



# PHILIPPIANS

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## INSTRUCTOR BIOGRAPHY

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Russell and his wife Dee are blessed with three children - Ross, John and Kati. Ross and John are both graduates of the Southwest School of Bible Studies and currently serve as ministers in the Lord's church.

## INTRODUCTION

The city of Philippi was located near the seacoast (9 miles from Neapolis) in eastern Macedonia (Acts 16:12). It was nestled between the Strymon and Nestos rivers near the mountain ranges of Pangaeus and Haemus. The town was highly valued for its nearby goldmines. Tradition tells us that the city, under its first name of Crenides (or Datum), was founded by some who came from nearby Thasos led by Kallistratos. When Crenides was attacked by Thracians the people sought Philip II of Macedon (father of Alexander the Great) for their protection. Philip, who probably coveted the wealth to be gained from the nearby goldmines, decided to capture the city for himself and renamed it Philippi in his own honor (356 BC). Philip established a powerful garrison in Philippi to protect its goldmines. The ancient historian Diodorus claimed the mines near Philippi were very productive and were surely a big part of financing Philip's future military campaigns. Philip was also responsible for improving the terrain of Philippi by draining the surrounding swamps. This produced a plain which was extremely fertile. It is here the historic Battle of Philippi took place.

Following the assassination of Julius Caesar (44 B.C.) those loyal to Caesar (Mark Antony, Octavian Caesar, and Marcus Lepidus) joined forces to defeat those involved in the assassination (Marcus Brutus and Gaius Cassius). In 42 B.C. their forces met in a gap between an impassable marsh and the unscalable cliffs near Philippi. Brutus and Cassius were defeated.

Philippi was an important city and flourished not only as a result of the nearby goldmines but also because it was located on the Via Egnatia. This prominent Roman road spanned from Rome to Asia. It was constructed in the 2nd century B.C. covering a total distance of approximately 696 miles (1,120 km), was over 19 feet (6 meters) wide and was paved with stone or covered with a layer of sand. Paul would make good use of this road when he first came to Philippi around 52 A.D. during his second missionary journey. The city was a key strategic location for spreading the gospel. Paul would commonly select such places for the beginning of his work in a region.

Once Philippi became a Roman colony it flourished. The predominant language of the people became Latin. The Roman laws and customs prevailed (Acts 16:20-21). There were only a few Jews who lived in Philippi and for this reason there was no local synagogue (Acts 16:13). The city also had a school of medicine which may be significant if tradition is right in saying that Luke the physician lived there. Today the site has numerous and substantial archaeological remains including a theatre and four basilicas.

Paul first came to the city during his second missionary journey (52 A.D.). We can read about his visit in Acts chapter 16. Philippi was visited again by Paul approximately five years later during his third missionary journey. It is not surprising that Paul had such a close relationship with the Philippian brethren. It is evident, from their financial assistance, that they felt the same closeness for the apostle (Philippians 4:15-16; 2 Corinthians 11:9).

## PHILIPPIANS OUTLINE

- I. Paul's Current Circumstances
  - A. Salutation ..... 1:1-2
  - B. Thanks and prayer for the Philippians ..... 1:3-11
  - C. The spread of the gospel..... 1:12-19
  - D. Paul's life of service ..... 1:20-26
  - E. Exhortation to stand fast ..... 1:27-30
- II. Having the Mind of Christ
  - A. Exhortation to love and humility ..... 2:1-4
  - B. The mind of Christ..... 2:5-8
  - C. Christ highly exalted..... 2:9-13
  - D. Exhortation to be lights in the world ..... 2:14-18
  - E. The service of Timothy ..... 2:19-24
  - F. The service of Epaphroditus..... 2:25-30
- III. Having the Knowledge of Christ
  - A. Warnings about false teachers..... 3:1-3
  - B. Paul's former life and present example ..... 3:4-17
  - C. Warnings against the enemies of the cross of Christ ..... 3:18-21
- IV. Having the Peace of Christ
  - A. Exhortation to certain individuals..... 4:1-3
  - B. Exhortation to joyous living and thought..... 4:4-10
  - C. Content in Christ ..... 4:11-13
  - D. Praise for their generosity and salutations ..... 4:14-23

## Writer

It is agreed upon by almost all scholars that the writer of this epistle is the apostle Paul (Philippians 1:1). Paul loved and appreciated this congregation like no other. Some have even called this epistle Paul's "love letter" to the Philippian brethren. They had supported him in his work when he was in great need (Philippians 4:15-16; 2 Corinthians 11:8-9) and their liberality served as an example for others to follow (2 Corinthians 8:1-5). An explanation for this wonderful attitude might best be seen in 2 Corinthians 8:5 which says, they first "gave themselves to the Lord."

## Language

This letter was originally written in Koiné Greek. The word "Koiné" means "common." This is a fitting name because it was the common language used by the people at that time. The New Testament is written in a popular form of the "Koiné" Greek which was spoken by the common people in the cities throughout the whole of the Greek-speaking world during the first century.

## Date

The date of writing for this epistle is uncertain but was probably written from Rome between 60 and 64 AD while Paul was in prison (Philippians 1:13–14). This may have been when he was under house arrest (Acts 28:14–31).

