Tertullian, and Clement of Alexandria.

F. OUTLINE OF PHILIPPIANS

1. Philippians is a difficult book to outline because it is intensely personal, and does not attempt to give a logical and progressive presentation of some particular subject. However certain large sections can be given separate headings
2. Outline (Memorize)
 - Salutation: 1:1-2 (Author, destination, greeting)
 - A. Thanks and prayer for the Philippians; 1:3-11.
 - B. Progress of the gospel in Rome; 1:12-18.
 - C. Paul's hopes; 1:19-26.
 - D. Exhortation to a worthy manner of life; 1:27—2:18.
 - The example of Christ; 2:5-11.

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- E. News about Timothy and Epaphroditus; 2:19-30.
- F. False teachers contrasted with Paul's example; 3:1—4:1.
- G. Final exhortations and thanks; 4:2-23.

- 1. To individuals to be in harmony; 4:2-3.
- 2. To joy; 4:4-7.
- 3. To right thinking; 4:8-9.
- 4. Thanks for their gift; 4:10-20.
- 5. Salutations; 4:21-23.

3. Although the above outline does not show much of a systematic development of ideas in Philippians, there is still a oneness about the book. Every chapter reflects of the unifying topic of RIGHT-MINDEDNESS, the good mind!

PHIL. 1—*A mind of thanks.*

Paul was thankful for the fellowship of the Philippians (1:3-11), for gospel victories (1:12-18), and for the hope of salvation (1:19-26).

PHIL. 2—*The mind of Christ.*

All of the feelings and acts that Christians should have and do are motivated by having the mind of Christ within us.

Timothy was commended because his mind was set on seeking the things of Christ. (2:19-21).

PHIL. 3—*A mind of right values.*

Paul counted everything loss for Christ (3:8). His superb Hebrew ancestry and training was counted refuse that he might gain Christ. "Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded." (3:15).

PHIL. 4—*A mind of many virtues.*

The last chapter contains several paragraphs not directly related to one another, but all reflecting the good mind. They seem to be fruits growing on the tree of a good Christian mind.

Unity—"Be of the same (a united) mind." (4:2)

Joy—"Rejoice in the Lord." (4:4)

Clean thinking—"Think on these (virtuous) things."
(4:8)

Contentment—"In whatsoever state I am, therein (I am) content." (4:11)

Thankfulness—(4:18)

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G. QUESTIONS OVER THE INTRODUCTORY SECTIONS

A. *General facts about Philippians.*

1. Who was its author?
2. What was the date and place of composition?
3. What was the feeling between Paul and the Philippian church?
4. Give four descriptive expressions that describe the epistle to the Philippians.
5. What act of the Philippians caused Paul to send the epistle?
6. Who was Epaphroditus?
7. How are the doctrinal sections in Philippians presented?
8. Does Philippians emphasize holy living, or is this one of the less prominent subjects in the book?
9. What (or who) is at the heart of the gospel and of life, as it is presented in Philippians?

B. *Paul the apostle in Rome.*

1. Why is it necessary to know something about Paul's experiences in Rome to understand Philippians?
2. When did Paul arrive in Rome?
3. How long was Paul in Rome?
4. Under what circumstances did Paul come to Rome?
5. Were there Christians in Rome before Paul arrived there?
How do you know?
6. Where did Paul live in Rome?
7. Was Paul's situation in Rome comfortable?
8. Could Paul continue preaching and teaching in Rome?
9. How did Paul's presence in Rome affect the Christians there?
10. What letters did Paul write from Rome? (Name four.)
11. Name six guests or companions that Paul had in Rome.
12. How did Paul get along with the Jews in Rome?
13. Who ruled Rome during the time when Paul was there?
14. What was the character of this Roman ruler?
15. What hints of the scandals and cruelties of the Roman emperor appear in Paul's epistles?
16. Why was Paul's court trial so long delayed?
17. What was the outcome of Paul's trial or hearing?

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C. *Philippi and Macedonia.*

1. Where was Philippi?
2. What was the name of the area, or province, wherein Philippi was located?
3. Why was the location of Philippi strategic?
4. What was the ancient name for Philippi?
5. What mineral resources once were obtained around Philippi?
6. Who gave Philippi its name? About when did this occur?
7. What nation took over Macedonia during the second century B.C.?
8. Who made Philippi a "colony"?
9. What were the Roman colonies like?
10. Were there many Jews in Philippi?
11. What "first" in the experiences of Paul can the city of Philippi claim?
12. What physician seems to have lived in Philippi?

D. *Paul's experiences with the Philippians.*

1. During which missionary trip did Paul first visit Philippi?
2. Who accompanied Paul on that trip?
3. Name three converts to Christ in Philippi.
4. Did the Philippian church have pleasant or harsh experiences?
5. When did Paul revisit Philippi?
6. Where did the Philippians send offerings to Paul following his first visit with them?
7. Were the Philippians poor or rich?
8. Who bore the Philippians' offering to Paul in Rome?
9. What happened to this messenger in Rome?

E. *Critical Questions about Authorship.*

1. What has been the prevailing view as to the authorship of Philippians?
2. What point in, or portion of, the letter has caused some to question the unity of the letter.
3. What did the ancient Christian writers indicate about the authorship of Philippians?

F. *Outline.*

1. Write the outline of Philippians from memory, including the Scripture references.

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2. What unifying topic is reflected in every chapter of Philippians?
3. What are the topics suggested for each of the four chapters?

Memory Work

The following passages should be memorized as the epistle is studied:

1:3-6, 21-24, 27.

2:1-11, 12-18.

3:7-14, 20-21.

4:4-8, 13, 19.

PHILIPPIANS CHAPTER ONE

A MIND OF THANKS

The things we commonly think about and the way we feel are the most important thing about us. The apostle Paul gave us an example of right-mindedness. In Philippians chapter one he exhibits a mind of *thanks*.

1. *Personal thanks*; (1:3-8)

Paul liked people. He liked the Philippians. He was not thankful merely for God's blessings in an abstract way, but for people individually and particularly. He appreciated the Philippians for their partnership with him in his work. His thankfulness for them led him to feel a confidence about their future deeds and ways of life.

2. *Prayerful thanks*; (1:9-11)

Paul prayed that their love might abound (overflow) more and more, leading them to better knowledge and more fruitfulness.

3. *Optimistic thanks*; (1:12-26)

Optimistic thanks for *past* events—In the confinement of arrest in Rome Paul had won many to Christ, even from the Praetorian Guard. Other Christians had been made bolder. Even the few Christian preachers who were envious of Paul and tried to bring misery upon him, were still preaching the gospel, and Paul rejoiced in this. (1:12-18)

Optimistic thanks for *future* hopes—Whether Paul lived or died made no real difference to him. If he died, that was gain to him. If he lived, his life would bring progress and joy to Philippians. (1:19-26)

4. *Concerned thanks*; (1:27-30)

Paul was concerned that their manner of life be worthy of the gospel, and that they be not frightened by enemies and by suffering.

Outline of 1:1-2

Salutation; 1:1-2

1. Senders; 1:1
2. Recipients; 1:1
3. Greeting; 1:2

1:1. Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, to all the saints in Christ Jesus that are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons; 2. Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Translation and Paraphrase

1:1. Paul and Timothy, bondservants of Jesus Christ, (send this epistle) to all the saints (the holy brethren) in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, (along) with (your) bishops (overseers or elders) and deacons (ministers or servants). 2. (May) grace (be) to you (all) and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ (the Messiah).

Notes

1. In New Testament times letters were started by giving the author's name first, and then the recipient's name.

Paul usually wrote an expression of thanks and prayer for his readers right after the salutation. This was followed by the body of the letter, which was closed with such concluding items as greetings from various people, and the benediction. Paul followed this pattern in Philippians.

2. Paul does not refer to himself as an *apostle* as he begins Philippians. The omission of this title is in keeping with the affectionate character of the letter. The Philippians were believers. Paul did not need to approach them with the tone of apostolic authority.
3. Timothy's name is added as co-sender of the epistle. Timothy was well-known to the Philippians. He came there with Paul on both visits to Philippi. See Acts 16:11-40; 19:21-22; Phil. 2:22.

Timothy seems to have grown up in Lystra (in Asia Minor), under the instruction of a godly mother (Eunice) and grandmother (Lois). II Timothy 1:5; Acts 16:1. He joined Paul and Silas when they came through Lystra during Paul's

second missionary trip. Timothy continued with Paul during his third missionary trip, and was with Paul in Rome during his first imprisonment, and afterwards. He was a loyal, constant, beloved, and effective helper to Paul.

4. While Timothy's name is joined with Paul's in the greeting, the frequent references to *my* and *me* instead of *our* and *us* in the book show that Paul was indeed the primary, if not the sole author. 1:3-4.
5. While Paul and Timothy sent the letter, in the truest sense Philippians is Christ's letter to the church.
6. Paul calls himself and Timothy *bondservants*; that is, slaves. While Paul was not servile, he was utterly a bondservant of Christ, bought, completely dependent, and undividedly loyal. Romans 1:1; Gal. 1:10.
7. The expression "servants of Christ Jesus" points back to the Old Testament, where the prophets are often called *servants* of God. See Amos 3:7; Jer. 7:25; Ezra 9:11; Daniel 9:6; Joshua 1:2.

Also Jesus himself was called the servant of God. Isa 42:1; 52:13; Matt. 12:15-18.

Thus the use of the title *servant* by Paul associates him with such honored servants of God as the prophets and with Christ himself.

8. The *saints* at Philippi were the *holy* ones, or the *separated* ones at Philippi. All Christians are saints. They are not called saints because they do not sin (See I John 1:8), but because they are set apart to God. The fundamental meaning of the word *holy* is that of setting apart, of being devoted to God. Compare Exodus 19:5-6.

In Christ Jesus we are set apart from the world, acquitted of all sins, and called to a life of good works.

9. Such expressions as "in Christ Jesus" are exceedingly common in Paul's writings. *In Christ Jesus* occurs 48 times; *in Christ* 34 times, and *in the Lord* 50 times. The doctrine that we are in Christ was a favorite of Paul's, and is accentuated in Philippians.
10. The Philippian church was organized with bishops and deacons. When these officers were selected for the Philippian church is not known. The churches of New Testament times seem to have selected their own elders and deacons, after the qualifications had been laid down for such offices by the inspired apostles and prophets.

11. The bishop (this word means overseer or superintendent) is the same officer as the one elsewhere called *elder*. Compare Acts 20:17, 28; Titus 1:5-7. Several elders were appointed for each individual church. Acts 14:23. The practice of having one bishop as overseer over a number of churches, or over some vast area, is a work of the devil.
12. Deacons (this word means servant, attendant, or minister) were men selected to do various services required by the church, as needs arose. Study Acts 6:1-6; I Timothy 3:8-13.
13. Paul began and ended every epistle of his (except Hebrews) with a wish for *grace* upon his readers.

Grace means favor, undeserved favor. It also refers to the good effects that God's favor brings to us. To gain a sense of our debt to God for His grace, and our total dependence on this favor, is to make a giant stride toward Christian maturity. See Hebrews 4:16.

14. In Paul's view *peace* was the state of tranquility and blessedness which rose out of reconciliation with God. We can experience peace amidst persecutions and poverty. Those not reconciled to God have inward strife and discontent, even in wealth and ease.

Outline of 1:3-11

A. Thanks and prayer for the Philippians; 1:3-11

1. Thanks: 1:3-8
 - a. Thanks given always; 1:3
 - b. Thanks given with joy; 1:4-5
 - c. Thanks given with confidence; 1:6-8
 - (1) Confidence that the Lord will perfect them; 1:6
 - (2) Confidence is the correct attitude for Paul; 1:7-8
2. Prayer; 1:9-11
 - a. Requests; 1:9-10a
 - (1) That their love may abound in knowledge; 1:9-10a
—The result of knowledgeable love is that they will approve excellent things.
 - (2) That they may be sincere and void of offence; 1:10b-11a
—Unto the day of Christ.
—Being filled with the fruit of righteousness.
 - b. Purpose of the prayer—the praise and glory of God; 1:11b

3. I thank my God upon all my remembrance of you, 4. always in every supplication of mine on behalf of you all making my supplication with joy,

Translation and Paraphrase

3. I give thanks to my God in all (my) remembrance of you, 4. always in every supplication of mine in behalf of all of you making my supplication with joy,

Notes

1. These verses are easy to understand. They need more to be imitated than to be interpreted. Paul gave thanks for his brethren. Do we give thanks for our brethren?
2. The word *supplication* used here means a prayer emphasizing the aspect of need. Even in such prayers as supplications the Philippians were mentioned with thankfulness. Paul's prayers in behalf of his needs were not selfish nor self-centered. They were joyful prayers involving others.

5. for your fellowship in furtherance of the gospel from the first day until now;

Translation and Paraphrase

5. (I give thanks for you) because of your fellowship (your share in, and your participation) in (and for) the (work of) gospel, from the first day (when you received Christ until (right) now.

Notes

1. The word *fellowship* is from the Greek *koinonia*, which refers to the share one has in anything, participation, association, or communion. It may refer to the act of sharing a thing in common, or to the thing shared. The word is variously translated as *communication* (Phm. 6), *communion* (I Cor. 10:16), *contribution* (Rom. 15:26), *distribution* (II Cor. 9:13), and *fellowship*.

The cognate verb (*koinoneo*) is variously rendered "be made partakers of," "be partakers of," "communicate," "distribute."

2. In Christ we have fellowship in ministering to people's needs (II Cor. 8:4), fellowship of the mystery of the gospel (Eph. 3:9), fellowship of the Spirit (Phil. 2:1), fellowship of Christ's sufferings (Phil. 3:10), fellowship with God and one another (I John 1:3).
3. The Philippians had a fellowship in the furtherance of the gospel with Paul. The preposition *in* in 1:5 is the Greek *eis*, which suggests that their fellowship was not just *in* the gospel, but was *directed toward* the goal of the gospel. The Philippians' part in the gospel had been continual from the first day they received the Christ until the time Paul wrote this letter to them.

6. being confident of this very thing, that he who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Jesus Christ:

Translation and Paraphrase

6. (I am thankful for you because I am) persuaded (and convinced) that he who (God) began in you (plural) a good work (the work of transforming and using you) will carry it out to completion, (even) until the day of Christ Jesus (when he comes again).

Notes

1. God is at work in the Christian. See Phil. 2:12-13. God will continue his work within the Christian until the end of his life. God prunes us like a vinedresser prunes grape vines, that we may bear more fruit. John 15:2. We are transformed to become like Christ. (II Cor. 3:18).
2. A day is coming called the day of Jesus Christ. It will be HIS day. Every eye shall see him. (Rev. 1:7). Every knee will bow, and every tongue confess. Phil. 2:10. Saints will marvel and glorify Him. II Thess. 1:10. Sinners will wail because of him. Rev. 1:7. Satan and the enemies of Jesus had their day long ago on Golgotha. But we may say of the day of Christ that "His day is marching on!"

7. even as it is right for me to be thus minded on behalf 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 with me of grace. 8. For God is my witness, how I long after you all in the tender mercies of Christ Jesus.

Translation and Paraphrase

7. (I have this confidence concerning you), just as it is befitting for me to think (in) this (way) about you all. (And why is it befitting that I have this confidence about you?) Because I have you in my heart (and isn't it natural for us to have confidence in those we love?), since you are all partakers with me in the grace (of God); (you have been partakers) both in my bonds (imprisonment), and in the verbal defence, and (in the work of) making firm the gospel.

8. For (as surely as) God is my witness, I long for you all with the (very) heart (lit. bowels) of Christ Jesus.

Notes

1. Paul's reasoning in vs. 7 is a little hard to follow. Verse 7 is an explanation as to why he felt confident that God would continue to work within them (stated in vs. 6). The explanation is that it was right, or just, for Paul to feel this way. And why was it right? The implied answer seems to be that anyone should have confidence in those who are as dear to him as the Philippians were dear to Paul.
2. Paul and the Philippians had been joint-partakers of God's grace. Though 700 miles separated them, God's power was as close to the Philippians as it was to Paul.
3. The word *partakers* (Gr. *sugkoinos*) comes from the same root as the word *fellowship*. It means a joint sharer, or one who partakes with another. In three respects the Philippians had been partakers with Paul:
 - a. Partakers in *bonds*. Their contribution to Paul while he was in bonds identified them with Paul. Compare Heb. 10:32-33! Furthermore some of them may actually have been placed in bonds after Paul's departure. Phil. 1:29-30.
 - b. Partakers in the *defense of the gospel*. This refers to the verbal defense, or speech, as that given at a trial. Paul often defended the gospel by giving answers to those who spoke falsely about the gospel. Phil. 1:16; Acts 24:10; 26:1.

