

The Epistle To The Philippians



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To God Be The Glory!

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The Epistle To The Philippians

Introduction To The Epistle

INTRODUCTION

1. Of all the letters written by the apostle Paul, Philippians is perhaps **the most personal** and **heartwarming** in nature.
2. So revealing is it of Paul's character, this epistle has been called "**a window into the apostle's own bosom**"
3. Throughout the epistle, the **keynote** is the word "**Joy**"...
 - a. Note how frequently the word "joy" (or a variation of it) is found: **1:3-4,18,25; 2:1-2,16-18; 3:1; 4:1, 4**
 - b. In view of this, we can understand why some call this epistle "**Paul's hymn of joy**"

[As we begin to study this very short epistle, it might be helpful to see the **value** this book has for us, especially in light of today's society...]

I. THE SEARCH FOR PEACE OF MIND

A. PEACE OF MIND IS SOMETHING MANY ARE LOOKING FOR TODAY...

1. To find it, many are swallowing tons of tranquilizers
2. In addition to **drugs** (both prescription and illegal drugs), there are tranquilizing **books** (e.g., bestsellers promising secrets to having peace of mind)

B. SUCH "PEACEFULIZERS" OFTEN DO MORE HARM THAN GOOD, FOR IN MANY WAYS THEY FAIL...

1. They fail to provide **lasting peace** in the face of life's often harsh realities
2. They fail to deal with **the problem of sin**, the true underlying cause of much anxiety
3. They do not provide **peace with God**, the only true basis for lasting peace of mind
4. Those trusting in tranquilizers, whether books or pills, are trying to **escape** rather than face reality

[What does all this have to do with the book of Philippians?]

II. PHILIPPIANS AND THE SEARCH FOR PEACE OF MIND

A. THIS SMALL BOOK IS WRITTEN BY A MAN WHO HAD FOUND TRUE PEACE OF MIND...

1. Even though he was imprisoned at the time! - **Ph 1:12-18**
2. Even though he might soon be a martyr! - **Ph 2:17-18**
3. He had the joy that comes from peace of mind, and wanted to share it with others! - **Ph 4:4-7,11-13**

B. THEREFORE, HERE ARE SOME GOOD REASONS FOR STUDYING THE EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS...

1. It reveals **the nature of true peace and joy!**
 - a. The joy is found only “in the Lord” - **Ph 4:4**
 - b. The peace is one that “surpasses understanding” and is like a fortress - **Ph 4:6-7**
2. It reveals **a man who provides an example** of what produces joy and peace (again, the epistle is like “a window into the apostle’s own bosom.”) - **Ph 4:9**
 - a. His love for his brethren - **Ph 1:8**
 - b. His devotion to his Lord - **Ph 1:21; 3:7-11**
 - c. His striving for perfection - **Ph 3:12-14**
 - d. His concern for the enemies of the cross - **Ph 3:18**
3. It reveals **the Christ Who is the ultimate source** of this joy and peace!
 - a. The mindset of this Lord who provides peace and joy - **Ph 2:5-8**
 - b. The exaltation of Him who gives this peace and joy - **Ph 2:9-11**

CONCLUSION

1. These are some of the reasons why this epistle is certainly very relevant for present-day living!
2. Do you have the peace that “passes understanding”? The joy that is “in the Lord”?
 - a. If not, then I hope you will want to learn more about it from this epistle
 - b. If not, and you know why and what you should do about it, then why not do it today!

Salutation To The Philippians

Philippians 1:1-2

INTRODUCTION

1. In our previous lesson we introduced the book of Philippians as a book that is very relevant to our times
2. As we actually begin our study of this epistle, we shall examine Paul's salutation as found in the first two verses...

[First, we notice...]

I. THE "AUTHOR" OF THIS EPISTLE

A. IDENTIFIED AS "PAUL"...

1. This is **the apostle Paul**, of course
2. Who was once the "**persecutor**" - **Ac 8:1,3**
3. But is now the "**persecuted**"
 - a. For he is writing this while in Roman custody - **Ph 1:12-14**
 - b. During the time period mention in **Ac 28:30**

B. HE IS JOINED IN THE SALUTATION BY "TIMOTHY"...

1. A **traveling companion** who joined Paul during his second journey - **Ac 16:1-3**
2. He was a young man, devoted to serving Paul, whom **Paul loved as a son** - **Ph 2:19-22**
3. He later was the recipient of two other epistles by Paul (1 & 2 Timothy)

C. TOGETHER, THEY ARE DESCRIBED AS "SERVANTS"...

1. A **title of humility**, it denotes dependence, obedience, and acknowledgment of ownership
2. Used in connection with Jesus Christ...
 - a. It is a word with real dignity
 - b. Indicates **intense devotion** to the Lord

[Having considered those responsible for this epistle, we next take a look at those to whom it is addressed...]