## History of the Congregation

This congregation was founded by Paul during great persecution during his second missionary journey (Acts 16:12-40). It started small with Lydia and her household, and the Philippian jailor and his family.

## Key Word

The word "joy" (or "rejoice") is found 16 times in this epistle (1:4; 1:18; 1:25; 2:2; 2:16; 2:17; 2:18; 2:28; 3:1; 3:3; 4:1; 4:4). The word "joy" (or "rejoice") is often found twice in a single verse. This is even more meaningful when we consider that this epistle was probably written from a place of imprisonment.

## Key Verses

1:17; 1:21; 2:5; 2:12; 2:14; 3:8; 3:13-14; 4:4; 4:6-8; 4:11; 4:13.

## Theme

Living a joyful Christian life.

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

1. In the first chapter Paul expresses his thankfulness for the Philippian brethren.
2. Paul also states his joy in the spread of the gospel and his determination to magnify Christ in his life or even his death.
3. The main emphasis for this chapter is Christ-centered living ("Christ" - used 18 times).

### DISCUSSION

#### I. Salutation (1:1-2)

##### Verse 1

Timothy (English form of the Greek name - Timotheus) was a young man of Lystra. He was a companion of Paul on his second and third missionary journeys and was the recipient of two of Paul's epistles.

Timothy was of both Jewish and Greek ancestry. He was the son of Eunice, a Jewess, by a Greek father who may have been dead when Paul first visited their home (Acts 16:1).

Paul and Timothy are "servants" or slaves of Jesus (Savior) Christ (the anointed one).

The Philippian brethren are called "saints." The word "saint" is an English translation of the Greek word HAGIOS which means set apart for a holy use. All Christians are saints (1 Peter 1:15-16).

We notice here the terms "bishops" and "deacons" mentioned in this verse. Bishops (1 Timothy 3:1-2) are also referred to as elders (1 Timothy 5:1), overseers (Acts 20:28), pastors (Ephesian 4:11), rulers (Hebrews 13:7, 17), presbytery (1 Timothy 4:14) and shepherds (1 Peter 5:2). The different terms are used to emphasize different aspects of the same office.

The qualifications for elders are clearly given to us in God's word (1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:6-9). The deacons are servants of the church who work

under the oversight of the elders. The qualifications for deacons are also provided to us in the scriptures (1 Timothy 3:8-13).

The organization of the Lord's church is clear:

- A. Christ - Jesus is the head of the church (Colossians 1:18).
- B. Elders - A plurality of qualified men serve as elders to oversee each independent congregation of the Lord's church (Acts 14:23; 1 Peter 5:1-2).
- C. Deacons - These men serve the congregation under the elders (1 Timothy 3:8-12).
- D. Members - Preachers are simply members who preach the gospel (Romans 10:14-15).

Any other titles, positions or roles established by men to rule a congregation are NOT authorized by God and therefore sinful (Matthew 20:20-28).

Verse 2

Paul wished for them to receive God's grace and peace. "Grace" is the unmerited favor we receive from God (Romans 5:8). "Peace" with God, only comes when we are cleansed from our sins in the blood of Christ (Isaiah 59:1-2; 1 Peter 1:18-19; Romans 6:3-4).

## II. Thankfulness and prayer for the Philippians (1:3-11)

Verse 3

"remembrance" (or mention) - Paul was thankful for his Philippian brethren and he thought of them often.

Verse 4

"prayer" - In this verse he mentions making requests. When writing to Timothy Paul gave more elements of prayer (1 Timothy 2:1).

Verse 5

The word "fellowship" is a translation of the Greek word KOINONIA which has been translated as "Communication" (Philemon 6), "Communion" (1 Corinthians 10:16), "Contribution" (Romans 15:26), "Distribution" (2 Corinthians 9:13) and "Fellowship" (Philippians 1:5). It can convey the idea of partnership, participation and/or financial assistance (Philippians 4:16).

## Verse 6

The "he" referred to in this verse is God. How did God begin a work in them and how would it continue? God's tool is His word (Ephesians 6:17; Hebrews 4:12). It is through God's word that we grow in our faith (Romans 10:17).

"the day of Jesus Christ" (Judgment day) - God's word would continue to do its faith building work until Christ's return (Isaiah 40:8; Matthew 24:35). The "day of Christ" is mentioned several times in this epistle (Philippians 1:6; 1:10; 2:16 - see also 2 Thessalonians 2:2).

## Verse 7

"gospel" - The gospel is singular and unique (Galatians 1:8-10). The core of the gospel is the death burial and resurrection of Christ (1 Corinthians 15:1-4). However, it is not limited to these facts as is seen in Paul's use of the word gospel in the Galatians passage.

"defense...of the gospel" - The gospel must be preached and it must be defended against the false doctrines invented by men (Jude 3).

"confirmation...of the gospel" - The gospel message was confirmed by the miracles which were done (Mark 16:20; John 20:30-31; Acts 8:18-23).

## Verse 8

"record" - Paul confirms the truthfulness of what he is saying by citing God as a witness.

Paul greatly desired their spiritual growth and fellowship.