Sometimes people say, "The gospel does not need defending; it only needs preaching." This is not completely true. Paul defended the gospel. Often it is true, however, that the clear presentation of the gospel is its best defense.

- c. Partakers in the *confirmation* of the gospel. Confirmation is the act of making firm. This is done by teaching and by exhorting. The Philippians shared with Paul in doing this.
4. In verse 8 Paul seems to assert that his love for the Philippians is so great that it can hardly be believed. Therefore he calls upon God to witness to the truth of what he said.

Paul longed for them with the very same kind of longing that is in the heart of Christ himself. Do you have any Christian brethren that you can truthfully say you love like that?

The words "tender mercies" in vs. 8 (KJV *bowels*) is, literally *bowels*. Ancient people spoke of the bowels (the nobler bowels, stomach, liver, lungs, etc., rather than entrails) as being the seat of the affections. Actually this makes just as much (or more) sense as it does for us to speak of the *heart* as the center of the emotions and affections.

9. And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and all discernment; 10. so that ye may approve the things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and void of offence unto the day of Christ; 11. being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are through Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.

Translation and Paraphrase

9. And I pray this: (first) that your love may abound (overflow) yet more and more, in (ways directed by) precise knowledge and all discernment;

10. (And may this knowledgeable love bring you to the point) that you may test the things that differ (in this world with its conflicting values, and approve the things that are excellent); (then, secondly, I pray) that you (all) may be (as) sincere (as sunshine) and without offense unto the day of Christ,

11. being filled (not merely with inward sincerity but) with (the outward) fruit of righteousness (which comes) through Jesus Christ; (and all of these things will work out) unto (the) glory and praise of God.

Notes

1. Vss. 9-11 contain Paul's prayer for the Philippians. Basically this is a prayer that they may have an educated love and that they be sincere. Note that their educated love was to lead them

to approve the things that are excellent, not the trashy things in this world. Note that the things that Paul prayed for were all to result in glory and praise to God.

2. If there was any one problem that especially beset the Philippian church, it seems to have been the problem of dissension and lack of love between some of the members. This seems to be suggested by Phil. 2:3-4 and 4:2. Therefore Paul prayed that their love might abound (that is, not be merely adequate, but enough to overflow).
3. This love was not only to be abundant, but it was to be a knowledgeable love. It was to abound in knowledge (*epignosis*, precise love) and all discernment. Love without knowledge is useless sentimentality and self-defeating. We must discern what is truly good for those we love, as well as have a loving feeling toward them.
4. The first part of 1:10 may be translated in two ways, both of which, however, come out with about the same idea:
 - (1) that you may approve the things that are excellent (Gr. *diaphero*).
 - (2) that you may distinguish (or test) the things that differ (A.S.V. margin).

The verb *diaphero* in both classical and New Testament Greek meant (a) to excell (Matt. 6:26; 10:31; 12:12; Luke 12:7), and (b) to differ (I Cor. 15:41; Gal. 4:1; 2:6. Thus either of the above translations is suitable.

5. In our lives we find ourselves confronted with MANY differing things, and we must choose what we shall accept. As Christians we ought to choose the things that are excellent and not those that are trashy. This applies not only to food, but to everything—to reading, to entertainment, to music, to clothing, to art, to friends, etc., etc.
6. Paul prayed that we might be *sincere*. The etymology of this word (*heilikerimes*) is uncertain. Some think that it comes from *heile* (meaning sun), and thus we are to be as sincere as sunshine! Others say it comes from the verb *eilo* meaning to turn. According to this meaning we are to be sincere enough to stand being rotated about and inspected in every part.
7. "Void of offence" means "Not causing others to stumble."
8. The word *fruit* in 1:11 is singular, like *fruit* in Gal. 5:22. The fruit of righteousness may be single, when thought of as a whole, but it does come in many forms and flavors.

9. If the fruit of righteousness comes through Jesus Christ, it is easy to see why the world is such an unrighteous place. The people of the world either don't know of Christ or have rejected Him. Either way the world is deprived of the fruit of righteousness.

Outline of 1:12-18

- B. Progress of the gospel in Rome: 1:12-18
1. Report of Progress; 1:12
 2. Ways in which progress has occurred; 1:13-18
 - a. His bonds became manifest in Christ; 1:13
 - b. Most of the brethren are bolder to speak; 1:14
 - c. Christ is preached, even though insincerely; 1:15-18
 - (1) Some preach from envy and strife
 - (2) Some preach from good will
 - (3) Paul rejoiced in all the preaching; 1:18

12. Now I would have you know, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the progress of the gospel;

Translation and Paraphrase

12. But I (do) want you to know, brothers, that the things (which have happened) to me have come (along in such a way that they have worked out) for the advancement of the gospel.

Notes

1. Philippians has more of a newsy quality about it than Paul's other epistles. Yet the news is such that it builds up the soul, rather than merely satisfying the curiosity.
2. The word translated "furtherance" (or progress) is *prokope*, and refers to that which cuts open a way for an army or any forward-moving thing.

13. so that my bonds became manifest in Christ throughout the whole praetorian guard, and to all the rest;

Translation and Paraphrase

13. (The result has been) that my bonds have become plainly recognized (as associated with my being) in Christ—(This has become known throughout the whole Praetorium (the imperial guard) and to all the rest (who are around me)).

Notes

1. Paul reports that now in Rome the chains and bonds he wears are plainly recognized as being "in Christ," that is, that the wearer is in Christ and the bonds are the result of his being in Christ. They are not looked upon as bonds worn by one caught in a crime, but they have become a badge of Paul's being in Christ.
2. The phrase *in Christ* goes with *manifest*, rather than with *bonds*. The bonds were manifest as being the bonds of one in Christ. Paul's imprisonment became a matter of notoriety for his being in Christ. Confinement for such a cause would attract attention and inquiry.
3. Even the Praetorian guard (KJV, the *palace*) had come to realize that Paul was in bonds for being in Christ.

The Praetorium was the imperial guard. Originally this body was instituted by Augustus Caesar with 10,000 select soldiers. They were stationed in Rome and in nearby towns. Tiberius Caesar concentrated them all in Rome in a permanent strongly fortified camp. The name Praetorium nonetheless refers to the soldiers themselves, and is not used in a local sense of their camp. These soldiers had special privileges and double pay. In later years they became king-makers, with power to install and depose emperors.

Paul's gospel made a deep impression even among this rough body of men. The soldiers guarding Paul heard him teach his visitors, or conversed with him themselves at other times. When off duty, the guards would relate to others their experiences with Paul.

4. Paul's bonds were not only manifest to be in Christ among the Praetorian guard, but to all the rest, to all who saw or heard of him.

14. and that most of the brethren in the Lord, being confident through my bonds, are more abundantly bold to speak the word of God without fear.

Translation and Paraphrase

14. And (I want you to know also that) the greater part of the brethren in the Lord (here), being persuaded by (the example of what I have done in) my bonds, are (now) daring more

abundantly to speak the word of God fearlessly (than they ever did before).

Notes

1. Still more good news! Because of Paul's presence and example, many (that is, more, the greater part) of the Christians in Rome were now more confident and bold to speak of Christ without fear than ever before.
2. The power of one person who is courageous and faithful to stir up many who are willing but hesitant can be plainly seen in this verse.
3. This verse sounds very up-to-date. We are mostly fearful and hesitant to speak boldly of Christ in daily conversation with unbelieving associates. Yet the presence of one committed Christian who does this naturally and effectively will stimulate others greatly. Which are you, the bold example, or the hesitant follower?

15. Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some also of good will: 16. the one *do it* of love, knowing that I am set for the defence of the gospel; 17. but the other proclaim Christ of faction, not sincerely, thinking to raise up affliction for me in my bonds.

Translation and Paraphrase

15. (It is regretfully true that) some indeed are proclaiming Christ because of (their) envy (of me) and (because of their love of) strife; but some also (are preaching) through good will.

16. The one (group do what they do) out of love, realizing that I am appointed for (the) defense of the gospel,

17. but the other proclaim Christ out of factiousness, not sincerely, thinking to stir up affliction (upon me) in my bonds.

Notes

1. Paul's report about those in Rome who preached in such a way as to make people dislike Paul, while at the same time they were (at least supposedly) preaching Christ, sounds like bad news for Paul. But Paul took an utterly unselfish view about it, and rejoiced that Christ was being preached, even by these envious and factious speakers.

2. The question as to who these preachers are who preached Christ from motives of envy and strife has exercised the minds of commentators very much. Many suggest that they were the Jewish Christians who tried to force Gentile Christians to keep the law of Moses in addition to their faith in Christ. Such people were called Judaizers. Paul strongly condemned these Jewish legalists in Phil. 3:2-8.
3. The truth of the matter is that we just do not really know who these troublesome preachers were. It is hard for us to believe that Paul could rejoice that *Christ* was preached when the preaching consisted of demands to keep the law of Moses. Such Judaizing preachers are called "evil workers" and "dogs" in Phil. 3:2. The book of Galatians had been written several years before, and it in Paul had passionately condemned the binding of the law upon Christians.

All of this makes us feel that the Roman preachers who gave Paul trouble were not the Judaizers, but only certain unknown brethren, possibly Gentiles (since few Jewish brethren were with Paul in Rome; See Col. 4:11), whose hearts were deeply infected by envy and party-spirit.

4. If this be so, it is not necessary to conclude that Paul approved of half-false denominational-style preaching, or that we should do the same. There was nothing wrong, as far as we can tell, with the content of this preaching, except the statements of personal selfishness and envy that got into it. Paul gladly overlooked these, even he was the victim of the evil-speaking.
5. The factitious Roman preachers who through envy belittled Paul were like the Pharisees who through envy delivered Jesus to Pilate. Matt. 27:18; Mark 15:10.

However, let us not condemn these brethren too harshly, until we are utterly sure that we have never spoken about (or against) some brother so as to belittle him and exalt ourselves. If we have been the victims of such remarks, let us pray for grace to look upon them as Paul did.

6. Paul was set for, that is, appointed or destined for, the *defence* of the gospel. Compare Phil. 1:7. Not every man has the ability to make conspicuous public oral defence of the gospel. Such people become prominent, and frequently are the objects of criticism by their brethren who are less conspicuous, but are jealous of their prominence.

We must ever be cautious not to tear down the "big men" God has set in the church in order to exalt "little men" like most of us. They have too many enemies outside the church to need critics from their own brothers in Christ.

7. "Preaching Christ of faction" means preaching Christ in such a way as to build up our own little faction, clique, or denomination. *Faction* is party spirit, electioneering, and promoting our loyal (sic!) group. Too often church members will work harder to elect their special friends to some church office than they will to tell sinners of Jesus.
8. Those proclaiming Christ out of factious motives were indeed *thinking*, Paul says, but oh such thinking! Their thinking was based largely upon feeling alone, and was controlled by their own personal desires. Such thinking as this sought to raise up more affliction for Paul, even when he was already in chains.

18. What then? only that in every way, whether in pretence or in truth, Christ is proclaimed; and therein I rejoice, yea, and will rejoice.

Translation and Paraphrase

18. What (is my reaction to this)? Only (this) that in every manner—whether in pretense or in truth—Christ is being proclaimed, and in this I am (sincerely) rejoicing, and what is more I shall keep on rejoicing.

Notes

1. What then indeed? What if it is true that some men here in Rome are preaching Christ in such a way that I am getting more affliction because of their words? Suppose this is so, so what?

Paul leaves this annoying side of the case to itself, and passes on to the encouraging aspect. Christ is being preached and in this he rejoices and will continue to rejoice.

Outline of 1:19-26

- C. Paul's confidence in life or death; 1:19-26
 1. Confidence that his experiences would turn out to salvation; 1:19
 - a. Through your supplication.
 - b. Through the supply of the Spirit.

2. Confidence that he would always magnify Christ; 1:20-26
 - a. He would not be put to shame; 1:20.
 - b. He would magnify Christ either by life or death; 1:21-23.
 - c. He felt sure he would remain with them; 1:24-26.

19. For I know that this shall turn out to my salvation, through your supplication and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ,

Translation and Paraphrase

10. For I know that this (that is, my experiences) will turn out for me unto salvation (by salvation I mean my preservation and deliverance, both now and hereafter), through your prayer (of supplication) and (through the assistance provided in the) supply of (benefits given by) the Spirit of Jesus Christ.

Notes

1. Salvation means (1) safety, that is, deliverance from difficulties; (2) general health and well-being; and (3) eternal life in heaven.

Paul's reference to salvation here seems to refer more to the first two meanings than to the third. He expected to be acquitted of the accusations against him and to be released.

2. Paul had two helps that gave him confidence that he would get salvation.

(1) The prayers of his brethren, the Philippians in particular. Prayer is powerful.

(2) The supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ. (This is only a name for the Holy Spirit. Compare Romans 8:9.) This can mean either that the Holy Spirit himself is supplied to us to strengthen us (which is true), or that a supply of strength and intensity of faith is given to us by the Holy Spirit.

Whether the *supply* referred to is the Spirit himself, or to the various forms of assistance supplied by the Spirit, the net result is the same. Either meaning is satisfactory. We prefer the latter interpretation, but there is negligible difference.

20. according to my earnest expectation and hope, that in nothing shall I be put to shame, but *that* with all boldness, as always, *so* now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether by life, or by death. 21. For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

Translation and Paraphrase

20. (My confidence in salvation is) in accord with my constant expectation and hope, (and my expectation is this,) that (1) I shall in nothing (ever) be put to shame (never silenced, defeated, nor shown to be in error!), but (2) that (on the contrary) while (I continue to live) in all boldness as (I) always (have, that) Christ shall exalted (and magnified) in my body, whether through life or through death.

21. For to me to live is Christ (His life lives in me), and to die is gain.

Notes

1. Paul's confidence that he was going to be released from imprisonment in Rome, and come back to see the Philippians as a free and effective preacher, was no new feeling for him. He always had optimistic expectations about the course of his life. His present optimism was in full accord with his normal earnest expectations and hope.
2. The true man of God is never discouraged and pessimistic, gloomy and inwardly defeated. He knows that the Lord will win the victory, and he knows that he is on the Lord's side.
3. The root meaning of the word *expectation* (Gr. *apokaradokia*) means an intense watching, with the head turned from all other objects. May God help us to have such a magnificent confidence in His direction in our lives that nothing else will look important to us.
4. Paul's constant confidence led him to have two particular hopes, one negative and one positive:
 - (1) In nothing would he be put to shame, never being silenced by adversaries, nor shown to be in error.
 - (2) Christ would be magnified, that is, honored and exalted and made to appear great by the things which Paul did in his body. See Acts 19:17: "The name of the Lord Jesus was magnified."
5. Paul's hope that Christ would be magnified in his body was Paul's confidence whether he lived or died, because to Paul to live was Christ, and to die was gain.
6. Wm. Barclay, in analyzing the ways that for Paul it was true that "to live is Christ," says that Christ is the beginning, the continuing, the end (or goal), the inspiration, the task, the

strength, and the reward of life. Each of these ideas deserves a lot of meditation.

7. For the Christian dying is gain, because we depart and be with Christ. Compare Phil. 1:23. The Christian is only two or three heartbeats from being with Christ forever. The sinner is only two or three heartbeats from being separated from the Savior forever in torments.
8. Phil. 1:21, 23 are two of numerous passages throughout the Bible that rather clearly teach that the spirit of man continues a conscious existence after death, even before the general resurrection of the bodies of all men.

If there is no conscious existence after death, it was foolish for Paul to desire to depart (die) and be with Christ. If we know nothing after death, and will not see Jesus until the resurrection, Paul could not have hastened his being with the Lord by dying. The doctrines of soul-sleeping and annihilation just do not fit Paul's teachings.

9. Other passages which give evidence of conscious existence after death include:

II Cor. 5:6, 8-9. To be absent from the body means to be at home with the Lord.