II. THE "RECIPIENTS" OF THIS EPISTLE

A. IDENTIFIED AS "SAINTS IN CHRIST JESUS"...

1. The term "**saint**" was a common term by which **all** Christians were called in the NT
 - a. Literally, it means "**holy one**" - cf. **1 Pe 2:9**
 - b. The basic idea behind the word is that of "**separation**", for the purpose of consecration
2. But note that they were called saints "**in Christ Jesus**"
 - a. It is **in Him** that we are "set apart"
 - b. Only by virtue by being in Him and having our sins forgiven by His blood can we be called "saints" - cf. **Re 1:5-6; 5:9-10**

3. It is interesting to notice the contrast between “servants” and “saints”
 - a. By using such terms, Paul immediately humbles himself and exalts those to whom he is writing
 - b. Thereby practicing what he later preaches in regards to humility - cf. **Ph 2:3**

B. IN PARTICULAR, THEY ARE THE SAINTS “WHO ARE IN PHILIPPI”...

1. That is, the church in Philippi
2. The **beginning** of the church is found in **Ac 16:9-15**
 - a. Prompted by the “Macedonia Call”
 - b. Started with the conversion of Lydia
3. Its **early growth** is also found in Acts 16 (verses 16-40)
 - a. With the conversion of the Philippian jailor and his family
 - b. With the church meeting in Lydia’s home
 - c. And with Luke staying at Philippi after Paul’s departure
4. Several things may be said about the **characteristics** of the church
 - a. It appears to be predominantly **Gentile** (lack of a synagogue in Philippi would suggest this)
 - b. It appears to be predominantly **female** (implied by meeting in Lydia’s home and the reference to women in **Ph 4:2**)
 - c. They were **very supportive** in the preaching of the gospel - **Ph 4:15-16**
 - d. They provided for needy saints in other areas - **2 Co 8:1-5**
 - e. They cared for Paul in his distress - **Ph 4:10,14**

C. ALSO ADDRESSED WERE THE “BISHOPS AND DEACONS”...

1. In this verse, we see the **organization of a local church** as God intended
 - a. It is made up of “saints” (the members)
 - b. It is overseen by “bishops”
 - c. It is served with the assistance of “deacons”
2. Concerning the “**bishops**” (translated “overseers” in some versions)...
 - a. These were men charged with guarding the flock and providing spiritual food
 - b. They were also called “elders” (or “presbyters”), and “pastors” (or “shepherds”) - cf. **Ac 20:17,28; 1 Pe 5:1-2**
 - 1) For they were older men
 - 2) And they were to feed (or pastor) the flock under their charge
 - c. According to the New Testament...
 - 1) They had to meet certain qualifications before they were appointed to serve as “elders-bishops-pastors” - **1 Ti 3:1-7; Ti 1:5-9**
 - 2) There was always a plurality in the congregation, never just one - cf. **Ac 14:23; 20:17; Ph 1:1**
3. Concerning the “**deacons**”...
 - a. The term means “servants” or “ministers”
 - b. They also had to meet certain qualifications - **1 Ti 3:8-13**
 - c. They served the needs of the congregation, under the oversight of the bishops (elders, pastors)

[So the recipients of this epistle was a well-established congregation, one that had demonstrated their love and support for the apostle Paul. Finally, we briefly notice the greetings given to them...]

III. THE “GREETINGS”

A. “GRACE”...

1. This was the common greeting of the **Greeks**
2. It speaks of wishing favor and kindness upon them

B. “PEACE”...

1. This was common greeting of the **Jews** (“Shalom!”)
2. It speaks of the result of receiving favor and kindness

C. “FROM GOD OUR FATHER AND THE LORD JESUS CHRIST”...

1. This is the source of grace and peace which Paul desires the Philippians to receive
2. For when one has received unmerited favor and kindness from God through His Son Jesus Christ, one truly receives peace:
 - a. Peace with God - **Ro 5:1**
 - b. Peace with men - **Pro 16:7**
 - c. Peace with one’s self - **Ph 4:6-7**

CONCLUSION

1. At this point, we can see that this epistle is **a personal letter**, between...
 - a. A man in chains who is accompanied with a dear friend
 - b. And a congregation of holy people whose love for this man has been demonstrated on several occasions
2. In the next lesson, we shall examine the **“joyful thanksgiving”** on the part of Paul for the fellowship he has enjoyed with the church at Philippi

In the meantime, are you experiencing the grace and peace that comes only from “God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ”?