## Verse 9

We see in this verse the recipe Paul gives for the growth of their love. Love would abound in "knowledge" and in all "judgment." Love without knowledge and judgment is simple emotion without any foundation.

"abound" - This means to go beyond, superabundant (in quantity) or superior (in quality).

#### Verse 10

"approve" - This English word is a translation of the Greek word DOKIMADZO which means to put to the test. Christians are to follow after that which is excellent as we prove ourselves to be sincere (genuine) for the day of Christ (judgment).

#### Verse 11

"fruits of righteousness" - These fruits should be seen in every Christian's life (Galatians 5:22; Ephesians 5:9). The glory and praise for these fruits belong to God and not ourselves (Matthew 5:16).

### III. The spread of the gospel (1:12-19)

#### Verse 12

Paul did not want the brethren to have anxiety about his situation. Christians should not suffer from anxiety (Philippians 4:6).

"furtherance" - The Greek word which is translated as "furtherance" was used to describe the action of an advancing army (2 Timothy 2:3-4).

#### Verse 13

Through his imprisonment Paul became known to some who he probably would have never been able to reach otherwise (Felix - Acts 24, Festus - Acts 25, King Agrippa - Acts 26 and others in Caesar's household - Philippians 4:22).

#### Verse 14

This shows the power of a good example. As Christians we should set a good example for others to follow (1 Corinthians 11:1).

#### Verse 15

Some were preaching the gospel because of feelings of envy. Perhaps, they had been impressed by the following and recognition Paul had received. The "strife" they had was probably with others who were also trying to gain prominence. However, there were those good preachers who had the right motive in their preaching. They were "speaking the truth in love" and "serving the Lord with all humility of mind" (Ephesians 4:15; Acts 20:19).

#### Verse 16

Some were preaching Christ with a motive of contentiousness to cause disagreements and arguments. Perhaps they thought if they were allowed to openly preach Christ without retribution others might think Paul was not really imprisoned for his teaching. This they assumed would make things more difficult for Paul. Perhaps they did not trust Paul because he had once been a persecutor of the church.

#### Verse 17

The word "defence" comes from the Greek word APOLOGIA which is defined as a reasoned argument in defense of something, typically a theory or religious doctrine. In the book of Jude we learn that we "should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3; 1 Peter 3:15).

#### Verse 18

In this verse Paul is not teaching "the ends justify the means." He is not saying their wrong attitude was approved by God. He was simply expressing his joy that the truth was being spread even if they did not have the right motive. The Bible is clear that an improper attitude will condemn (John 4:24). People will be lost eternally for wrong motives and attitudes.

#### Verse 19

Paul was confident his "salvation" (deliverance) from his current trial would surely come. His assurance was based on their prayers and the "supply" (contribution) of the Spirit of Jesus Christ

#### IV. Paul's life of service (1:20-26)

#### Verse 20

Paul was not ashamed because he suffered as a Christian (1 Peter 4:16). It did not matter if he lived or died because both outcomes would serve to magnify (show to be great) Jesus.

#### Verse 21

"to live is Christ" - Galatians 2:20  
"to die is gain" - Revelation 14:12-13

## Verse 22

If he continued to live there would be "fruit" (good results) as he continued his efforts to spread God's message of salvation. If given the choice he is not sure which outcome he would choose.

## Verses 23 & 24

We take note of Paul's unselfishness when we realize that even in his current situation (a prisoner in Rome) he was thinking of others first.

## Verses 25 & 26

Paul was confident his work with them would be allowed to continue. Notice "joy" and "rejoicing" are both mentioned. We also see the connection of "joy" to their faith.

There is a difference between having joy and being happy. Happiness comes by chance and is dependent on one's condition or circumstance. However, joy is what Christians will experience. It is not tied to one's condition or circumstance. As we see in Paul's letter a Christian can feel joy even if he is suffering in prison.

## V. Exhortation to stand fast (1:27-30)

### Verse 27

"conversation" - ("conduct" NKJV) - The word translated here comes from the Greek POLITEUOMAI which is defined as "to behave as a citizen." The meaning in this verse is that we should behave as a citizen of heaven (Philippians 3:20).

"stand fast" - They will be able to stand firm in the one faith if they are united in one spirit and one mind. The Corinthians struggled in their faith because they were not united (1 Corinthians 1:10-13).

### Verse 28

They should have no fear concerning those who opposed them. The gospel message was to their adversaries proof or indication of utter destruction, but to the Philippians it was salvation. The same message had two vastly different responses (1 Corinthians 1:18).

#### Verse 29

Paul explains they were given the opportunity for faith and suffering. Maybe we do not see suffering as a gift but suffering for Christ should be seen as a privilege, not a burden.

#### Verse 30

The Philippians were now suffering like Paul. When Paul and Silas first preached the gospel in Philippi, they were persecuted severely by the enemies of the truth. They were dragged to the market place, beaten and put into prison (Acts 16:19). The Philippians had seen this for themselves. They had also heard of Paul's current captivity in Rome.