Luke 16:19ff. The story of the rich man and Lazarus. There is no convincing reason for not taking this story rather literally.

Acts 7:59. Stephen, as he was dying, called, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Stephen expected to go where Jesus was, and so do I.

Matt. 17:3. Elijah and Moses were alive and recognizable thousands of years after their presence on earth.

Genesis 25:8; Num. 21:24; Deut. 32:50. Many Old Testament saints "were gathered to their fathers," when they were not buried in the tombs of their fathers, or anywhere near them. When, then, did this gathering take place? Unless the expression is purely figurative, it seems to be best to understand that they were gathered together in that realm beyond the grave.

Ezekiel 32:31. Pharaoh in Sheol (Hades) sees the multitude of his host and speaks with them.

II Samuel 12:23. David expected to go unto his dead son.

10. Such passages as Psalm 115:17 and Eccl. 9:5 are set forth by some as presumably teaching that the dead know nothing and are unconscious. Since the Scriptures never contradict them-

selves, and such a meaning contradicts other plainer passages, this cannot be the true teaching of the passages referred to.

It is true that the *bodies* of the dead know nothing, and differ in no way from the dead bodies of beasts. This is probably the point of these verses. Also these verses may simply reflect the fact that in the Old Testament dispensation that God had not yet fully revealed the facts about life and immortality as He has now revealed them through Christ. For it was Christ who brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. II Tim. 1:10. Note that He did not bring it into existence; he brought it to light.

22. But if to live in the flesh,—if this shall bring fruit from my work, then what I shall chose I know not.

Translation and Paraphrase

22. But if (it happens to be my lot) to continue living in (the) flesh, (well) this (will produce) to me fruit of labor; and (therefore) I cannot make known what I would (really) choose (as my lot, since I really do not know myself!).

Notes

1. Paul found himself in a quandry, wanting both to die and to live. So he weighed the alternatives. If he lived, that would bring to him further fruit of his labor on earth. This to him was as appealing as the idea of dying and going to be with the Lord. So he says, "What I should choose I know not."
2. Paul had no uncertainty about what would happen if he lived, as the inclusion of the italicized *if* in the American Standard Version might suggest. He took it for granted that fruitfulness would follow if he continued living on earth. We need not ever be in doubt that we shall bear fruit, if we speak forth our gospel clearly and regularly. See Gal. 6:9 and Isaiah 55:10-11.
3. Every saint must come to this condition of mind-willingness to die, and yet desire to stay on earth and work.
4. Perhaps we may wonder how Paul could assume that by wishing it he could influence the course of events, and determine whether he lived or died. In truth he probably couldn't; none of us can. And yet a "death wish" very frequently leads people to give up their interests in life, and to give up trying, and to pine themselves to death. Paul did not yield to this. He

retained his zest for life, and his confidence that he could do something worthwhile, even when he was old and in prison. He did not join the duet of Jonah and Elijah, "We wish we could die." (Jonah 4:3, 8; I Kings 19:4).

23. But I am in a strait betwixt the two, having the desire to depart and be with Christ; for it is very far better: 24. yet to abide in the flesh is more needful for your sake.

Translation and Paraphrase

23. I am hard pressed (from the two sides), having the desire to depart (that is, to die) and be with Christ, for this is very much better (Gr. more better by much),

24. but to continue (or remain) in the flesh (is) more necessary for you (plural).

Notes

1. Paul was in a *strait*. A strait is a narrow place, as a neck of water between two land areas (e.g., the straits of Gibraltar and the straits of Magellan). He was close to both sides, to living and to dying. He found both directions appealing. He was pressed, squeezed in by both alternatives.
2. The expression "to depart" means to break up, as the breaking up of a camp; also to loose, as of loosing the mooring ropes of a ship so it can sail. Thus in Paul's use it meant to break up the camp in this life, and loose life's moorings so as to move to another world.
3. See notes on 1:21 about our departing to be with Christ. The doctrine of immortality is very precious to God's saints.
4. To Paul to depart and be with Christ was better by much than to remain on earth.

But just at that time he was needed on earth, and was emotionally and intellectually drawn toward living and helping the Philippians, since that was more needful for them than his death.

The courage of the Philippians might have faltered if Paul had just then died in bonds. The mystery of lawlessness was already working, and Paul was needed to help them resist this apostasy.

25. And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide, yea, and abide with you all, for your progress and joy in the faith; 26. that your glorying may abound in Christ Jesus in me through my presence with you again.

Translation and Paraphrase

25. And being persuaded of this (the necessity of living to help you) I know that I shall remain and continue near to you for your progress and joy in the faith,

26. So that your exultation (and joy) may abound (and be overflowing) in Christ Jesus by means of me, through my coming again to you.

Notes

1. Paul's conviction that he was needed assured him that he would continue living in the flesh. What was best for man was the thing that God would cause to happen.
2. Paul would not only just abide (Gr. *meno*), but abide with (Gr. *parameno*) them.
3. Paul himself experienced progress in the gospel (Phil. 1:12), and joy (Phil. 1:3). His presence with the Philippians would cause them to share such progress and joy.
4. Progress and joy are necessary things in the lives of Christians. Without them our motivation and energy lags, and we soon lag all over.
5. "Glorying" means "our cause or ground for glorying," rather than the act of glorying or boasting.
6. Evidently the Philippians were praying for Paul's release. Compare 1:19. When this release came to pass, they would glory in Christ because their prayers had been granted.

Outline of 1:27—2:18

- D. Exhortation to a worthy manner of life; 1:27—2:18
1. Plea for steadfast striving; 1:27-30
 - a. Do this whether I come or be absent.
 - b. Stand fast in one spirit.
 - c. Do not be affrighted by adversaries; 1:28-30.
 - (1) This is to them a token of perdition.
 - (2) This is to you a token of salvation.
 - (3) Follow my example in this.

2. Plea for unity and humility; 2:1-4
 - a. Motives for unity; 2:1-2a
 - b. Attitudes and actions of those in unity; 2:2b-4
3. The example of Christ; 2:5-11
 - a. He did not grasp his original state; 2:5-6
 - b. He became an obedient servant; 2:7-8
 - c. Honors that Christ received because of his obedience.
 - (1) Exaltation;
 - (2) A name above every name.
 - (3) Universal submission to him; 2:10-11
4. Commands; 2:12-18
 - a. Work out your salvation with fear and trembling; 2:12-13
 - (1) Do this whether I am present or absent.
 - (2) God is working in you; 2:13
 - b. Do all things without murmurings; 2:14-15

Purposes—That ye become blameless and harmless.
That ye become children of God without blemish.
 - c. Hold forth the word of life; 2:16
 - d. Paul's place in their worthy life; 2:17

—A drink-offering poured out upon their service.
 - e. Rejoice. 2:18

27. Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ: that, whether I come and see you or be absent, I may hear of your state, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one soul striving for the faith of the gospel;

Translation and Paraphrase

27. Only live as citizens (of God's kingdom) in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you, or am absent, I may hear the news concerning you, that you (plural) stand fast with one (united) spirit, with one soul striving together (like athletes in training) for the faith (which is) the gospel.

Notes

1. While the Philippians were to glory in the progress and joy of their faith, they needed to take care that their lives were *worthy* of the gospel (or good news) of Christ. *Worthy* means of equal weight or value.

2. There is a figure of speech in 1:27 which is not apparent in the English translation. When Paul said, "Let your manner of life (KJV *conversation*) be worthy," he was literally saying, "Behave as citizens in a manner worthy of the gospel." The Greek verb *politeuo* means "to be a citizen, or exercise your citizenship." The metaphor of heavenly citizenship is found again in Phil. 3:20.
3. Paul exhorts them not to allow their faith to fluctuate with his circumstances or presence. Live lives worthy of the gospel whether he is present or not.
4. The Philippians should stand fast in one spirit, that is, in one disposition, one frame of mind. The word *spirit* here probably has no direct reference to the Holy Spirit, but to their own spirits, which would, of course, be under the control of the Holy Spirit.

It is very important that Christians *stand fast* in what they believe, and in their determination to live according to this belief. Compare Ephesians 6:11, 13-14.

5. The expression "with one soul" probably means "with one mind or feeling." It seems to be nearly an exact synonym of "in one spirit." The collective "soul" of the whole group was to be ONE soul, one mind. Compare Acts 4:32.
6. The Philippians were to be *striving* for the faith of the gospel. *Striving* (Gr. *sunathleo*) means striving *together*. The figure refers both to athletic games and to contending in battle. The Christian life requires effort, and discipline, and exertion.
7. Our striving is to be done for the faith, or in the faith (a dative of interest). There are many good causes in this world, but the striving of Christians is to be exerted for the faith.
8. "The Faith of the gospel." The faith is the gospel. (It is a genitive of apposition.) The faith is the full sum of what we believe and practice, as revealed by Christ.

28. and in nothing affrighted by the adversaries: which is for them an evident token of perdition, but of your salvation, and that from God;

Translation and Paraphrase

28. And be frightened by nothing (which may be done) by the opposers. (Your boldness will make an impression on them, as being) and evidence of (their impending) destruction; But (on

the other hand your boldness in the face of opposition will to you be an evidence) of your salvation, and (that) this (salvation is) from God (himself).

Notes

1. 1:28 elaborates the command in 1:27 to *stand fast*. Two participial phrases expand this idea of standing fast: We stand fast (1) striving together; and (2) being frightened in nothing by the adversaries.
2. Generally the adversaries of the gospel would rather frighten us from our faith and Christian work, than try to convince us logically that we are wrong, or physically prevent us from serving Christ. Those who are frightened by threats are defeated before the battle ever starts. Christians in many lands today face threats of loss of jobs or other troubles. "Be frightened by nothing."
3. The boldness of Christians in the face of threats and persecutions is for the unbeliever an evident token of perdition, a plain sign that they face destruction by God. Compare II Thess. 1:4-5. *Perdition* means destruction, or ruin, and refers to the punishment of hell.

When persecuting unbelievers see Christians boldly continuing in their faith in spite of threats and harm, they instinctively feel, "If this Christian faith means so much to these people, there must be something to it after all. And if there is something to it, then I'm on the wrong side, and God will surely punish me for fighting against the truth." Paul seems to have felt that way before his conversion. Compare Acts 26:14, 22:19-20.

4. Whereas the boldness of Christians is to sinners an evident token of destruction, it is at the same time an evident token (a plain indication) of salvation to Christians. When Christians experience trouble victoriously, they sense that the power to endure came from outside of them, from God, and not from their own puny will power or strength of character.

Also the boldness of Christians serves as an evident token of salvation in that it fulfills the words of Christ to us that we both shall suffer, and that He will help us at such times. See Luke 12:11-12.

5. The expression "and that from God" refers back to the word *salvation*. We have not merely a token of salvation, but a token of salvation which comes from God.

29. because to you it hath been granted in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer in his behalf: 30. having the same conflict which ye saw in me, and now hear to be in me.

Translation and Paraphrase

29. (Do not think that your sufferings indicate that you are not saved,) because it has been graciously granted to you to suffer on behalf of Christ, and not (merely) to believe upon him. (The privilege of suffering for Christ is a gift from him to you.)

30. (You shall be) having the same struggle (and agony) which ye saw was in my life, and now hear is my lot.

Notes

- 1:29 enlarges on the idea expressed in 1:28 that the boldness of Christians is a plain indication to them of salvation. This is true because Christ has granted to us the privilege of suffering for Him as well as believing on him. The fact that we suffer confirms the truth of his words and confirms that we are His.
- The word *granted* (KJV *given*) in 1:28 means to grant as a favor, or bestow graciously. How seldom do those who suffer look upon this as a gracious grant! But the early Christians so viewed it. Acts 5:41.
- The troubles of the Philippians were like those that they had observed Paul to experience, and like those which they now heard that Paul was enduring. This fact doubtless strengthened their backbone, and took away their self-pity.

The word *conflict* in 1:30 is from the Greek *agonia*, from which we get our word *agony*. It refers to painful types of struggle and to extreme mental anguish.

Study and Review

Questions Over Philippians Chapter One

(Give Scripture references with your answers if none are given in the questions.)

- What heading is suggested for Philippians chapter 1? Suggest another topic for the chapter if you wish.

CHAPTER ONE

2. What two individuals joined in sending the epistle?
3. Does the fact that Paul did not use the official title *apostle* at the start of the letter (as he did in Gal. 1:1) suggest anything to you? What?
4. How do the two senders describe themselves? (1:1). What is the meaning of this term?
5. To what class of people in the Old Testament was the title *servants of God* often applied?
6. By what word are the Philippians described in Paul's greeting? What is the meaning of this word?
7. What does the word *bishop* mean?
8. What other names are applied in the scripture to the same offices as the bishop?
9. What does the word *deacon* mean? What briefly was the work of deacons?
10. How many of Paul's epistles begin with a request for grace to be with his readers?
11. What is grace?
12. What else did Paul wish for them besides grace?
13. What were Paul's feelings as he remembered the Philippians in prayer? (1:3-4)
14. What had the Philippians done that Paul described as *fellowship in the gospel*? (Compare Phil. 4:14-16.)
15. What does the word *fellowship* mean?
16. What was Paul's confidence concerning the good work done by the Philippians?
17. What is the *day of Jesus Christ*?
18. Why did Paul say in 1:7 that it was meet (or proper) for him to feel toward the Philippians the confidence he expressed in 1:6?
19. In what three ways were the Philippians partakers of grace with Paul?
20. What does *confirmation of the gospel* mean?
21. How greatly did Paul long after the Philippians?
22. Explain the phrase *bowels of Jesus Christ* in KJV of Phil. 1:8.
23. What three things did Paul pray that the Philippians might do or be? (1:9-11)
24. What results occur when our love abounds more and more in knowledge and judgment? (1:9-11)
25. Revised version margin translates part of 1:9, "So that ye may

PHILIPPIANS

- distinguish the things that differ." (Similarly Barclay). Discuss the meaning of this rendering.
26. Explain the term *offence* in 1:10.
 27. What is the source of the fruit of righteousness?
 28. How had Paul's prison experiences generally affected the progress of the gospel?
 29. Where did Paul lodge while in Rome as a prisoner? (Acts 28:30)
 30. Where had Paul's faith and reputation become known? (1:13)
 31. What was the Praetorian Guard (the "palace")?
 32. What sort of bonds did Paul wear? (1:14; Compare Eph. 1:20; Acts 28:20)
 33. How had Paul's presence in Rome affected many of the brethren there?
 34. What did Paul mean by saying, "Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife"? Is this a description of heresy or of bad attitudes?
 35. Who were those who were guilty of preaching Christ of contention, supposing to add affliction to Paul's bondage?
 36. What was Paul's feeling toward those who preached the gospel contentiously?
 37. Does Paul's attitude toward insincere preaching indicate that we should approve of preaching mixed with denominational doctrines? Why or why not?
 38. What two things gave Paul assurance that his experiences would turn out to his salvation?
 39. What does the word *salvation* in 1:19 mean?
 40. How did Paul feel about the possibility of his being put to shame, that is, being humiliated into silence? (1:20)
 41. What does *magnify Christ in my body* mean?
 42. In what circumstances did Paul expect that Christ would be magnified in his body?
 43. Explain the phrase *For me to live is Christ*. What does Christ have to do with the Christian's life?
 44. What advantage was there for Paul to continue living in the flesh?
 45. What advantage in dying? Which was preferable, living or dying?
 46. Where do Christians go when they depart from this life? (Compare II Cor. 5:6, 8)

CHAPTER ONE

47. Did Paul conclude that he would remain alive or die?
48. What purposes would be served by Paul's future presence with the Philippians? (1:25)
49. What sort of manner of life (KJV *conversation*) were the Philippians to live?
50. What did Paul hope to hear about the state (or affairs) of the Philippians?
51. What is the relation of the gospel to the faith as indicated by the expression *the faith of the gospel*?
52. How were the Philippians to feel about their adversaries?
53. Explain the expression *an evident token of perdition*. (Compare II Thess. 1:5)
54. How is a Christian's boldness before adversaries an evident token of perdition to the adversaries?
55. How is a Christian's boldness an evident token of salvation to the Christian himself?
56. Does Paul speak of suffering as a privilege, or as a necessary evil to be endured?
57. Who is set forth as an example of suffering with joy? (1:30)

PHILIPPIANS



The apostle Paul gives two letters—Ephesians and Colossians—to Tychicus to deliver.