Paul's Thanksgiving For The Philippians

Philippians 1:3-8

INTRODUCTION

1. In the last study we examined **the salutation** of Paul and Timothy to the brethren at Philippi (**1:1-2**)
2. As is quite common in Paul's epistles, an expression of **thanksgiving** follows the salutation
3. In this epistle to the Philippians, we find Paul's thanksgiving in **verses 3-8**, where we begin to look into "the window of Paul's own bosom"

[As we examine this passage, three things stand out, the first being that Paul is...]

I. THANKFUL FOR THEIR FELLOWSHIP (3-5)

A. THE MEMORIES OF THEIR FELLOWSHIP WAS A SOURCE OF GREAT JOY...

1. Every time he remembered them, it made him glad!
2. The memories were **a source of frequent joy**, because every time he prayed, he included them
 - a. Here we get a glimpse into the prayer life of the apostle Paul
 - b. It evidently included frequent prayers for those with whom he had labored in the past - cf. **Co 1:3; 1 Th 1:2**
3. The joyful memories were the result of sharing together in the work of the gospel
 - a. **"From the first day..."**
 - 1) From the day that Lydia opened her home to him
 - 2) As recorded in **Ac 16:15**
 - b. **"...until now."**
 - 1) This would include the "giving and receiving" when he first left Macedonia and also in Thessalonica - **Ph 4:15-16**
 - 2) And now that he is in Rome, with the gift sent to him by Epaphroditus - **Ph 4:18**

B. THIS ILLUSTRATES THE BLESSING OF "PLEASANT MEMORIES", AND THE "FELLOWSHIP" THAT CREATES THEM...

1. Pleasant memories are a blessing in difficult times
 - a. Despite imprisonment, Paul could pray with joyful thanksgiving as he remembered the Philippians
 - b. As one person put it: **"God gave us memory so that we might have roses in December."**
2. But memory can be a curse instead of a blessing!
 - a. If we have spent our lives in sin and have troubled those around us, memory can be a curse!
 - b. As someone said: **"Most people live the first half of their life making the second half of their life miserable!"**
 - c. For memories to be a blessing to us, we must be a blessing to others!
3. The sort of fellowship experienced between Paul and the Philippians creates the most precious memories!

- a. Fellowship in the gospel of Christ!
- b. Sharing together in spreading the Word, either directly by teaching or indirectly by supporting those who teach

[How comforting it must have been for Paul, though experiencing imprisonment, to be able to look back upon his relationship with the Philippians with such joyful memories! What kind of memories are we creating today? It will affect the kind of future we have! As Paul continues his expression of thanksgiving, he writes that he is...]

II. CONFIDENT GOD WILL COMPLETE HIS WORK IN THEM (6-7)

A. THE BASIS FOR SUCH CONFIDENCE...

1. Certainly it involves **the faithfulness of God Himself**, as expressed throughout the Scriptures
 - a. E.g., in helping us to handle temptations - **1 Co 10:13**
 - b. E.g., in providing forgiveness when we succumb to temptations - **1 Jn 1:9**
2. But Paul also took into consideration **the faithfulness of the Philippians**
 - a. They were willing to share in his chains - cf. **Ph 2:29-30**
 - b. They were willing to share in the defense and confirmation of the gospel (through their support of Paul)
 - c. As such, they were sharing together in the grace of God!