## CHAPTER TWO

### INTRODUCTION

1. In Chapter two the emphasis is on having the mind of Christ (see verses 2, 3, 5 and 20). Having the "mind of Christ" is having the attitude of Christ.
2. We learn the importance of humility and self-denial in achieving unity (Matthew 5:3).
3. Christ is set forth as the perfect example to be imitated by all Christians (Philippians 2:5).

### DISCUSSION

- I. Exhortation to love and humility (2:1-4)

#### Verses 1&2

"consolation" - This word comes from the Greek PARAKLESIS which is a compound of two words PARA (beside or near) and KALEO (to call). In this verse it basically means to call to one's side to console, encourage, strengthen and comfort.

Paul says if these qualities are in Christ (those mentioned in verse 1) then the Philippians should make Paul's joy full and complete. The apostle has no doubt these virtues are in Christ, but their reaction to his plea will show their belief of these things. He tells them later in the letter that they had already given him much joy (Philippians 4:1).

#### Verse 3

"strife or vainglory" - Self-conceit should never be a motivation in the life of a Christian. The mind should be motivated with the humility of Christ (Philippians 2:7-8). True humility means instead of focusing on qualities where we shine, we celebrate qualities where our neighbor shines.

#### Verse 4

If we have unselfish humility (Romans 12:3) we will have concern for others (Romans 12:9-10).

This is one of the verses found in the Bible which by implication condemns gambling. One cannot "look...on the things of others" if one is trying to take away their money (Matthew 7:12). There are four authorized ways to obtain money. You can earn it, you can be given a gift, you can find it or you can inherit it. Taking from others is not authorized, even if they cooperate.

## II. The mind of Christ (2:5-8)

### Verse 5

Christ is the perfect pattern and example of humility. Our challenge is to be transformed with a renewed mind (Romans 12:2).

### Verse 6

"form of God" - Colossians 2:9 states, "For in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." In John 1:1-3 we find, "In the beginning was the Word (Jesus - John 1:14), and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made."

### Verses 7 & 8

"made Himself of no reputation" - Jesus took upon Himself the form of a servant. He did not surrender His deity. During His earthly ministry He was fully man and fully God. Jesus never gave up His position as the second person of the Godhead.

In these verses we see the sacrifice, humility and obedience of Christ. He freely gave His life of His own will (John 10:17-18).

## III. Christ highly exalted (2:9-13)

### Verse 9

"name" - The name spoken of here may be "Lord" which indicates His authority. Many different names have been assigned to Christ to emphasize different aspects of His greatness, such as Emmanuel (Matthew 1:23 - God with us), Jesus (Luke 1:31), Son (Hebrews 1:4-5), King of kings and Lord of lords (Revelation 19:16), Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6).

#### Verses 10 & 11

All will confess Him and recognize His authority (Matthew 10:32-33; Romans 14:11-12). Even the demons believe and tremble (James 2:19).

#### Verse 12

The word "work" in the original Greek means "keep on working" out your salvation. It is an ongoing process. Remember this is written to Christians encouraging them to complete their salvation by continuing to grow in their faith and knowledge with complete reverence to God (Romans 10:17; 2 Timothy 3:16-17).

#### Verse 13

It is important to notice God works "in" us not "for" us. How does God work "in" us? God works in us (Luke 8:15; Romans 10:8) through His word (Acts 20:32; 1 Peter 1:23-25; Psalm 119:104-105).

Salvation is a cooperative effort involving both God and man. The work of man is faith and obedience (Ephesians 2:10; Titus 2:14). God's part is grace. God has given His Son as our sacrifice and the message of truth which teaches us about salvation. The grace of God also teaches us how we should live (Titus 2:11-14).

#### IV. Exhortation to be lights in the world (2:14-18)

#### Verse 14

Through the ages man has had a problem with murmuring (Numbers 11:1-3). We cannot be faithful children if we are always murmuring against God and disputing (questioning) His word. "Murmuring" is a serious sin (1 Corinthians 10:10). The word "disputing" is used to describe an argument which grows out of the murmuring. Our obedience is not pleasing to God if we murmur and complain about what He has commanded.

#### Verses 15 & 16

If we do not live "blameless" and "harmless" (innocent and pure) lives we will not be able to "shine as lights" in our dark ("crooked and perverse") world (Isaiah 5:20; Matthew 5:16). It is true we must live in this world, but we are not to be of this world (1 Corinthians 5:9-10; Romans 12:2; James 1:27).

We should "shine as lights" in this world "holding forth the word of life" to those around us. How do we hold forth the word? We do this by supporting the truth (1 Timothy 3:15) and by sharing this life-giving good news with others (2 Corinthians 4:7; 2 Timothy 4:2; 1 Peter 3:15).

We must take the good message of God's word to those who are lost (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16). Paul makes it clear that converts have a responsibility to convert others (2 Timothy 2:2).

Paul would rejoice in the "day of Christ" (judgment day) to learn that the Philippians had stayed true to the things they had been taught (1 Corinthians 3:11-15).

#### Verse 17

The word "offered" comes from the Greek SPENDŌ which means "to pour out as a drink offering" (Numbers 15:4-5). In picturesque language Paul explains that even if his life (blood) is to be poured out upon the sacrificial offering of their faith he would rejoice with them all. Paul did not value his life so highly that he was unwilling to give it for the cause of Christ (Acts 20:24).