Travelling with Tychicus on the thousand-mile trip to Colossae is the slave Onesimus, who clutches to himself a letter from Paul to his master Philemon.

Though Paul was under house arrest in his own rented dwelling, and chained always to a Roman guard, he was inwardly joyful, and thanked God for the faith and love of the Colossians and Ephesians.

PHILIPPIANS CHAPTER TWO THE MIND OF CHRIST (in you)

1. *Motivations to the mind of Christ; (2:1)*

- Being in Christ.
- Consolation of love.
- Fellowship of the Spirit.
- Tender mercies and compassions.
- Personal appeal from Paul.

2. *Attitudes of the mind of Christ; (2:2-4)*

- Unity and harmony.
- Freedom from factiousness and vainglory.
- Lowliness.
- Concern for others.

3. *Christ's own example; (2:5-11)*

- He did not grasp onto His divine form.
- He became an obedient servant.
- Honors He won by obedience.

4. *Commands for those with the mind of Christ; (2:12-17)*

- Work your salvation to completion; 2:12-13
- Don't murmur or question; 2:14-15
- Hold forth the word of life; 2:16-17
- Rejoice; 2:18

5. *Paul's helpers who had the mind of Christ; (2:19-29)*

- Timothy; 2:19-24
 - He sought only the things of Christ; 2:21.
- Epaphroditus; 2:25-29
 - He hazarded his life for the work of Christ; 2:30.

2:1. If there is therefore any exhortation in Christ, if any consolation of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any tender mercies and compassions, 2. make full my joy, that ye be of the same mind, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind; 3. *doing* nothing through faction or through vainglory, but in lowliness of mind each counting other better than himself; 4. not looking each of you to his own things, but each of you also to the things of others.

Translation and Paraphrase

2:1. If there is any exhortation (and consolation for us) in Christ (and I know there is), if (there is) any persuasive message in love (and there is), if any participation in (and fellowship of) the (Holy) Spirit, if (there are) any heart-felt emotions and (any) compassions—

2. (then, for the sake of these precious things,) make my joy full (and complete. You can do this if you take care) that you (all) think the same (way), having the same love (not some of you loving and some hating), (being) of one soul (one mind), thinking the one (way, the way of Christ);

3. (Do) not (be) thinking about how you can further (your own little) faction, or about empty self-glory, but (rather) in lowliness of mind (let every one) regard one another as better than themselves,

4. not each (one of you) looking (and concentrating) on his own (affairs), but each (one) also (looking upon) the things of others.

Notes

1. This section (2:1-4) contains Paul's plea to the Philippians to be of one accord, to be united.
2. Verses 1 and 2a give five motives for being of one accord:
 - (1) The exhortation (and consolation) of being in Christ.
 - (2) The persuasive power of love.
 - (3) The fellowship, or participation, we have in the Holy Spirit.
 - (4) The tender mercies and compassions, both those which we feel within ourselves, and those we receive from others.
 - (5) A personal appeal from Paul: "Make full MY joy."
3. Verses 2-4 contain a list of attitudes and actions that are done (or at least should be done) by those who are of one accord.
 - (1) They are of the same mind. They seek to be impartial and view every-one in the same manner, trying in all circumstances to think as Christ would think.

- (2) They have the same love. They seek to prevent a situation wherein some folks are hating and some loving.
 - (3) They are of one accord, literally "souled together." Perhaps the best commentary on this is Acts 4:32: "The multitude were of one heart and soul."
 - (4) They are of one mind, "thinking one (thing)." This is nearly a repetition of (1) above.
 - (5) They do nothing through faction or vainglory.
 - (6) They count each other as being better than themselves.
 - (7) They are more concerned about the sins and burdens of others than about their own pleasures and wishes.
4. The motives for unity given by Paul in Phil. 1:1-2a are not the motives we often consider uppermost. We often feel that we can only be united when we have by fiery debate overwhelmed our religious adversaries, and subdued them into conformity to the truth as we see it.

However, this approach has not worked. Since all of us are quite confident that we have the truth and everyone else is at least a bit misguided, we are not likely to arrive at unity by controversy. The fruitful motives for unity are those that Paul suggests: our being in Christ, our common love, etc. Unity, wherever it comes at all, comes more readily as a result of heart-feelings than of intellectual conquest of the adversaries.

This is not to belittle the necessity for religious discussion or of defending the faith. These things we must do, and not leave the other undone.

5. The word *exhortation* (*paraklesis*) in 2:1 carries a double significance. It indicates both an urging, or exhortation, and a consoling. As Christians we do have both consolation and exhortation. We are stirred up to holy lives and hard labor by the truth of the gospel; we are at the same time consoled and reassured by the promises of the gospel.
6. The word *consolation* (*paramuision*) in 2:1 literally means persuasive speaking. There are many many persuasive messages in the gospel. We need to act upon this persuasion.
7. *Fellowship* (*koinonia*) in 2:1 means a share in, a participation in something. Christians have a share of participation in the Holy Spirit. He is given to us as a gift when we repent and are baptized. Acts 2:38. He lives in our body as his temple. I Cor. 6:19. He brings to us much desirable fruit. This participation in the Spirit should lead us to unity.

8. Phil. 2:1 mentions *tender mercies* (KJV *bowels*) and *compassions*. As Christians we do share many kind feelings and actions, both within ourselves and from others. There are dear friends who come to our need when we are in distress, who speak kind and encouraging words, who frankly but kindly tell us when we are doing something wrong.

Such tender mercies and compassions should create within us an overwhelming desire to be ONE with our brethren.

The word *bowels* in KJV is just exactly the meaning of the Greek word *splanchna*. The ancients regarded the nobler bowels (heart, liver, lungs, etc.) as the seat of emotions. It is really just as logical (or more so) to say, "I love you with my bowels," as to say, "I love you with my heart. We say the latter only because it is the modern idiom.

9. Alas, faction and vain glory motivate many Christians more greatly than do Christ and our tender mercies. Some people will come to a church election to vote for their friends when they will not come often at other times. *Faction* means self-seeking, electioneering, promoting our own little party or clique.

So often when one church or one faction in a church does something successful, another church or faction will feel constrained to do the same or to do something to top their neighbor. It is good to be stirred up by the example of others to love and good works, but the desire to promote ourselves or our faction at the expense of others is sin.

Vain-glory, that is, empty glory, useless desires to glorify ourselves, leads many to seek church offices, to make public performances that are not edifying, to show off before the church, and to run others down that they may feel superior to those they criticize.

Vain-glory, the pride of life, is one of the strongest and most basic temptations we experience. I John 2:16. You and I are both tempted by it, and yet we often will not even admit this to ourselves. Such vain-glory hinders our having the unity we should with our brethren.

10. Is it really possible that we in lowliness of mind can count each one better than ourselves? Phil. 2:3. Perhaps this seems impossible; however a mere recognition of the reality that every person on earth knows some things we do not know, can reach and influence people we can scarcely affect at all, can do things we cannot do—mere acceptance of these facts

will cause us to admit that others are indeed better than ourselves.

God is not impressed with our education, our wealth, our physical beauty, nor our possessions. We must not scorn the lowly or despise the mighty; let each count other better than himself.

This does not exclude the necessity for self-respect and recognition of our own abilities; these feelings are necessary too. However, self-respect and self-pride usually need much less cultivation than respect for others. Self-respect and self-pride are like weeds that grow naturally. Respect for others must be given lots of cultivation.

11. Verse 4 exhorts us to look not upon our own things, our own affairs, worries, and plans, but also to the things of others. This cannot mean that we are to be meddlesome or nosey in the affairs of others. Other scriptures forbid this, I Pet. 4:15.

Rather it means that we are to be concerned with the affairs, failings, and needs of others which we may be able to help without intruding upon their strictly private affairs.

5. Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:

Translation and Paraphrase

5. Let this way of thinking continue among you, (that same feeling) which also was in Christ Jesus (when he came to earth).

Notes

1. The final and strongest appeal for unity is the example of Jesus Christ.
2. 2:5 can either be read as the closing verse of the paragraph 2:1-5, or as a starting verse to 2:5-11. Either way it is rich in meaning.
3. This verse introduces 2:6-11, which is a paragraph with some of the deepest theological thoughts in the New Testament in it.
Notice carefully, however, that Paul did not employ theology to satisfy our curiosity about divine secrets, but to get us to live lives in which discord, selfish ambitions, and disunity are excluded.
4. We hear much about heart transplants. Christians must have mind transplants; the mind of Christ must replace our old sinful minds.

6. who, existing in the form of God, counted not the being on an equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7. but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men; 8. and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross.

Translation and Paraphrase

6. (Though Christ) was existing (before he came to earth) in the (very) form (the intrinsic nature) of God, he did not consider (this) being equal with God a thing to be grasped (and clutched onto),

7. but (rather) he emptied himself (of much of his divine glory), taking (upon himself) the (very) form (the intrinsic nature) of a slave (or servant), being (temporarily) made in the (outward) likeness of men.

8. And being found (by those who lived with him on earth) in the (outward) fashion as a man, he humbled himself, (even to the point of) becoming obedient unto death, (yea) death upon a cross.

Notes

1. To understand this section, the exact meaning of the words used must be understood.
 - a. *Existing* (KJV, *being*; Gr. *uparcho*). This term means *being*, but it has the deeper implication of pointing to that existence which is our basic essence, the innermost nature. Thus the fact that Christ was *existing* in the form of God suggests that the form of God was his basic essence, his innermost nature.
 - b. *Form* (Gr. *morphe*). Form is that which is intrinsic and essential about anything. It is the opposite to the outward and changeable fashion. See the notes that follow concerning FORM and FASHION.
 - c. "Counted (it) not . . . a *thing to be grasped*." The Gr. word *arpagmos* used here means both the act of seizing (or robbery, as in KJV), or the thing seized (as in ASV and RSV). We prefer the latter meaning, because equality with God was not something Christ might have obtained by seizure, but it was already his. He might have clutched onto it because it was already his, but he did not do so.

Such readings as that in the New English Bible, "He did not think to snatch at equality with God," suggest that Christ was not equal with God. This is contrary to the whole paragraph, which has its point that Christ gave up his equality with God.

Numerous other Scriptures teach that Christ had the full nature of deity before He came to earth, before He was conceived in Mary. (See John 1:1, 2; 3:13; 17:5, 24; Col. 1:15-16).

- d. *Emptied* himself. The Gr. verb *kenoo* used here means to empty out or drain. When Christ came to earth, He submitted Himself to limitations which He had not had in glory before then. On earth Christ could become weary (John 4:6), but God is never weary (Isaiah 40:28; 45:11-12). Christ became hungry (Luke 4:2), but God is not hungry (Psalm 50:12-13). Some things Christ did not know (Matt. 24:35), but God knows all things (Heb. 4:13). Before Christ came to earth he dwelt in a realm described as "ivory palaces." (Ps. 45:7-8). But Christ emptied himself to a great degree of such glory when He came to earth.

The doctrine of Christ's emptying Himself is sometimes called the *kenosis*. This is a great mystery, and it has caused much disagreement in the church throughout the centuries. Exactly what was the nature of Christ while He was here on earth? To what degree did He empty Himself? Was He fully divine, or fully human, or both, or a mixture? Did He have one nature or two? Such questions can never be perfectly answered. We cannot understand human nature. How can we comprehend the divine nature?

It is enough for us to know that when Christ was on earth He was both the son of God and son of man (Matt. 16:13-17). As son of man he lay exhausted in a boat. As son of God he could rise and command the stormy waters of the Sea of Galilee to become calm. (Luke 8:23-24).

- e. *Likeness* (Gr. *omoiotoma*; 2:8). That which is made, a likeness, image. This term refers to Christ's outward appearance while on earth. It is somewhat synonymous to the term *fashion*.
- f. *Fashion* (*schema*). This refers to outward appearance of anything. As such it may be changed from time to time. Thus, the *fashion* of the world passes away. (I Cor. 7:31).

FORM and FASHION

1. Christ existed in the *form* (Gr. *morphe*) of God. Phil. 2:6. He took the *form* of a servant. Phil. 2:7. He was found in *fashion* (Gr. *schema*) as a man. Phil. 2:8.
2. *Form* is that which is intrinsic, essential, and unchangeable about anything. *Fashion* is that which is outward, incidental, and transitory about anything.
3. Christ had the form, or true nature of God. Also he took the actual nature or form of a servant. However, his fashion, or appearance, on earth was not necessarily his fashion in glory after leaving the earth. Thus the appearance of Christ as described in Revelation chapter one is considerably different from that of the lowly son of man on earth.
4. The meanings of *form* and *fashion* can be illustrated and confirmed by the uses of these words and their related words in the New Testament. Note the ways the words are translated in King James version.
 - A. FORM—3 times translated as *form*; Mark 16:12; Phil. 2:6, 7.
 1. *Metamorphoo* (a related word)—Translated "be changed" (II Cor. 3:18), "be transformed" (Matt. 17:2; Mk. 9:2; Romans 12:2). "Be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind." Let your mind actually be made into something intrinsically new.
 2. *Summorphoo* (related word)—"being made conformable unto;" (Phil. 3:10).
 3. *Summorphos* (related word; an adjective)—"conformed to" (Rom. 8:29); "fashioned like unto" (Phil. 3:21).
 - B. FASHION—2 times translated "fashion." (Phil. 2:8; I Cor. 7:31). "The *fashion* of this world passeth away."
 1. *Metaschematizo* (a related word)—"Be transformed" (II Cor. 11:13, 14). Satan transforms himself. He can change his outward appearance, but not his true nature and form. "Change" (Phil. 3:21); Christ shall change our vile body. "Transfer in a figure" (I Cor. 4:6). "Transform one's self" (II Cor. 11:15); Satan's ministers transform themselves, but they only change their outward appearance, not the real form.
 2. *Suschematizo* (a related word)—"Be not conformed" (Rom. 12:2); Christians should not adopt the fashion

of this world for this is contradictory to their true nature. "Fashion one's self according to" (I Peter 1:14).

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2. The King James rendering of Phil. 2:6, "thought it not robbery to be equal with God," is satisfactory if it is understood to mean, "Since Christ was already equal with God, he considered it not robbery to claim equality with God."

If you or I should claim equality with God and demand to be worshipped, that would be robbery. We would be claiming honors that belong only to God. But Christ did not look upon being equal with God as robbery by him. How can one steal that which is already his?

3. The fact that Christ existed in the *form* of God shows that he had true godhood. The fact that he took upon himself the *form* of a servant shows that he had true servanthood. Both as God and as a servant in the likeness of men, Christ's form was genuine.
4. The fact that Christ *took upon himself* the form of a servant shows that He was truly God before then, and that He was not a created being. All created beings are servants of God by the very fact of their being created by God. "All things are thy servants." Psalm 119:91. Christ was not a servant as a result of his being created, but rather because he took upon himself the form of a servant.
5. Christ was made in all respects like as we are, except that he never sinned. Heb. 4:15. He partook of flesh and blood, since we, the children of God, are sharers in flesh and blood. Heb. 2:14. He came to earth with the command to die as men die. John 10:18. Christ was fully obedient to this command. Heb. 10:7. He was always obedient to the will of His father. He learned obedience, as we have to learn it, by the things which He suffered. Heb. 5:8. His obedience and sufferings extended to the ultimate degree of submission and agony, to the very death upon a cross.
6. As we consider this example of Christ, how could we be high-minded toward other people, or be factious, or proud, or seek our own advantages to the hurt of other people?

9. Wherefore also God highly exalted him, and gave unto him the name which is above every name; 10. that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of *things* in heaven and *things* on earth, 11.

and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Translation and Paraphrase

9. Therefore (because of the obedient self-sacrifice of Christ) God has given to him (as a gift) the name (which is) above every name, (the name of LORD),

10. So that at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, (the knees) of the things in heaven, and things on earth, and things under the earth (the dead).

11. (Not only will every knee bow, but also) every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the father.