#### Verse 18

If Paul is called upon to sacrifice his life for the truth, he encourages the Philippians to be glad and rejoice. His loss should not be a time of sorrow because his sacrifice would serve to confirm the truth of his faith and preaching (Philippians 1:21). People do not often give their lives for a lie.

### V. The service of Timothy (2:19-24)

#### Verse 19

This verse shows us once again Paul's great concern for his brethren (2 Corinthians 11:28).

#### Verse 20

Like Paul, Timothy had the same genuine concern for the brethren. Paul completely trusted Timothy and would often send him to congregations that needed help when Paul could not go himself (1 Thessalonians 3:1-2; Acts 19:22).

## Verse 21

The general rule is that people are more concerned with their own ease and comfort. They are often unwilling to deny themselves in order to sacrifice for Christ (Philippians 2:4). Some get caught up in the pleasures of this world (2 Timothy 4:10).

## Verse 22

Timothy was Paul's son in the faith (1 Timothy 1:2). He was his son in a spiritual sense, not a physical sense. We also notice that Timothy was known by his actions. This serves as a good lesson for us. We will be known by our example (Proverbs 22:1). The Philippians had seen Timothy's faithfulness. Our faith is shown by our actions (James 2:18).

## Verses 23 & 24

Paul did not know the future, but he was hopeful he would either hear a report concerning their condition or be able to come himself to visit them (James 4:14-15).

## VI. The service of Epaphroditus (2:25-30)

### Verse 25

All that we know of Epaphroditus is found in this epistle. He had been chosen by the Philippians as their messenger (minister?) to bring to Paul certain things which might be of benefit to him while he was in Rome (Philippians 4:18). Evidently, while he was visiting Paul he had become gravely ill. He was a man who nearly worked himself to death for the cause of Christ. When his Philippian brethren heard of his condition they were understandably concerned. However, once Epaphroditus had recovered Paul felt it would be good to send him back to Philippi to ease their concerns. This also provided Paul an opportunity to send with him a letter to the congregation.

The terms Paul used to describe his relationship to Epaphroditus would be appreciated by any follower of Christ. He is Paul's brother (Matthew 12:48-50), companion in labor (working together) and fellow soldier (2 Timothy 2:3-4; Ephesian 6:12-17).

#### Verse 26

It says much concerning his character that he was concerned about how his brethren would react when they heard about his sickness. He did not want them to worry. This stands in stark contrast to those brethren who actively seek more attention from others.

#### Verse 27

Paul was thankful God had restored the health of his dear brother in the faith and spared Paul the sorrow he would have felt had Epaphroditus died.

This teaches us that Christians are not exempt from illness and death. Notice Paul did not miraculously cure Epaphroditus. Why? Because the purpose of miracles was to confirm the word (Mark 16:20). Paul left Trophimus sick at Miletus (2 Timothy 4:20). The miracles were for a specific purpose and for a limited time (1 Corinthians 13:8-10; Acts 8:18-21; Ephesians 4:11-13; Jude 3).

#### Verse 28

Paul had sent him "the more carefully" or "with haste" so that all might rejoice.

#### Verses 29 & 30

Paul commends them to receive their brother with gladness and honor. Epaphroditus had been willing to risk his own health in an effort to serve Paul.

## CHAPTER THREE

### INTRODUCTION

1. In Chapter three the emphasis is on having the knowledge of Christ.
2. We also see a contrast between the false teachers and Paul.
3. Paul explains his willingness to suffer and sacrifice all in order to win Christ (Philippians 3:8).
4. Paul encourages the Philippians to follow him as he follows Christ (Philippians 3:17; 1 Corinthians 11:1).

### DISCUSSION

- I. Warnings about false teachers (3:1-3).

#### Verse 1

The word "rejoice" literally means "keep on rejoicing." Also, notice that their rejoicing is "in the Lord" (Ephesians 1:3).

Paul is not bothered that he needs to remind them of certain things that he has taught them before. He knows that the repetition will do them good (2 Peter 1:12).

#### Verse 2

The "dogs" spoken of here refer to the Judaizing teachers who were trying to bind the Law of Moses upon Christians (Acts 15).

The word "circumcision" is defined as "to cut up" or "mutilate" the flesh (Galatians 5:1-6; 6:15).

#### Verse 3

Those who are the true circumcision: (1) "worship God in the spirit" - John 4:24; (2) "rejoice in Christ Jesus" - Romans 5:1-2; and (3) do not put "confidence in the flesh" - Romans 2:28-29. Christians are the true circumcision. They are the true people of God. It would be foolish for anyone to try to serve God by following the Law of Moses today (Galatians 3:1-3).

## II. Paul's former life and present example (3:4-17).

### Verses 4 & 5

The Jews had confidence because they were children of Abraham (Matthew 3:9). If any man had grounds for relying on his pedigree it would be Paul.

Paul was "circumcised the eighth day" (Genesis 17:12).

He was "of the stock of Israel" (1 Chronicles 2:1-2). He was not an Ishmaelite or Edomite who were also circumcised or the son of a proselyte who could have been circumcised on the eighth day. He was a natural born Israelite (Romans 9:4).