Notes

1. Most probably the name given to Christ because of his obedience is LORD. After Acts 2:36 Jesus is constantly called LORD. See Acts 7:59-60; 9:1; 10:36.
2. Christ's new name represented new glory and new offices for Him. Abraham and Jacob received new names when their life situations changed. We receive a new name—Christian—when we come into Christ.
3. Out of appreciation for the things Christ has done we worship Him. We bow the knee, both literally and figuratively.
4. Everyone and everything will confess Christ Jesus as Lord, ultimately if not now, involuntarily if not willingly. The dead shall rise, and every eye shall see Him, even those who pierced him on the cross, and all tribes of the earth shall wail because of Him. Rev. 1:7. May it be even so, Lord Jesus. Yea, come quickly, Lord. Rev. 22:20.
5. The "things under the earth" probably refer simply to those who are dead. This does not suggest that there is some large subterranean cavity in the earth where a great group of souls dwell. But rather that those buried under the earth shall rise again and confess with the living that Jesus Christ is LORD.
6. The confession that Jesus Christ is Lord was really the only confession of the church in the time of the apostles. I Cor. 12:3; I John 4:2; Acts 8:37; Matt. 16:16. In those glorious times before the church was corrupted by human doctrines, the disciples of Christ did not recite any "apostles'" creed, Nicene creed, or Athanasian creed. Such human writings should be forgotten and thrown into the dump heap. The apostles never

wrote the apostles' (sic!) creed, and in its final form it was not completed until three or four centuries after the last apostle was dead. The Biblical confession that Jesus Christ is Lord is unifying. The creeds of men are destructive and divisive.

7. God is glorified when Jesus Christ is confessed. See John 5:23.

12. So then, my beloved, even 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; 13. for it is God who worketh in you both to will and to work, for his good pleasure.

Translation and Paraphrase

12. So then, my beloved ones (seeing how God has exalted Christ, I exhort you now that) even as you have always obeyed, not (just) as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, (that you) work out to completion your own salvation, with fear and trembling.

13. For God is the one working in (the midst of) you (all), both (motivating you) to desire (that which is good) and (enabling you) to work for his good pleasure.

Notes

1. This section (2:12-18) gives some commands for the worthy Christian life. These commands include commands to steadfast work (2:12-13), contentment (2:14), purity (2:15a), evangelistic zeal (2:15b-16), and rejoicing (2:17-18).
2. The "so then" at the beginning of 2:12 indicates that the good acts called for in 2:12-16 are motivated by the obedience and exaltation of Christ described in the preceding paragraph.
3. Some Christians are faithful Christians only when the preacher is nearby. Paul expected the Philippians to be just as obedient in his absence as in his presence, and he indicates that they had done this previously.
4. "Work out" (Gr. *katergadzomai*) means to work to completion. When we work out a contract, we work it till it is done. Likewise we must work out our salvation until the end.
5. 2:12 does not suggest that by work we earn our salvation, but that our salvation must be followed by steadfast work to the end. Eph. 2:8-9; Titus 3:5. While our salvation is not gained by our works of righteousness, we must be zealous of good works and careful to maintain them. Titus 3:5; 2:14. Failure

to follow through with good works after we receive Christ is both evidence and cause of our not having salvation.

6. Christians need to feel fear and trembling because of the danger of forsaking Christ and displeasing God is so near to all of us and so deadly. "We are become partakers of Christ *if* we hold fast the beginning of our confidence firm unto the end." Heb. 3:14.
7. 2:13 teaches us that God motivates us (causes us "to will") to do his good pleasure; and then also He enables us to do it ("to work"). This thought should bring great delight to the servant of God. Our dedicated desires and labors represent the very desires and labors of God expressed through us.

If you find yourself desiring to do something for the Lord—to write a song, a poem, a book, a letter, a tract; to make a call; to do a helpful deed; to pray for a particular person or project; to give money for some specific need—then, brother, you should do it, and do it quickly. That desire within you may be God's working within you, causing you "to will." As God furnishes the willingness, so also will He furnish the ability "to work."

14. Do all things without murmurings and questionings; 15. that ye may become blameless and harmless, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverted generation, among whom ye are seen as lights in the world, 16. holding forth the word of life; that I may have whereof to glory in the day of Christ, that I did not run in vain neither labor in vain.

Translation and Paraphrase

14. Do all things without murmurings or disputings,
15. so that ye may become blameless and pure (unmixed with evil), (being) children of God without blemish in the midst of (our) crooked and distorted generation, among whom you (all) shine as lights in the world;
16. (You shine by) holding forth the message (word) of life; (I pray that you will always do this) so that I may have something to glory about in the day of Christ, (namely) that I did not run (my race of life) in vain, neither have I toiled wearisomely in vain.

Notes

1. God's people have been forbidden to murmur against Him in both the Old and the New Testament (I Pet. 4:9; I Cor.

10:10; Numbers 11:1-3). Murmuring is one way of questioning God's reality, His power, and His care over us. It is tempting God.

2. Similarly *questionings* (KJV *disputings*), whether they are directed toward God or men, are a serious offence. Disputings with men usually reflect the view that God will not punish evildoers, or that God does not care about us enough to do anything. Disputings with God may be direct challenges of His wisdom. There have been cases when God's saints asked Him why He did certain things. Thus Habakkuk (2:1), Jeremiah (12:1), Abraham (Gen. 18:23-25), and others. But these men asked out of a heart of trust and faith. To question God because we do not like his judgments, or doubt that He is doing anything is another matter. Let us lift up holy hands to God, without wrath and *disputings* (I Tim. 2:8).
3. *Blameless* (Gr. *amemptos*) means not subject to blame, deserving no censure. Luke 1:6; I Thess. 3:13.
4. *Harmless* (Gr. *akeraios*) means unmixed, pure, free from evil, without mixture of evil. Matt. 10:16.
5. Our generation is called crooked and perverse, and it certainly is. *Perverse* means turned aside, distorted, corrupted, perverted. Our generation is backwards in its thinking on many things. They call evil good and good evil. (Isaiah 5:20). It calls true religion fanaticism and superstition, while it calls alcoholism and fornication freedom! The whole world lieth in the evil one. I John 5:19. It is still, as in Christ's time, a faithless and perverse generation (Matt. 17:17). Christians are sheep among wolves. (Matt. 10:16).
6. In the midst of this evil generation we are to become children of God without blemish, without moral flaw, or rebellious minds. Eph. 1:4; Col. 1:22; Rev. 14:5.
7. We are to be seen as lights in the world. Compare Matt. 5:14-16; I Peter 2:9; Eph. 5:8, 11-13. An old proverb says, "It is better to light a candle than to complain about the darkness." May the Lord raise up a new generation of committed Christians, who will give their light without flickering and without fear.
8. 2:16 indicates that we shine as lights in the world only when we hold forth the word of life. The light is not in ourselves, but in the divine message we bear.

Our message is the word of LIFE. See Acts 5:20. It is a living (quick!) message. Heb. 4:12. Those who hear and believe it are made alive. John 5:24-25. Do you really believe that our gospel is the only source of life and light for the world? Then, brother, let it shine; let it be heard.

9. Numerous passages teach us that as Christians our works will be remembered and rewarded on the day of Christ, that is, the day of judgment. Paul's words in 2:16 suggest this again. See I Cor. 3:14-15; I Thess. 2:19-20; II Cor. 5:10; Rev. 22:12; Matt. 25:28-29.
10. The day of Christ Jesus is the day of His second coming, the time of the last judgment. See notes on Phil. 1:10. Compare II Cor. 1:14.
11. Paul did not want to stand before Christ on the day of judgment with no victories won, no souls he had saved, no record of accomplishment. Like a runner who raced to win, or a worker who labored to get a job done, Paul did not want to have run in vain or labor in vain. I Cor. 9:25-27. If the Philippians did not remain true to Christ, then Paul's labors would have been in vain. Isaiah 49:4; 65:23.

17. Yea, and if I am offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy, and rejoice with you all: 18. and in the same manner do ye also joy, and rejoice with me.

Translation and Paraphrase

17. But (I hasten to assure you that I do not ask you to hold forth the word of life just so I can have easy victories for myself. For even) if I (should lose my trial here and give up my life, and) be poured out like a drink offering upon the sacrifice and the service of your faith (those things being the sacrifice and I being the drink offering), I rejoice (personally) and rejoice (jointly) with you all.

18. And (now) in the same way, you (yourselves) also be rejoicing (personally), and rejoicing (jointly) with me.

Notes

1. These two verses are like a jewel set at the peak of a crown. Paul has given a stirring exhortation in 2:12-16. Now he crowns the paragraph with a magnificent statement of his own self-sacrifice. He uses a bold figure of speech, and tells of

his own complete dedication without affection, boasting, or insincerity.

2. The Gr. verb translated *offered* (*spendomai*) means "to be poured out as a drink offering, or libation." According to Old Testament law a drink offering of a cup (about a quart) of wine was poured out upon the carcass of each burnt offering. Numbers 15:4-5.

Paul compares the service and sacrifice of the Philippians to a burnt-offering, and his own life to a drink-offering poured out upon their sacrifice, as a final enrichment of that sacrifice.

The self-sacrificing dedication of the great martyrs like Paul is indeed the crowning enrichment and glory upon whatever sacrifices we as disciples of Jesus may make.

3. By his reference to the possibility of his life being offered, Paul raises (in 2:18) the sobering reality that he might not be acquitted and released from Rome, but might be executed. If this happened, his career would close, like a poured-out drink offering is thenceforth never used again.
4. Paul refers to the *service* (Gr. *leitourgia*) of the Philippians' faith. The service referred to by this word is divine service, the service or ministry of priests relative to the prayers and sacrifices offered to God (Thayer). Outside the Bible the term was used to refer to various types of public service, but in the Bible it always has reference to 'divine service, and suggests again the truth that every Christian is a priest unto God to offer spiritual sacrifices well-pleasing to God. I Peter 2:5.
5. Paul rejoiced to think that his career, however it might end, might be like a drink-offering poured out upon the sacrifice of the Philippians' faith. He called upon them to rejoice with him in this thought. There was nothing morbid about it: it was a glorious point of view. He rejoiced in their triumphant sufferings, and wanted them to rejoice with him.

Outline of 2:19-30

- E. News about Timothy and Epaphroditus; 2:19-30
 1. Timothy; 2:19-24
 - a. Paul hoped to send Timothy to them; 2:19, 23
 - b. Paul had no one else like Timothy; 2:20-22
 - c. Paul himself trusted to come soon; 2:24

2. Epaphroditus; 2:25-30
 - a. It was necessary to send Epaphroditus back; 2:25, 28
 - b. Experiences of Epaphroditus; 2:26-27
 - (1) He longed after the Philippians.
 - (2) He was sick.
 - (3) He recovered.
 - c. Receive him in the Lord; 2:29
 - d. Honor him for his work and courage; 2:30

19. But I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy shortly unto you, that I also may be of good comfort, when I know of your state. 20. For I have no man likeminded, who will care truly for your state. 21. For they all seek their own, not the things of Jesus Christ. 22. But ye know the proof of him, that, as a child *serveth* a father, so he served with me in furtherance of the gospel. 23. Him therefore I hope to send forthwith, so soon as I shall see how it will go with me; 24. but I trust in the Lord that I myself also shall come shortly.

Translation and Paraphrase

19. But I hope in the Lord Jesus (—he being the basis of my hopes, his glory the goal of my hope, my association with Him being the supreme thing in my life—) to send Timothy unto you speedily, so that I may be of good courage, knowing of your affairs (and not being uneasy because of uncertainty.)

20. For I have no one (with me) of like mind (with a soul like his), who will (just) naturally be concerned with (and really anxious over) your affairs.

21. For all (the others) are seeking their own affairs (their own interests and desires), not the things of Christ Jesus.

22. But you (all) know what Timothy has proved out to be, that as a child (serves) a father (so) he serves with me in the gospel (and for the sake of the gospel).

23. I hope therefore to send him (to you) soon, (as soon as) I see (how) my affairs (work out here).

24. But I trust in the Lord that I myself shall be coming (to you) soon.

Notes

1. For a brief summary of Timothy's life see notes on Phil. 1:1-2.
2. Paul several times sent Timothy to visit churches that needed some personal guidance when Paul himself could not go. He sent him to Thessalonica (I Thess. 3:1-2). He sent him on

ahead to Macedonia from Ephesus (Acts 19:22). On another occasion he left Timothy at Ephesus while he himself went into Macedonia (I Tim. 1:3). (Compare I Cor. 16:10). Many great preachers like Paul owe some of their accomplishments to their "second team," to those like Timothy.

3. Although Paul faced the possibility of losing his case and losing his life (being poured out like a drink-offering; Phil. 2:17), the Philippians would not be bereft of guidance. He planned to send Timothy to them.
4. Paul hoped "in the Lord." (2:19). As Christians we hope in the Lord, trust in the Lord (Phil. 2:24), receive one another in the Lord (Phil. 2:29), rejoice in the Lord (Phil. 3:1; 4:4), glory in the Lord (Phil. 3:3), stand fast in the Lord (Phil. 4:1), use our minds in the Lord (Phil. 4:2), labor in the Lord (I Cor. 15:58). Whether we live therefore or die, we are the Lord's. (Rom. 14:8).
5. Paul's purpose for sending Timothy was that he might be cheered (literally *well-souled*) when he heard the news from Timothy about their activities. Good news from faraway places is like waters to a thirsty soul. Prov. 25:25.
6. Paul's statement that he had no one like Timothy who would naturally care for their welfare sounds like a rather harsh judgment upon Paul's other associates. But this need not be so. Perhaps at this time none other of Paul's associates were with Paul. The others had been sent out from Paul, and only Timothy was left of the devoted ones. This is somewhat indicated by the fact that Paul does not list at the close of Philippians a number of associates who sent greetings, as he does at the end of some other epistles (See endings of Colossians and Romans.)

Also perhaps this condemnation(?), or evaluation, is only a matter of degree. Timothy had such a high degree of devotion to Christ and to his brethren that Paul could truly say, "I have no man likeminded," and still not really be implying that the other co-workers were deficient in devotion. Paul's high praise of Epaphroditus in the following paragraph certainly suggests that he was not lacking in dedication to Christ.

7. "Naturally" (or "truly;" Gr. *gnesios*) means "as a birthright, or as an instinct derived from spiritual parentage" (Thayer). A similar word is used in Phil. 4:3 to describe Paul's *true* yokefellow.

8. The temptation to seek our own affairs rather than the things of Jesus Christ has always been strong. (The world says, "Do your own thing.") Even some of Paul's associates were affected by it. It is quite natural to seek our own honor, our own positions of authority and prominence, our own enrichment. To *naturally* seek the things of Christ as Timothy did, is unnatural, that is, unnatural by human standards.
9. The Philippians really did not need Paul's praise of Timothy. They knew Timothy quite well themselves. They knew the *proof* of Timothy. *Proof* means the test by which something is shown to be good, as gold is proved by fire. I Peter 1:7. Our deeds and words soon furnish a proof of our real nature to all who know us.
10. The concerns of the man of God; Phil. 2:20-22.
 - (1) Concern over the things of Christ.
 - (2) Concern over the spiritual state of his fellow Christians.
11. Paul's statement that Timothy served him as a son serves a father expresses the ideal father-son relationship. However, children frequently rebel against parents and are disobedient. Always the hearts of children should be turned to the fathers, and vice versa. Also the hearts of younger ministers should look toward older ministers with respect and assistance. Malachi 4:6.
12. Paul closes the paragraph about Timothy's visit with the note that he himself is confident that he will get to come to them soon. This news of a proposed visit by Paul would strengthen Paul's preceding exhortations to a worthy life. (1:27—2:18).

25. But I counted it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother and fellow-worker and fellow-soldier, and your messenger and minister to my need; 26. since he longed after you all, and was sore troubled, because ye had heard that he was sick; 27. for indeed he was sick nigh unto death: but God had mercy on him; and not on him only, but on me also, that I might not have sorrow upon sorrow.

Translation and Paraphrase

25. But I regarded (it as) necessary to send Epaphroditus (back) to you. (He is to me my) brother, and fellow-worker, and fellow-soldier; and (certainly he is) your messenger (apostle!) and minister to my need.

26. (I am sending him back now) because he has been longing for you all, and (has been) distressed (like one away from home—

homesick!), because you heard that he was sick (and he did not want you to be worrying about him.)

27. For indeed he has been sick (so sick he was) near to (the point of) death. But God had mercy on him, and not only on him, but also upon me also, so that I might not have sorrow upon sorrow (the sorrow of his death heaped upon my other burdens).