Paul was "of the tribe of Benjamin" who was the son of Rachel whom Jacob loved. He was not of Leah or one of the handmaids (Bilhah or Zilpah).

He was a "Hebrew of the Hebrews" which meant both of his parents were Hebrews.

Concerning his attitude toward the law he had been a "Pharisee" which was the strictest sect among the Jews (Acts 23:6; 26:5).

### Verse 6

Paul had been very zealous of the old law even to the point of persecuting Christians (Acts 7:58; 8:1-3; 9:1; 26:11; Galatians 1:13). Paul was truly zealous but his zeal was based in ignorance (Romans 10:1-3).

Paul also explains that no blame or accusation could be rightfully made against him that he had not previously kept the law.

### Verse 7

Those things which the Jews held in high esteem were actually of no value (Galatians 3:26-29).

### Verse 8

Things he once counted as great gain he now considers worthless. Instead of a gain they were a loss. Not only would these things not save him they would actually result in his destruction if he decided to trust in them. The true value was in the Christ who he gladly followed and sacrificed all

worldly things. He did not covet those things the world holds dear (Romans 8:1).

What did he win in Christ? He won the "knowledge of Christ" which gives eternal life (2 Peter 1:5-8), "righteousness which is of God by faith" (Philippians 3:9; Romans 5:1; 10:2-3) and the "resurrection of the dead" (Philippians 3:11).

## Verse 9

We cannot be found "in Him" by the law because we cannot keep the law perfectly. However, because of God's grace, found in God's righteousness, we have the opportunity for salvation through faith. Our obedience to God's plan of righteousness places us "in" Christ. In God's word we find that His plan for salvation has six clear steps:

1. One must hear the saving message of salvation (Romans 10:17). Obviously one must learn of the truth before it can be obeyed.
2. One must have faith, or in other words believe that Jesus is indeed the Christ the Son of God (John 8:24; Mark 16:15-16). However, this is not the only step. Faith alone will not save (James 2:14, 17, 24).
3. One must repent. The sinner is required to repent which includes sorrow for sin and a change of will which results in a changed life (Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38; 2 Corinthians 7:10).
4. One must confess their faith in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God (Acts 8:37; Matthew 10:32-33; Romans 10:10).
5. One must also be baptized for the remission of sins (Mark 16:15-16; Matthew 28:18-19; Romans 6:3-4; 1 Peter 3:21) into Christ (Galatians 3:26-27).
6. One must then remain faithful (Revelation 2:10).

Ananias told Saul in Acts 22:16, "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." Saul was a man who already had faith, being repentant and in prayer (Acts 9:1-18; 22:1-16), but he was still in sin and needed to do something more. He needed to obey the final step of God's plan of salvation.

A person's sins are washed away not by the water of baptism but by the blood of Christ when one submits to God's plan of salvation to hear, believe, repent, confess and to be baptized (Acts 8:38-39). Only then is the sinner saved from past sins and is added to the Lord's church (Acts 2:38, 41).

We do not earn our salvation and there are no works of merit which will save us (Ephesians 2:8-10), but there are works of obedience which God requires (James 2:19-20).

#### Verses 10-11

In baptism we are made "conformable to His death" (Romans 6:3-4). The singular goal of Paul was that (by any required means possible) he might attain (arrive at) the resurrection from the dead.

#### Verse 12

Paul was not claiming that he had already "attained" (Greek - LAMBANŌ - "to take with the hand or lay hold of") spiritual perfection. However, he did pursue it that he might "apprehend" (Greek - KATALAMBANŌ - "lay hold of so as to make one's own, to seize upon and to take possession") it as he was "apprehended" (Greek - KATALAMBANŌ) by Christ (1 Corinthians 6:20).

#### Verses 13-14

Paul pressed (literally - "ran") toward the "mark" - from the Greek word SKOPOS - "a distant mark looked at" - from which we get our word "scope."

As Paul strove for spiritual perfection he understood the need to put the past behind him. He had been forgiven for those past offences and therefore they should be forgotten as he strove toward the "high calling of God in Christ Jesus." We must put aside those things which hinder us as we run the race of life and seek to win the prize of heaven (Hebrews 12:1-2).

#### Verse 15

"perfect" - The word "perfect" comes from the Greek word TELEIOS which describes something which is brought to its end, finished, complete or full grown. Those who are spiritually mature in the faith or complete should have the same attitude of pressing toward the goal (Ephesians 4:13; 2 Peter 1:5-7).

God would show them (by His inspired word - 2 Timothy 3:16-17) the proper way to think if they were thinking differently about anything.

#### Verse 16

Paul encourages them to continue on the path that had brought them to their present state (Galatians 6:16). They had been converted (Matthew 13:15), perfected (James 1:25) and completed (2 Timothy 3:16-17) by the word of God. His word had built them up (Acts 20:32) and cleansed their souls (1 Peter 1:22), so why would they abandon His teaching now?

#### Verse 17

The Philippians were to follow the good example set by Paul (1 Corinthians 11:1). Paul followed the example of Christ by: Sacrifice (choosing not to please himself - Romans 15:3) and Service (giving his life in service to others - Ephesians 5:2; Philippians 2:4-5).