Notes

1. This section about Epaphroditus reaches an apex in Christian courtesy. It is so worded that Epaphroditus did not need to feel any embarrassment in returning, and the Philippians could receive him back with appreciation for what he had done in their behalf for Paul, and with no resentment at his returning. Courteous and true words like these of Paul are always befitting.
2. Evidently when the Philippians sent Epaphroditus to Paul to deliver their offering they intended for Epaphroditus to remain there with Paul to serve Paul on their behalf. For Epaphroditus to return home after a short time would raise many questions and perhaps some misunderstandings (they are always easy to raise!). Paul therefore wrote this paragraph to explain his sending Epaphroditus back.
3. Observe the complimentary titles bestowed upon Epaphroditus: brother, fellow-worker, fellow-soldier, your messenger, your minister to my need. (The Gr. word for *messenger* is *apostle*, meaning *one sent*.)
4. Epaphroditus longed after the Philippians, and was distressed. He was "full of heaviness." (The Gr. word has the derivation of "away from home," suggesting homesickness. But it probably merely means "distressed" or "sore troubled.")

The reason for his distress was that he had heard that they had heard that he was sick, and he did not want them to be worrying over him. In this Epaphroditus showed some sterling quality. He was less worried about his own critical illness, than he was about anxiety that the news of his illness was causing to his friends.

5. Indeed Epaphroditus had been sick, so sick that he was near to death. He had recovered, but the fact remains that he had been deathly sick.

Our being Christians does not guarantee that we shall never have sickness or injury. Paul left Trophimus at Miletus

sick. (II Tim. 4:20). Paul himself was not delivered from his grievous thorn in the flesh. (II Cor. 12:7-9). Epaphroditus came near to death during his sickness.

Such Scripture portions as these show that it is wrong to allege that we can pray for and receive miraculous healing of all sicknesses. It is true that such favors are sometimes bestowed, but they are not our inalienable heritage in this life. Some might argue that James 5:15 says that the prayer of faith shall save the sick. The scripture in James 5:15 probably refers to those who had miraculous gifts of faith and healing such as were in the early church. No one, not even Paul the apostle, claims 100% healings for those he prays for, as this verse promises. Therefore James 5:15 seems to refer to those having miraculous gifts of faith and healing.

Note that in James 5:15 it is the faith of the one praying that saves the sick. So often fake modern "healers" blame their failures upon the lack of faith on the part of the sick, but James 5:15 indicates that it is the one praying who exercises the faith. Thus if the "healer" cannot heal, he is at fault, not the sick.

6. Paul was relieved that God had had mercy on Epaphroditus, so that he recovered. Paul felt that this was an act of mercy upon him, as well as upon Epaphroditus. For Epaphroditus' recovery spared to Paul added sorrow (the sorrow of Epaphroditus' death) upon sorrow (the other griefs and sorrows he was already bearing).

28. I have sent him therefore the more diligently, that, when ye see him again, ye may rejoice, and that I may be the less sorrowful.
 29. Receive him therefore in the Lord with all joy: and hold such in honor: 30. because for the work of Christ he came nigh unto death, hazarding his life to supply that which was lacking in your service toward me.

Translation and Paraphrase

28. I am therefore sending him the more speedily (to you), so that (by) seeing him (safe and sound) you may rejoice again, and I (myself) may be less sorrowful (no longer being worried because I know you are worried.)

29. Receive him therefore in the Lord with all joy, and regard such (men) as worthy of honor,

30. Because he came near unto death, risking his life for the sake of the work of Christ, so that he might fulfill that which is lacking in your service to me.

Notes

1. Paul's returning Epaphroditus would accomplish two objectives: (1) It would cause the Philippians to rejoice upon seeing him again safe and sound. (2) It would make Paul himself less sorrowful, to know that the anxieties of the Philippians were relieved. The pain in their hearts hurt Paul's heart.
2. The Philippians were to receive Epaphroditus with joy, not reluctantly as if he were a quitter or a failure. He was neither. Rather he was to be held in honor.
3. We wish we knew all the details of Epaphroditus' activities in Rome with Paul, so we could know just how he had risked his life to serve Paul. We can ask Paul or Epaphroditus about this in the New Heaven and Earth.
4. There was a class of Christians in the ancient church called *parabolani* (a word meaning those who cast themselves aside in disregard of danger and risk). These people risked their lives going among the sick, and into the houses where the plague was rampant to minister and serve others.

A related word (*paraboleuomai*) is used to describe Epaphroditus' deeds in Rome. He risked and hazarded his life to serve Paul. We do not know the details as to what risks he ran.

There are times when Christians must be willing to lay down their lives that others may be saved and served. Acts 20:24; 15:26.

5. The *Preacher's Homiletic Commentary* gives the following outline, based on 2:25-30, of Heroic Devotion to Christ:
 - (1) It is wholly absorbed in the work of Christ; 2:30.
 - (2) It risks life in serving the cause of God.
 - (3) It should be held in highest esteem; 2:29.
 - (4) It is fully of sympathy for the anxieties of people; 2:26.
6. Phil. 2:30 suggests that the Philippians owed Paul a debt of service. Compare Philemon 13, 19. Converts do owe a debt of service to those who win them to Christ. The Philippians had sent one of their members, Epaphroditus, to Paul to help pay their debt to Paul.

PHILIPPIANS

Study and Review

Questions Over Philippians Chapter Two

1. What four motivations does Paul use to urge the Philippians to be likeminded? (2:1)
2. What personal appeal does Paul make to the Philippians to be likeminded? (2:2)
3. Why, probably, did Paul stress the topic of unity to the Philippians?
4. Nothing was to be done through *faction* (or strife) or *vain-glory*. What is faction, and what is vainglory?
5. How were the Philippians to regard one another? (2:3)
6. What were the Philippians to look upon, and what were they not to look upon? What does *look upon* mean? (2:4)
7. Who had a mind like the mind we should have?
8. What was Paul's purpose for relating the information in 2:6-8?
9. In what form did Christ exist before he came to earth?
10. What does the word *form* in 2:6 mean? What is the difference between *form* and *fashion* (in 2:8)?
11. (Question based on King James Vers.) Why would Christ not have thought it robbery to be equal with God. Is claiming equality with God robbing God?
12. (Question based on American Stand. Vers.) How did Christ look upon (or count) his being on an equality with God?
13. Did Christ actually have equality with God, or was this only something he might have seized? Give reason for your answer.
14. When did Christ empty himself (or make himself of no reputation)?
15. Define the word *kenosis*.
16. What does the statement, "He took upon himself the *form* of a servant," indicate about Christ's human nature? What does it indicate about His nature before He came to earth?
17. How greatly did Christ humble himself? (2:8)
18. What was the result of Christ's humiliation and obedience?
19. What is Christ's name that is above every name?
20. What response to Christ shall every knee make?
21. What response to Christ shall every tongue make?
22. What effect is there upon God when men confess Christ? (2:11)
23. Had the Philippians been an obedient group of disciples? (2:12)
24. What is the meaning of the expression *Work out* your own salvation?

CHAPTER TWO

25. How can we work out our salvation when salvation is not of works? (Eph. 2:8-9)
26. What feelings should we have as we work out our salvation? Why should we have such feelings?
27. What two things does God work to bring about within us? (2:13)
28. What is wrong with murmurings and questionings (KJV, *disputings*)?
29. What type of children of God are we to become? (2:15)
30. How did Paul describe the generation in which he lived? (See 2:15). Is our generation any different?
31. What are Christians to be seen as (or shine as)?
32. What would give Paul opportunity to glory on the day of Christ?
33. What could cause Paul to have labored in vain? (2:16)
34. In 2:17 what does Paul compare the Philippians' service to, and what does he compare his own life to? Did this make him happy or sad?
35. Whom did Paul hope to send to the Philippians quite soon, and why was he being sent?
36. What was distinctive about Timothy's attitude toward the Lord's people and the Lord's work?
37. To what did Paul compare Timothy's service with him?
38. Whom had Paul sent back to Philippi, presumably with the letter to the Philippians?
39. Where did Paul feel that he himself would soon get to come?
40. In what five ways did Paul describe Epaphroditus? (2:25)
41. What had Epaphroditus been sent to Rome to do?
42. What feelings had Epaphroditus been having about the Philippians? Why?
43. What do Epaphroditus' experiences indicate (if anything) about miraculous healings?
44. How did Paul want the Philippians to receive Epaphroditus back?
45. How much had Epaphroditus risked? For what purpose was this risk?
46. What was lacking as far as the Philippians' relation to Paul was concerned?

PHILIPPIANS CHAPTER THREE

A MIND OF RIGHT VALUES

Paul counted everything as being loss for Christ (3:8). His superb ancestry and training was regarded as refuse that he might gain Christ. He devoted himself to one thing, to stretching forward unto the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. "Let us therefore, as many as are perfect, be thus minded." (3:15).

1. *Right values about the law-keepers— beware! (3:2-16)*

1. Lawkeepers are not the people of God; 3:2-3.
 - a. They are dogs, evil workers, concision.
 - b. Christians are the true Israel.
2. Paul could glory in the law more than they, but he did not; 3:4-16.
 - a. Paul's many grounds for confidence under the law; 3:4-6
 - b. Paul's attitudes; 3:6-16
 - (1) He counted gains under the law as loss; 3:7
 - (2) He counted all things loss for Christ; 3:8a
 - (3) He desired only Christ; 3:8b-11
 - (4) He did not consider himself perfect; 3:12a, 13a
 - (5) He pressed on; 3:12b, 13b-16

2. *Right values about Paul—be imitators! (3:17-21)*

1. Imitate Paul; 3:17.
2. Reasons for imitating Paul; 3:18-21
 - a. Many are enemies of the cross; 3:18-19
 - b. Our citizenship is in heaven; 3:20-21

CHAPTER THREE

Outline of 3:1-21

Rejoice; 3:1

F. False teachers contrasted with Paul's example; 3:2—4:1

1. Why beware of the law-keepers; 3:2-16

a. Because they are not the true people of God; 3:2-3

(1) They are dogs, evil workers, concision; 3:2

(2) We are the circumcision; 3:3

(a) We who worship by the Spirit of God

(b) We who glory in Christ Jesus

(c) We who have no confidence in the flesh

b. Because Paul had more to place confidence in than they, but he sought only Christ; 3:4-16

(1) What Paul could have placed confidence in; 3:4-6

(a) Being circumcised eighth day

(b) Being of the stock of Israel

(c) Being of the tribe of Benjamin

(d) Being a Hebrew of Hebrews

(e) Being a Pharisee

(f) Being zealous unto persecuting

(g) Being blameless according to the law

(2) Paul's attitudes; 3:7-15

(a) Counted gains under the law as loss; 3:7

(b) Counted all things loss for Christ; 3:8a

(c) Desired only Christ; 3:8b-11

—To gain Christ; 3:8b

—To be found in Him; 3:9

—To know Him; 3:10a

—To know the power of His resurrection; 3:10b

—To know the fellowship of his sufferings; 3:10b-11

(d) Did not consider that he was perfect; 3:12a, 13a

(e) He pressed on; 3:12b, 13b-16

—Let us all be thus minded; 3:15

—Let us walk as we have attained; 3:16

2. Why be imitators of Paul; 3:17-21

a. Command to imitate Paul; 3:17

b. Reasons for imitating Paul; 3:18b-21

(1) Because many are enemies of the cross; 3:18-19

(2) Because our citizenship is in heaven; 3:20-21

3:1. Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you, to me indeed is not irksome, but for you it is safe.

Translation and Paraphrase

3:1 (As for) the remaining (considerations), my brothers, (just continue to) rejoice in the Lord. (If it sounds repetitious for me to say this, well) to me it is not (at all) irksome to keep writing the same things to you (that I have declared in previous communications. I do not do it because I am lazy or have nothing else to say), and (furthermore) for you this is (the only) safe (course I can follow).

Notes

1. Chapter three opens with "Finally," although it is only about half way through the epistle. The word "Finally" does not here mean "In conclusion."

This expression "Finally" (Gr. *to loipon*) is used frequently by Paul to begin some new subject in his writings. It is various translated as "finally" (II Cor. 13:1), "henceforth" (Mark 14:41; I Cor. 7:29; Heb. 10:13; II Tim. 4:9), "For the rest," "besides," or "as to what remains." (I Thess. 4:1; II Thess 3:1).

The "finally" in 3:1 is resumed, or perhaps repeated, at 4:8.

2. The obligation to rejoice in the Lord is stated several times in this epistle. See Phil. 2:18; 4:4. Compare II Cor. 13:11; I Thess. 5:16.
3. "Rejoice" is a present tense form, signifying continuous action: "Keep on rejoicing." The joy of Christians is continuous and indestructible because it is joy in the Lord. Our earthly circumstances may change, causing us to feel elated or sad, but the Lord never changes. We can always rejoice in Him. Nothing can separate us from the love of Christ. (Romans 8:35-39). So, no matter what your troubles, "Rejoice!"
4. Christian joy is more often hindered by minor inconveniences than by major tragedies. Learn not to react to a five-cent annoyance by a five-dollar surge of adrenalin and anger.
5. In this verse (3:1) Paul sets forth the necessity for repetition in our teachings. Preachers must not fear to repeat themselves. In the four gospels we find several identical statements by

Christ placed in different situations. Obviously Christ repeated himself frequently. After all we have only one message, and men cannot hear the old truths too often.

Paul did not therefore find it irksome, or grievous, to him to repeat himself. On the contrary he viewed repetition as the only safe course for the Philippians.

6. The "same things" that are referred to could be the things written earlier in this book (we prefer this view), or things spoken orally before, or a repetition of things written in some earlier letters. There is no real evidence that Paul ever wrote an earlier letter to the Philippians.
7. There is a sudden change of tone after 3:1. 3:2 begins a section that is harshly critical of certain men. However, we need not conclude, as some have, that the sudden change in tone indicates that our book of Philippians is a composite production, made of parts of two letters unskillfully combined by someone long after Paul's time. See introductory sections, page 12.

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

Translation and Paraphrase

2. (Now, my brothers,) Beware of the dogs! Beware of the evil workers! Beware of the (flesh-) cutting, the slashing-cision!

Notes

1. "Beware of the dogs; beware of the evil workers; beware of the concision." The "dogs" referred to here were the Judaizers, those who insisted that Christians must keep the law of Moses, with its laws about circumcision, not eating meats, etc.
2. The word *dog* had a very ugly connotation to ancient Jews. They did not think of dogs as we think of our prized household pets. To them the word *dog* brought to mind the unclean, half-wild, roaming, pack-running, scavenging pariah dogs of that part of the world.

"Dog" stands for a homosexual in Deut. 23:18. Dogs are outside of heaven. (Rev. 22:15). Give not what is holy to dogs. (Matt. 7:5). Gentiles are called "dogs" (Matt. 15:27).

3. Why should Paul call these Judaizers evil workers and dogs? They taught that people were saved by doing ceremonial works

like circumcision, and by keeping the law, and fulfilling the works of the law. By doing this they placed themselves completely at odds with God's will as revealed through Christ. Of course they would have denied this, but Paul's evaluation of them must be accepted as true. Therefore in our own time anyone who insists that we must keep the law of Moses, wholly or in part, must be included in Paul's condemnation.

4. The word *concision* (Gr. *katatome*) is a play on the word *circumcision* (Gr. *peritome*). In Old Testament times circumcision was a sign of God's covenant with Abraham and his descendants, and was absolutely necessary. Under our Christian dispensation circumcision is of no importance at all. (Gal. 6:15) Paul uses the rather derisive name *concision* to refer to compulsory circumcision in our times. Concision means a cutting, a slashing, a pagan mutilation of the flesh which served no purpose. That which the Judaizers called circumcision—a mark of honor—was to Paul on a concision—a meaningless mutilation of the flesh. Compare Gal. 5:12 for a similar thought.
5. *Concision* is used in the Greek Old Testament (LXX) in several very unflattering connections;
 - Lev. 21:5—"Make not cuttings in their (the priests') flesh."
 - 1 Kings 18:28—The prophets of Baal slashed themselves as they prayed for Baal to send down fire upon his altar.
 - Isaiah 15:2—The Moabites cut their beards in grief.
6. How could Paul refer to these Judaizers as evil workers? Basically because they insisted upon forcing their false doctrine upon Gentile converts to Christ, and would not listen to Paul's message of truth. Paul truly loved his fleshly kinsmen the Jews (Romans 9:1-2); nonetheless they fiercely and fanatically opposed him everywhere he went. Even the Christian Jews showed antagonism toward Paul. In doing such actions they made themselves evil workers.
7. 3:2 begins a new section in our outline, which we entitle "False Teachers contrasted with Paul's example" (3:2-21). The first subtopic in this section is 3:2-17, which deals with the topic "Why beware of the law-keepers." Two reasons are developed for this: (1) Law-keepers are not the true people of God; and (2) Paul had more to place confidence in than they had, but he sought Christ only.

3. For we are the circumcision, who worship by the Spirit of God, and glory in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh:

Translation and Paraphrase

3. For we (Christians) are the (people who are the true) circumcision, (we) who worship by (the guidance and instructions of) the Spirit of God (and not through the law of Moses), and (we who) rejoice in Christ Jesus (as our only hope), and do not put (our) trust in the flesh (like those who place their confidence in circumcision do);

Notes

1. In this verse Paul gives a reason why we must beware of those who try to force the law upon Christians: They are not the true people of God. Christians are the true people of God.
2. In the Old Testament God told Abraham, the father of the Hebrew nations, that he and every male with him must be circumcised. It was the token or sign of the covenant between God and Abraham. This was to be done by all of Abraham's descendants after him. The uncircumcised male was cut off from his people because he had broken God's covenant. Gen. 17:10-14.

Because of this command to Abraham, the Jews became a circumcised race, and the "The Circumcision" came to refer to the Jews.

3. Paul asserts that this has now been changed. The Jews who practice fleshly circumcision are no longer the true circumcision, the true people of God. We Christians who worship by the Spirit of God and place no confidence in the flesh (like the Jews did in this circumcised flesh) are now the real circumcision. A similar thought is given in Romans 2:25-29. Compare Gal. 6:15-16 and Col. 2:11-13.

Because Christians are the true circumcision it is proper to refer to the church as Israel. Romans 2:28-29; 9:6-8; Gal. 3:29; 6:16; Rev. 3:9.

4. The idea that fleshly circumcision is of no value unless it is accompanied by true faith and a godly life was not original with Paul. Deut. 10:16 and 30:6 speak of an uncircumcised heart, that is, a heart not yielded and obedient to God. Jer. 6:10 speaks of an uncircumcised ear, an ear not receptive

to God's commands. Ex. 6:20 speaks of uncircumcised lips, that is, unworthy lips. These references were all spoken about people who practiced fleshly circumcision. From these references it appears that circumcision had always been a matter of the heart, rather than of outward fleshly form. This is further confirmed by the fact that Abraham received the sign of circumcision AFTER he had already been declared righteous before God as a result of his faith. See Romans 4:9-11; Gen. 15:6; 17:11.

5. Three signs of the true circumcision: (Phil. 3:3).

(1) Worshipping by the Spirit of God.

(2) Boasting in Christ Jesus.

(3) Having no confidence in the flesh.

6. Worshipping by the Spirit of God involves several things:

It involves worshipping according to the new covenant laws, which were given by the Holy Spirit beginning on the day of Pentecost, when the church began. See II Cor. 3:3, 6; Acts 2:4, 16-17.

It involves worshipping with the righteousness, peace, and joy that is produced by the Holy Spirit within us. See Romans 14:17. We serve God in our spirits (Rom. 1:9), which have been made free from the law of sin and death by the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:2).

The Holy Spirit was not given to all men until after the death of Christ and His glorification. Therefore those under the law before Christ could not really have worshipped by the Spirit. Neither can those who now try to worship according to that system of law in force before the Holy Spirit was poured out upon all flesh. John 7:39; Gal. 3:2.

To relapse back to a pattern of life which followed the law of Moses after having once began to serve Christ would be the height of folly. Paul said to the Galatians, who were doing this, "O foolish Galatians . . . having begun in the Spirit, are ye now perfected in the flesh?" (Gal. 3:1-3).

7. Christians, the true people of God, glory in Christ Jesus; that is, they have Christ as their basis for boasting (that is, glorying or confidence), and not the law. Paul gloried in nothing except the cross of Christ (with all that that involved). (Gal. 6:14; Compare II Cor. 1:31; 10:17).

Philippians chapter three elaborates at great length about how Paul had more grounds for glorying in fleshly distinctions than many Judaizers who gloried in them, and yet Paul counted all these things loss that he might gain Christ. (Phil. 3:7-8)

8. Christians, the true people of God, have no confidence in the flesh. The fact that they are negro or white, circumcised or uncircumcised gives them no confidence whatsoever. We know that God can, if He should desire, raise up circumcised children of Abraham from stones. (Luke 3:8). We put our trust in the living God and in His son, and not in our flesh.

Worship involves all of our lives. It is not limited to acts done in group assemblies. Worship involves the feelings in our hearts, toward God, our constant prayer contact with God, and the deeds and words that we do because we are God's

9. All the religious teachers in modern times who try to convert people to keep the law, wholly or in part, fall under Paul's condemnation here in Phil. 3:2-3. This includes all those who try to make us keep Saturday as a Sabbath day, to reject certain meats or foods, to keep the feasts of the law like the feast of Tabernacles, etc. See Col. 2:16-17.

It is odd that in our generation that is generally so lawless, that some should yet seek to bind an extreme and obsolete system of law upon us. While we are not without law before God, we are not under the law given through Moses. I Cor. 9:20-21.

4. though I myself might have confidence even in the flesh: if any other man thinketh to have confidence in the flesh, I yet more:
5. circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee;
6. as touching zeal, persecuting the church; as touching the righteousness which is in the law, found blameless.

Translation and Paraphrase

4. although I myself could have confidence in the flesh (if that were the source of confidence). (Indeed) if any other man thinks he has grounds for confidence in the flesh, I (have even) more (than he has).

5. (I was) circumcised when I was eight days old. (I was not some Ishmaelite or off-branch from Abraham.) (I am) of the race of Israel (not a proselyte). (I am) of the (distinguished!)

tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews (so completely Hebrew that I speak the Hebrew tongue). With regard to the law (I was) a Pharisee (holding their strict ideas about the law, and not the compromising position of many Hellenistic Jews).

6. With regard to zeal (I was) persecuting the church (of Christ); with regard to (the) righteousness (which) is (revealed) in the law, (I was) blameless.

Notes

1. Phil. 2:4 introduces a second argument as to why we must beware of the law-keepers (those Judaizers who try to make Christians keep the law of Moses): These people had less grounds for confidence in their physical distinctions than Paul had, and yet he placed no confidence in such things. Paul could denounce the Jewish view, for he once shared it to the fullest.
2. To emphasize that he had more grounds for confidence in Jewish ancestry and Jewish honors than other people who gloried in such things, Paul itemized his own distinctions:

(1) He had been circumcised the eighth day of his life. (Cf. Luke 1:59). This distinguished him from Gentiles, or proselytes, or Ishmaelites (who performed circumcision at age thirteen). Paul had lived all of his previous life in the Jewish faith.

(2) He was of the stock of Israel, of pure racial ancestry. See II Cor. 11:22.

(3) He was of the tribe of Benjamin (Rom. 11:1). This tribe was famous for its military prowess (Gen. 49:27; Judges 20), and for such honored names as King Saul and Mordecai (the cousin of Queen Esther). Paul was not from one of the ten renegade tribes.

(4) Paul was a Pharisee, as far as the law was concerned (Acts 23:6; 26:5). The Pharisees were a strict denomination of Jews. Their very name means "Separated." There were never more than 6000 of them. In spite of the hypocrisy of many of them, they were basically a strict, God-fearing group, accepting the entire Old Testament, and also the traditions which had developed around it. They refused to take part in the compromising life of many Jews of their time. Paul was not an apostate Hellenistic Jew (favorable to Greek culture) but a Pharisee.

(5) Paul was a persecutor as far as zeal was concerned. Details of Paul's (Saul's) persecutions of the church may be read in Acts 8:1, 3; 9:1-2, 13-14; 22:3-5, 19-20; 26:9-11.

Zeal for a correct cause is good. Phinehas the priest was commended for his zeal. (Numbers 25:11-13). Christ had such zeal that he drove the money changers from the temple. (Psalm 69:9; John 2:17). However, zeal for a false cause is useless, perhaps even deadly. See Rom. 10:2. Saul's zeal was like that.

(6) Paul was a blameless man, as far as the righteousness of the law was concerned. He had kept all the ceremonies and rituals of the law so faithfully that no one could find fault with his performance.

Strangely enough, however, Paul looked back upon this time when he was "blameless according to the law" as being a time when he was the chief of sinners. See II Tim. 1:13-15. This shows that people can be self-deceived about their standing before God. Also it shows that the law really made no one righteous (Hebrews 10:1-4).

3. These six descriptions of Paul's life and attainments were written to show that he could have claimed, if he had so desired, more honors from the Jewish point of view, than any of those who did place their confidence in Jewish background and attainments.

7. Howbeit what things were gain to me, these have I counted loss for Christ.

Translation and Paraphrase

7. Nevertheless (in spite of all the Jewish distinctions which I can legitimately claim), whatever things had been gain to me (that is, sources of honor and distinction) I have come to regard (these things) as (just so much) loss because of Christ (Jesus).

Notes

1. When did Paul count all those things which had appeared to be gain to him as loss?
 - (1) at his conversion (3:7)
 - (2) continuously thereafter (3:8)

2. Note what all Paul counted loss:
 - (1) Fleshly honor (his noble ancestry); (3:5)
 - (2) Education (Ph.D. equivalent!); (3:5)
 - (3) His office (Pharisee); (3:5)
 - (4) His social respectability (blameless); (3:6)
3. Observe the past tense (Gr. perfect) of "I counted" in this verse, which contrasts with the present "I count" in 3:8. (The Gr. Perfect tense indicates a past action with present effects.)
4. Paul counted his past honors as *loss*. If a modern businessman should unintentionally buy a load of merchandise that he could neither sell nor send back, he would write it off as so much loss. Thus Paul wrote off as loss his past beliefs, and in his case with no regrets.
5. Paul had found the pearl of great price. (Matt. 13:45-46). It was Christ. For Christ's sake he was willing to give up all else he ever had or gloried in. "For Christ count everything but loss."

8. Yea verily, and I count all things to be loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but refuse, that I may gain Christ.

Translation and Paraphrase

8. Indeed I verily (still) count all things (to be) loss for the overwhelming gain of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I suffered the loss of all things, and do count them as only (items of) refuse (dung, or filth), so that I may gain (or win) Christ.

Notes

1. Paul's past decision (stated in 3:7) to count all things loss for Christ was still his present attitude, as stated in 3:8.
2. How shall we describe the excellent knowledge of Christ which so entranced Paul? It is extensive, useful, cheering, satisfying, profound, authoritative, uplifting, purifying, helpful, transforming! (The expression "the knowledge of Christ" includes both the knowledge about Christ and the knowledge we gain through fellowship with Him.)
3. What things did Paul gain in Christ?
 - (1) He gained the excellency of the knowledge of Christ. (3:8, 10a). "This is life eternal that they should *know* thee,

the only true God, and him whom thou didst send, even Christ Jesus." (John 17:3)

(2) The justification (or righteousness) that comes through faith. Compare Romans 1:17; 3:21-22.

(3) A knowledge (experimental knowledge) of the power of Christ's resurrection (3:10).

(4) Partnership in Christ's sufferings (3:10).

(5) Identification with Christ in his death (3:10).

(6) Assurance of the resurrection unto eternal life (3:11).

4. Paul surely suffered the loss of all things. He lost his job, his reputation, his safety, his former friends, and finally his life. However, he also gained many things that were worth far more to him than all he lost.
5. "Refuse" (Gr. *skubala*, pl. of *skubalon*) means dung, filth, refuse. (Lidell & Scott's Lexicon).
6. Paul's supreme wish now was to gain (or win) Christ as his own, and to be found in Christ. We should endeavor to make Paul's feelings our feelings. To gain Christ and be found in him involves much more than merely to receive Christ as savior. It seems to have meant to Paul that he wanted to be absorbed completely into the nature, work, fellowship, and presence of Christ. May God help us to desire to gain Christ to the degree that Paul desired him.

9. and be found in him, not having a righteousness of mine own, even that which is of the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith; 10. that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, becoming conformed unto his death; 11. if by any means I may attain unto the resurrection from the dead.

Translation and Paraphrase

9. (I desire not only to gain, or win, Christ, but also that) I may be found in him (—found by God, and found by Christ himself, and by my brethren, and by those who oppose me—and when I am thus found that all may behold me,) not as (having) a righteousness of my own (which is) the (righteousness) based on (keeping) the law, but (as having) that (righteousness which comes) through Christ, the (righteousness) from God (which is given) upon the basis of faith.

10. (And I desire) to know him (that is, to know Christ—to know him in all the limitless experiences of fellowship available to us in the gospel), and (to know) the power of his resurrection (with that power working in my life), and (to know the) fellowship of his sufferings (to have a share in them, if need be, even to the point of) being made to conform to his death (along with him),

11. so that I may, if possible, attain unto the resurrection from the dead, (that is, unto the resurrection unto eternal life).

Notes

1. 3:9-11 expresses some of Paul's desires as they related to Christ. He desired to gain Christ, to be found in Christ, to know Christ, to know the power of Christ's resurrection, and to know the fellowship of His sufferings. All of these things involve Christ.
2. Paul wanted to be *found* in Christ. (No secret discipleship for him!) He wanted anyone who might care to investigate him, or who might accidentally cross his path, to find that he Paul was *in Christ*.
3. Paul desired that those who "found" him would find out quickly that his righteousness was not the righteousness commanded in the law—a righteousness which consisted of doing or not doing a long list of things that were contained in the law (Gal. 3:12)—but that his righteousness was that which is given through faith in Christ. This is a bestowed righteousness. God says, as it were, "I know that you have sinned, but because you believe in and desire to serve my Son, I declare you to be righteous, as righteous as if you had never sinned in your life." (Romans 1:17; 3:21-24). Out of the joy and inward peace that comes from this bestowed righteousness, we live lives of obedience, holiness, love, and good works, not because we are under the law of Moses, but because we desire to obey God's will and desire to do good unto all men to the utmost of our power. (Titus 3:8; Eph. 3:10).

A synonym for righteousness is *justification*, or acquittal. When God declares a man righteous, he is justified and acquitted of all guilt, just as if he had never sinned. Then he is furthermore aided by the Holy Spirit to live a life of true personal righteousness.

- | | |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 4. Our own righteousness— | The righteousness from God. |
| a. Based on the law. | a. Based on grace. |
| b. Requires meritorious works. | b. Requires faith. |
| c. Earned. | c. Free. |
| d. Brings glory to me. | d. Brings glory to Christ. |
| e. Impossible to attain | e. Freely available. |

(Romans 3:20)

5. Paul desired to *know* Christ. Compare Eph. 1:19. *Knowing* in Biblical usage, often means more than mere acquaintance. It signifies knowing intimately by experience and devoted association, (Eph. 4:13; John 17:3; Jer. 9:23-24). Sometimes *know* means to *approve*. (Matt. 7:23). Do you truly want to know Christ as Paul wanted to know him, or would you rather keep Christ off at a safe distance?

Paul seems to have come to feel in later years that he really did know Jesus. "I know him whom I have believed." (II Tim. 1:12).

6. Paul desired to know the power of Christ's resurrection. Compare Eph. 1:19-20. This power that brought Christ back from the dead is available to us as Christians. God will assist us with the same power with which he raised Christ. Romans 6:3-5 emphasizes that in baptism we are united with Christ in the likeness of his resurrection, as well as in the likeness of his death.
7. Paul desired to know the fellowship of Christ's sufferings, even to the point to becoming conformed to Christ's death.

Paul did not deliberately try to bring troubles upon himself; on several occasions in his life he took steps to prevent trouble from coming upon himself. But he accepted trouble and even death as a reality, and looked upon it as a means of identification with Christ.

Certainly Paul did experience a full fellowship (or share) in suffering for (and with) Christ. Acts 9:16; II Cor. 11:23-28. Paul has revealed to us that we enter the kingdom of God through many tribulations (Acts 14:22). Also that all who would live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution (I Tim. 3:12).