### III. Warnings against the enemies of the cross of Christ (3:18-21).

#### Verse 18

The Philippians are encouraged to make sure they were following the proper examples. Many were trying to lead them in the wrong direction (Matthew 15:14). Paul wept for the condition of these false teachers knowing the punishment they would face (Matthew 5:44; Acts 20:31).

Notice it says they are enemies of the "cross" of Christ instead of simply enemies of Christ. The emphasis is on their rejection of His sacrifice by their actions.

#### Verse 19

Their "end" is destruction (Matthew 25:41) and their god is their own belly. In other words they think only of fulfilling their own desires. They should be ashamed of the things they "glory" in. They think on "earthly" things (Romans 8:5; Colossians 3:2).

#### Verse 20

The word "conversation" (KJV) means "citizenship" (from the Greek word POLITEUMA). Christians, as citizens of heaven, should conduct themselves in holiness understanding that this world is not their true home (Hebrews 11:13-16). Christians patiently wait for the return of the Savior (Matthew 6:21; Colossians 3:1-3).

#### Verse 21

The Christian looks for Christ's return and the resurrection and transformation of the body prior to entering heaven (1 Corinthians 15:42-44, 51-53).

## CHAPTER FOUR

### INTRODUCTION

1. In Chapter four the emphasis is on having the peace of Christ.
2. The chapter is filled with Paul's exhortations urging the Philippians to stand fast in the Lord, to be of the same mind, to rejoice and to think on the proper things.
4. We also find Paul expressing his thanksgiving for their generosity to him.

### DISCUSSION

- I. Exhortation to certain individuals (4:1-3)

#### Verse 1

"Therefore" points back to the previous chapter. The Philippians should "stand fast in the Lord" because their "citizenship is in heaven" and they should be looking for the return of the Savior.

The Philippians (who Paul loves so dearly) are encouraged to "stand fast in the Lord" (1 Corinthians 15:58). His description of their importance to him is both beautiful and moving. Notice the phrase "dearly beloved" is used twice in this one verse. They are also referred to as his "joy and crown" (1 Thessalonians 2:19-20).

#### Verse 2

The names "Euodias" and "Syntyche" are both female. It appears that these two women had a disagreement. Paul beseeches them to be "of the same mind" (Philippians 2:2; Romans 12:16, 15:5).

#### Verse 3

The word "yokefellow" or "companion" as some versions have it could actually be a proper name (Greek - SUZUGOS). Either way Paul is asking for this individual to do what he can to bring harmony to this situation. He reminds him that these women had worked with him in the gospel with Clement and others whose names are in the "book of life" (Revelation 20:12). The identity of Clement is not revealed. Some say this was Clement of Rome, but there is no proof of this as the name Clement was very common.

## II. Exhortation to joyous living and thought (4:4-10).

### Verse 4

The key to our rejoicing is found "in the Lord" (Acts 8:39; Galatians 3:27). We would also do well to remember that Paul wrote these words while in jail. Circumstances do not control a Christian's joy. Notice the word "rejoice" is used twice in this one verse (Psalm 37:4).

### Verse 5

The "moderation" ("gentleness" - NKJV, "reasonableness" - ESV, "forbearance" - ASV) of the Philippians should be seen by others because the Lord is at hand. The phrase "the Lord is at hand" has been explained in various ways such as (1) He is Omnipresent and witness to all that is done - Proverbs 15:3 (2) He is near to help in time of trouble - Psalm 46:1 (3) He will soon come in judgment to punish those who do evil. This belief was dealt with by Paul in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18.

In this context the best understanding of this phrase is the Lord is always aware of our daily actions and attitudes (Hebrews 4:13). However, this does not produce fear or worry for Christians who faithfully serve the Lord.

### Verse 6

The word "careful" comes from the Greek word MERIMNAŌ which means to be anxious or troubled with cares. Notice that the solution for overcoming anxiety is prayer. We can also look to the words of Jesus concerning anxiety (Matthew 6:25).

We also see the different aspects of prayer emphasized in this verse. While "prayer" highlights the praise which is offered to God, "supplication" is used to describe making requests for needs and of course all is to be done with thanksgiving. This pattern is very similar to Paul's words found in 1 Timothy 2:1.

The power of prayer must not be overlooked (Ephesians 6:18; James 5:16).

### Verse 7

"passeth all understanding" - The peace which comes from God goes beyond what we could ever imagine.

"keep your hearts and minds" - The word "keep" is from the Greek word PHROUREŌ which means to guard or protect as if by a military guard (1 Corinthians 10:13). Does this mean that once we gain our salvation we can never fall away? When we look to the scriptures we find overwhelming evidence that Christians can so sin as to lose their salvation. There are biblical examples of those who fell away (Demas - 2 Timothy 4:10; Hymenaeus & Alexander - 1 Timothy 1:18-20; some Galatians - Galatians 6:4; Simon the sorcerer - Acts 8:22-24). There are also many warnings found in the New Testament concerning falling away (1 Corinthians 10:12; 1 Timothy 4:1-3; Matthew 13:41). There is clearly too much evidence to ignore.