But in all of these things Paul kept himself joyful and expectant. "If we died with him, we shall also live with him." (II Tim. 2:11-12). That which God appoints for us, though

it seems grievous for a moment, at last produces wonderful fruit in our lives.

8. Paul's statement in 3:11, in which he says, "if by any means I may attain unto the resurrection from the dead," is a bit hard to understand.

Paul cannot have meant that he needed to work for Christ to a certain point to be assured that his body would rise from the dead. This notion conflicts with Paul's own plain statements that he believed in a general resurrection of both the just and the unjust (I Cor. 15:23; Acts 24:15; 26:8). Christ also spoke of the coming general resurrection (John 5:28-29).

It would appear, then, that Paul meant that he hoped to live in such a way that he would be worthy of the honor of being raised from the dead, even though our worth has nothing to do with the certainty that we shall be raised. Or perhaps Paul meant that he wanted to be sure to be raised in the resurrection with the just. A resurrection unto eternal punishment is hardly an inviting "resurrection."

12. Not that I have already obtained, or am already made perfect: but I press on, if so be that I may lay hold on that for which also I was laid hold on by Christ Jesus.

Translation and Paraphrase

12. (I certainly am) not (implying) that I have already taken (hold of my goals), or (that) I have already become fully grown (and perfect); but I am pursuing (the goals), so that I may lay hold (upon them, the same goal) for which I was also laid hold upon by Christ. (He laid hold upon me at the time of my conversion, and directed me toward the goal, which I now long for and labor to take hold of.)

Notes

1. Paul here reveals yet more of the attitudes which he held, attitudes which distinguished him from the false teachers who gloried in their Jewish background.

Paul did not consider himself yet to have laid hold on the goals he had stated in 3:9-11. Compare 3:13a. He did not feel that he was yet perfect, even though Christ had given him that righteousness which comes through faith (3:9).

There was more he yet desired to attain. The word *attain* in 3:11 (Gr. *katantao*) is a different word from *obtained* in 3:12 (Gr. *lambano*), even though the KJV translates them as *attain* and *attained*. The former word means to arrive at; the latter means to take.

2. *Perfect* means full-grown, or mature in mind, complete. It does not suggest the idea of absolute sinlessness.
3. Though he did not feel that he was perfect, Paul nevertheless was always pressing on (Gr. *dioko*, pursue). This should be a lesson against letting down in our efforts, even in old age! Paul was no longer young when he wrote these words. Compare Philemon 9.
4. Paul sought to lay hold on the thing for which Christ had laid hold upon him and had directed him to seize. Christ had laid hold on Paul for a purpose, and now Paul sought to lay hold on that same purpose. We see here an illustration of the co-operation necessary between the divine will and the human will.

The idea that God and Christ lay hold on us, and direct our lives into certain paths for certain goals, is frequently found in the scripture. But in all such cases the human will and human effort had to cooperate with the divine directions, or the job did not get done. Note the cases of Moses (Ex. 3:10; 4:10-11), Jeremiah (Jer. 1:4-10). John the baptist (Luke 1:15-17), and Paul himself (Acts 26:19; Gal. 1:15-16). Compare Phil. 2:13. Perhaps God is laying hold on your life for a special service. Will you accept this direction, and strive to lay hold on the goal for which you were laid hold on?

5. R.S.V. translates 3:12b, "because Christ Jesus has made me his own." The Gr. prepositional phrase *epb' ho* (translated for *which* in KJV and ASV) does indeed sometimes mean *because* (Thayer's Lexicon), in accord with this reading. But most of the other principal versions (New English, Phillips, Amplified, New A.S.V., Confraternity, etc.) render the verse by a meaning similar to our familiar KJV and ASV. This would seem to be the preferred reading.

13. Brethren, I count not myself yet to have laid hold; but one thing I do, forgetting the things which are behind, and stretching forward to the things which are before, 14. I press on toward the goal unto the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

Translation and Paraphrase

13. Brothers, I do not count myself (yet) to have laid hold on (my goal). But one thing I (am doing): forgetting (disregarding) the things (that are) behind (in my past) and stretching forward (like a racer) to the things ahead,

14. I pursue (onward) toward the mark, unto the (great prize and) award of the upward calling of God in Christ Jesus, (that prize which God, the great umpire, awards to all of those who press ever onward and upward—to all those who obey the calling of God, which comes to us in Christ, and leads us ever upward toward God.)

Notes

1. Paul repeats in 3:13 the thought first stated in 3:12, that he did not yet count himself to have laid hold (perf. infin. of *katalambano*, the word used also in 3:12, meaning to lay hold on so as to make one's own). The goals Paul desired to lay hold on were stated in 3:10-11.
2. Paul was dedicated to *one* thing. Neither past failures and persecutions, nor fears about the future kept him from seeking this. The *one thing* which Paul did was to keep reaching and stretching out further toward things ahead, toward his goal.
3. *Forgetting* is a present tense, indicating continuous linear action. *Forgetting* here expresses the idea of disregarding, or refusing to be influenced by something.
4. "I press toward the mark, the goal." A goal is an object upon which the eye is kept fixed, so that it can be attained through constant attention and effort.
5. "Unto the *prize*." The *prize* referred to here is an award such as is given to a victor in athletic competition. Paul here compares his attainment of the fullest fellowship with Christ and his reward in heaven to a trophy such as an athlete might win.

Do you really desire this heavenly prize, or do you prefer the decaying award of this world?

6. The prize is described as the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. The term "high calling" may also be rendered as the "upward calling." Everything about the services of Christ leads us upward—upward in service to others, upward in kindness, upward in joy, upward in helpfulness, etc.

15. Let us therefore, as many as are perfect, be thus minded: and if in anything ye are otherwise minded, this also shall God reveal unto you: 16. only whereunto we have attained, by that same rule let us walk.

Translation and Paraphrase

15. Therefore let as many of us as are full-grown (mature, perfect, fully developed in Christian attitudes) think this same (way about our progress as Christians). And if any one (of you) think otherwise (about your Christian progress) God will reveal this (truth) to you (in due time, and convince you that I was right about it).

16. But (whatever your feelings about our goal for life may be, I urge) only (this, that we) live by the same (standard) unto which we have attained—(live in accordance with the best knowledge and feelings you have gained).

Notes

1. Verses 15-16 form a concluding exhortation to the preceding material. Paul urged those who considered themselves spiritually perfect (mature, or full-grown) to realize that they had to continue pressing on toward the heavenly goal, even as he did. If there were some among Paul's readers who did not feel about this as Paul felt, and thought that they were already fully attained, Paul did not quarrel with them, but only urged them to live according to the best knowledge and best feelings they then had. He adds the mild, perhaps half-humorous, rebuke, that if in any respect they did not now agree with Paul's views about the Christian life, that God would in due time reveal to them the truthfulness of Paul's position.
2. Most of us would be much better Christians if we only lived fully up to the things we now know we should do. How much more would we be excellent servants of God if we had a dedication like Paul's, who said, "One thing I do, forgetting the things which are behind, and stretching forward to the things which are before, I press on . . ."

17. Brethren, be ye imitators together of me, and mark them that so walk even as ye have us for an example.

Translation and Paraphrase

17. Be ye (all of you) fellow-imitators (imitators together) of me, (my) brothers, and be keeping your gaze upon those who are

walking in this manner, according to (the manner which) ye have and see in us (as) a pattern.

Notes

1. 3:17-21 forms a new subtopic in our outline, which we entitle "Why Be Imitators of Paul." This section further develops the topic of chapter three, "False Teachers Contrasted with Paul's example."

Two reasons in 3:18-21 are given for imitating Paul and marking (taking notice of) those who live by Paul's example:

- (1) Many people are enemies of the cross;
- (2) Our citizenship is in heaven.

We could say that 3:2-16 warns us to beware of the law-keepers, and 3:17-21 warns us to beware of the lawless.

2. The Philippians were urged—both as individuals and as a group—to imitate Paul. They were to be imitators *together* (KJV *followers*) of Paul. Paul could say what few preachers can: "Imitate me." Compare I Cor. 11:1; II Thess. 3:9.
3. They were furthermore to mark (that is, note, or observe, or behold) those who were walking (that is, living) according to the example of Paul.

We should be very selective about our friends and the people we imitate. This might seem to contradict Matt. 7:1, which says, "Judge not." However, Matt. 7:1 by no means forbids us to observe the conduct of people and to evaluate it. It only forbids us to form critical opinions of people on the basis of feelings and prejudice. Our instinctive emotional reactions toward people must be kept in check. However, observation of their deeds is necessary. "By their fruits ye shall know them." (Matt. 7:16). "He that doeth righteousness is righteous. He that doeth sin is of the devil." (I John 3:7-8) Let us therefore mark (note) those who so walk as Paul walked for our example.

4. *Ensample* means a pattern, type, or example. *Ensample* and *example* are close synonyms.

18. For many walk, of whom I told you often, and now tell you even weeping, *that they are* the enemies of the cross of Christ: 19. whose end is perdition, whose god is the belly, and *whose* glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.

Translation and Paraphrase

18. For many are walking (that is, living—people of whom) I have spoken many times, and (of whom) I now speak even (with) weeping—(that they are) the enemies of the cross of Christ (and all that the cross stands for).

Notes

1. Paul warned his Christian converts about evil men. He warned them often (3:18), and repeatedly. The idea that we must be so polite that we never speak out against evil-doers is not found in the Holy Scriptures. Christ himself exposed the Pharisees; Peter and Jude wrote warnings about ungodly men (II Peter 2; book of Jude); Notice the warnings of Paul in II Tim. 4:14 and I Tim. 1:19-20. Such Old Testament prophets as Isaiah (22:15ff), Jeremiah (20:1-6), and Amos (7:14-17) spoke out against ungodly men.
2. The word *walk* in 3:18 means to live. Comparing the Christian life to a walk is very common in the New Testament. See Eph. 4:1, 17; 5:15.
3. According to Paul there were *many* who walked in such a way as to be enemies of the cross. Still today many are going down the broad way of life to destruction, but only few up the narrow road that leads unto life. (Matt. 7:13-14).

As to who these *many* people to whom Paul referred were, we frankly cannot say. It could be that they included the Judaizers, or the Gnostics (an ancient denomination which thought that salvation comes by knowing certain mystical knowledge), or the heathen, or even some professed Christians. It probably would have been obvious to the Philippians that the heathen were ungodly, but perhaps not so apparent that some professed Christians were.

4. The very act of thinking and speaking about these ungodly people affected Paul strongly: "I tell you (of them) even weeping." Although it is sometimes necessary, we should also find it painful to warn about ungodly people.

If we really feel grieved over the sins of people, they will be less likely to be offended when we warn them, than they will if we adopt a superior, "holier-than-thou" (Isaiah 65:5). One preacher lost his job because he told his church that if they did not repent they were going to hell. A later preacher

before the same church said the same things, and was graciously accepted. One of the church members said, "The new preacher said the same things the old preacher said, but he acted like he was sorry about it."

5. "Enemies of the cross of Christ." The cross is central in Christianity. See Gal. 6:14; 5:11; I Cor. 1:17-18; 2:2; Eph. 2:16. The word *cross* in 3:18 probably refers to all the doctrines of Christ, which focus upon the cross. (*Cross* is therefore a metonymy, a part used to refer to a whole.)

Even most unbelievers admire the teachings and the holy life of Jesus. But the cross is a stumbling-block to them. The cross tells us that we are unclean sinners, so foul that the perfect one had to die for us. It sweeps away all our pride in human wisdom and knowledge. The cross says, "All your knowledge and morality does not impress God a bit. You must come to the cross in sincere recognition of your utter sinfulness if you want to be saved." Such implications are foolishness to the worldly-wise, and are stumbling-blocks to those who place confidence in their religious ceremonialism (I Cor. 1:18, 23). But the cross is still the only approach to God.

6. Probably those who were the very enemies of the cross of Christ thought that they were good, educated, wise, and perhaps even godly people. It so often happens this way. The wolves in sheep's clothing do not realize that they are wolves. "He that killeth you thinks he does God a service!" (John 16:2). Sincerity is no proof of salvation.
7. "Whose end is perdition." *Perdition* (Gr. *apoleia*) means destruction or ruin. It refers to the eternal punishment of hell fire. (Matt. 25:46; Mark 9:43-48; Rev. 20:15; 14:11).
8. "Whose god is the belly." The Greek word translated "belly" may refer to the whole belly, upper and lower; or just the lower belly (including its back side; or to the gullet; or the womb. In the light of these definitions it would appear that any person whose major interests are eating, drinking, or sex makes his belly his god. (II Pet. 2:18-19).

Anything that habitually occupies our minds and vocabularies is a god to us.

9. "Whose glory is their shame." Many people glory in and boast of things of which they should be ashamed. They glory in

acts of fornication, in how much alcohol they can consume, in money gained by gambling, and such things.

The term *antinomian* is sometimes applied to those who refuse to live according to any law, including God's. Those who glory in their shame are antinomians in the worst sense.

10. "Who mind earthly things." Christians should set their hope completely upon the grace that is to be brought to us at the revelation of Jesus Christ. (I Peter 1:13). We should be laying up treasures in heaven, not upon earth. (Matt. 6:19-21).

Some unbelievers (and even some church members!) deride Christians who have this attitude, as being too "otherworldly," or being "irrelevant" in this modern world. But the fact remains that the people who are most interested in the life to come live the present life in the best way. "Everyone that hath this hope (the hope of seeing God and being like God) set upon him, purifieth himself even as he is pure." (I John 3:3).

20. For our citizenship is in heaven; whence also we wait for a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ; 21. who shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation, that it may be conformed to the body of his glory, according to the working whereby he is able even to subject all things unto himself.

Translation and Paraphrase

20. (We must not be like these,) for our state (wherein we have our citizenship) is in the heavens, from whence we also (steadfastly) look for a savior, the Lord Jesus Christ,

21. who (Christ) shall change our lowly (physical) body (so that it will be like in form to his glorious body), and this he will do (in a manner) in accord with the working which he powerfully exercises (all of the time), (even to the point of) subjecting all things to himself.

Notes

1. "Our citizenship (KJV *conversation*) is in heaven." This is given as another reason for our imitating men like Paul (3:17). Paul lived by the laws of the kingdom of heaven; we are also citizens of heaven; therefore we should imitate Paul.

(The term *conversation*, as used in the KJV, does not mean speech. It has the meaning of conduct, or of turning to and fro in life's activities.)

2. The word *citizenship* (Gr. *politeuma*) means a system of laws governing a state, or the state or commonwealth itself. Thus the translations in R.S.V. and A.S.V.m. render it "commonwealth." Phillips' version, and the New English render it "We are citizens of heaven." James Moffatt has a famous translation of the verse: "We are a colony of heaven." Our citizenship is not to be in heaven in the future; it's there now.

3. The Philippians would find such terms as *citizenship* and *colony* meaningful, because Philippi was a Roman colony and the people there prided themselves on being Roman citizens.

As the Romans colonized and took over the world of their time, so Christians need to colonize and take over the cities and nations of the earth by gospel infiltration.

4. From heaven, where our citizenship is, we look for a savior to come back, the Lord Jesus Christ.

To the Christian Christ will come as a savior; to the world he will come as the judge.

The word *look* (*apekdechomai*) means to assiduously and patiently wait for.

5. The hope of Christ's second coming is a dominant theme in the New Testament. Acts 1:11; I Thess. 4:13—5:2; Heb. 9:28; Titus 2:13. It should be the dominant hope of every Christian.
6. Christ "shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation." "Fashion anew" (KJV "change;" Gr. *metaschematizo*) means to change the appearance of. (See p. 52). While the expression "fashion anew" does not in itself carry the idea of transforming the intrinsic nature of anything, it is here followed by the word "conformed" (KJV, "fashioned;" Gr. *summorphos*) which does indicate a basic transformation in the nature of the thing being referred to. Our bodies are to be thus changed.

Our bodies are now "vile" objects of humble character. (See note 7 below.) Christ will soon change them both externally and inwardly that they will become like his own glorious body. (See Rom. 8:29 and note 8 below). "We shall all be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump." (I Cor. 15:51-52).

7. Our "vile" body (KJV) is a description of our bodies as they now are, lowly and humble. This Biblical use of the word vile does not carry the connotation of evil that we now associate with it. It only means lowly.