#### Verse 8

The Christian should "think on" those things which are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, and of good report. Paul is exhorting the Philippians to not only think on these things but to also act righteously (Proverbs 23:7; Luke 6:45; Matthew 15:19).

"true" - This would be those things which are accurate, correct and factual. Truth is appreciated by us more today as we consider our world which is often filled with lies and deception.

"honest" - This is that which is respected, revered and honored.

"just" - This depicts those things which are fair and impartial.

"pure" - This describes those things which are uncontaminated, clean and untainted by the stains of sin.

"lovely" - This word highlights those things which are acceptable to God and pleasing in appearance (the beauty of holiness - Psalm 96:9).

"good report" - This would be those things which all see as being respectable, upright and virtuous. However, we must take into consideration that those who are worldly will at times speak evil of those things which are good (Isaiah 5:20).

To ensure that nothing is omitted Paul adds "if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise" to include all things which are virtuous and praiseworthy.

A mind filled with such things has no room for the evil thoughts and temptations which so often seek to capture our attention.

#### Verse 9

Notice that Paul lays out for them the steps that had brought them to their current spiritual condition. He starts with where they are and traces the process back to the start. They had learned these things because they had received the teaching. The teaching had been received when they were willing to hear God's truth proclaimed. The things they heard had first been seen in Paul's example. Effective evangelism begins with living the truth (Acts 1:1; 1 Corinthians 11:1). We will not be successful in our teaching if we do not live the gospel first in our lives.

#### Verse 10

Paul rejoiced that their care for him had revived. The Philippians would have been "careful" (full of care) sooner but they lacked the opportunity.

### III. Content in Christ (4:11-13).

#### Verse 11

Paul wants to be clear that he was not complaining. He could truthfully say that no matter what circumstances he found himself (2 Corinthians 11:26-28) he was always content because his strength was in Christ (verse 13).

#### Verse 12

Paul knew how to live with either abundance or want. Both conditions can be very challenging for the Christian. Sometimes having excess can be more difficult to manage (Psalm 73:3, 17-19).

#### Verse 13

The key to understanding this verse is the phrase "through Christ" (John 15:5). The Greek word translated as "through" is EN which is defined as "in, by or with." Too often we make extensive plans without considering our Lord's will.

IV. Praise for their generosity and salutations (4:14-23).

Verse 14

The Philippians had "communicated" (participated or fellowshiped) with him in affliction. They shared in the same trials.

Verses 15 & 16

When Paul left the region of Macedonia the Philippian brethren were the only ones who met their responsibility of "giving and receiving" (2 Corinthians 8:1-5; 1 Corinthians 8:14, 11, 7-9).

Verse 17

He was not motivated by greed when he sought their support. His desire was for them to have the opportunity to do this good work which would be a blessing to both him and them (Matthew 6:19-20; Acts 20:35).

Verse 18

It was because of their generosity, sent by the hand of Epaphroditus, that Paul had more than he needed.

Their act of kindness was described as sweet smelling sacrifice. This is a reference to the sacrifices made under the Law of Moses (Genesis 8:21). Other passages in the New Testament use similar language in much the same way (Ephesians 5:2; 1 Peter 2:5; Hebrews 13:16).

Verse 19 & 20

Paul expresses the glory which should be given to God because their generosity would not cause them to go without the necessities of life. God would take care of them as He does all who put the kingdom first (Matthew 6:33).

Verse 21

The word "salute" comes from the Greek ASPAZOMAI which means to enfold in the arms with an embrace. Once again Paul shows his love and care for these good brethren.

## Verse 22

All the Christians who were with Paul in Rome also expressed their love for their brethren at Philippi.

"Caesar's household" - The fact that even some of Caesar's household had been converted to Christ demonstrates Paul's great ability as an evangelist. At this time Nero was the emperor of Rome. He was a vile wretch who was full of evil. However, even in his own household there were Christians. Their exact relationship to Nero is unknown. The word "household" could be used to refer to actual relatives or simply advisors, guards, servants or even slaves. There is no way to know for sure who is spoken of in this verse. This also demonstrates to us the power of the gospel message (Romans 1:16).

## Verse 23

"grace" - Paul closes by expressing his desire that God's unmerited favor would bring blessings into their lives (Titus 2:11-12).

"Amen" - The word Amen started as a Hebrew word (Numbers 5:22), which was transliterated into Greek and then eventually into English. The word comes from a Hebrew root word which means "to build up or support; to be firm or faithful, to trust or believe; to be true or certain." It is also used as an adverb at the beginning of a speech to mean "surely, of a truth, truly" (Matthew 5:18; Mark 3:28; John 3:3). At the conclusion of a sentence it is used to mean "so it is, so be it, may it be fulfilled." When the word is used as an adjective it means "firm or true." Some dictionaries claim that when Amen is used at the end of a prayer it means approval of what is being said. However, our approval does not make it true. It is more correct to think of it as "this is true, or may it come to pass, or may it be fulfilled."

## CONCLUSION

1. This concludes Paul's "letter of joy" to the Philippians.
2. In this epistle we learn how to have the mind, knowledge and peace of Christ. We are also instructed on successful Christian living and the gaining of an eternal inheritance in heaven.