B. THIS PASSAGE SHOULD REMIND US THAT WE ARE NOT ALONE IN OUR GROWTH AS CHRISTIANS...

1. That God **“began a good work”** in our conversion, a work that involved:
 - a. His providence, in giving us an opportunity to hear the gospel - **Ti 2:11**
 - b. His regeneration, when we responded to the commands of the gospel - **Ti 3:4-7**
2. As we continue to **“work out our own salvation”**, God is right there with us:
 - a. Certainly we must cooperate with God - **Ph 2:12**
 - b. But God is truly at work within us! - **Ph 2:13**
 - c. And He provides whatever help we need - **Ph 4:13**
3. This Divine Help will be with us **“until the day of Jesus Christ”**
 - a. The “Day” when Christ comes to be glorified - **2 Th 1:10**
 - b. The same “Day” we will be glorified with Him, by virtue of God’s goodness and work in conjunction with our faith - **2 Th 1:11-12**

[With such help as the basis of our confidence, as long as we are faithful and partakers of God’s grace, He will complete His work in us! (but note carefully **He 3:12-14**). Finally, we notice in this thanksgiving of Paul...]

III. HIS DEEP LONGING FOR THEM (8)

A. IN EXPRESSING THE DEPTH OF HIS AFFECTION FOR THEM...

1. He calls upon God as a witness!
 - a. He Who knows the hearts of all men
 - b. And certainly Who knows the heart of Paul!
2. He describes it as the “affection of Jesus Christ”!
 - a. I.e., the same sort of love Jesus has toward us
 - b. Even as Jesus commanded His disciples, to love one another as He loved us - **Jn 13:34**

B. THIS SORT OF LOVE SHOULD CHARACTERIZE ALL DISCIPLES...

1. This is how the world will know that we are truly the disciples of Jesus - **Jn 13:35**
2. Such love comes only by being taught by God - cf. **1 Th 4:9-10**
3. And how does He teach us? Through the example of His Own Son! - **1 Jn 3:16**

CONCLUSION

1. How close Paul must have felt toward the brethren at Philippi!
2. And this is understandable, because it was the **pleasant memories of their fellowship in the gospel of Christ** that gave Paul such **joy and confidence** in the well-being of the Philippians
3. Note how all these things relate together:
 - a. Joy and confidence comes from pleasant memories
 - b. Pleasant memories come from fellowship in the gospel of Jesus Christ
4. If we lack the joy and confidence we desire, the key is to create pleasant memories by sharing with other workers in the spread of the gospel!
5. Finally...
 - a. Has God begun a good work in you? (via your obedience to the gospel?)
 - b. Will He complete it until the day of Jesus Christ? (via your faithful service to the Lord?)

Paul's Prayer For The Philippians

Philippians 1:9-11

INTRODUCTION

1. True to the form found in several of his epistles, Paul follows his **salutation** and **thanksgiving** with a **prayer** for his readers
2. Found in **Ph 1:9-11**, we find in this prayer that Paul is concerned about four things in the spiritual growth and development of the brethren at Philippi

[The first of these is...]

I. THAT THEIR LOVE MAY ABOUND (9)

A. "STILL MORE AND MORE..."

1. We have seen were they had excelled in their love toward Paul and others in the past
 - a. Towards Paul - **Ph 4:15-16**
 - b. Towards the needy saints in Jerusalem - **2 Co 8:1-5**
2. But a cardinal principle of Christian growth is that it should never stop!
 - a. In developing the graces of a Christ-like character, we should always be increasing - cf. **2 Pe 1:5-8**
 - b. Even if we are in no need for someone to teach us "**how**" to love, we can always use the admonition to "**increase**" our love! - e.g., **1 Th 4:9-10**
3. And so, Paul prays that their love may abound "still more and more"

B. "IN KNOWLEDGE AND ALL DISCERNMENT..."

1. These are the "**guidelines**" in which their love was to abound
 - a. "**in knowledge**" - according to the right moral principles (which comes from God's Word)
 - b. "**all discernment**" - using wisdom to apply these moral principles most effectively (such wisdom comes from asking for it in prayer - **Ja 1:5; Pro 2:1-9**)
2. Thus Paul's prayer is that their love may abound **for the right things and in the right way!**

[If Paul felt such was necessary for the Philippians, how much more for ourselves today! May we never be satisfied with the degree of love that we may have, but strive to increase our knowledge and wisdom of how to love others more abundantly. As Paul continues, it is his prayer for the Philippians...]

II. THAT THEY MAY APPROVE THE THINGS THAT ARE EXCELLENT (10a)

A. THE "PURPOSE" OF ABOUNDING IN LOVE STILL MORE AND MORE...?

1. It is possible that Paul is being progressive in his thoughts here
2. I.e., rather than just listing four equal but unrelated thoughts in this prayer, each of the four are related and the last three are but building on the thoughts which precede them (a form of "**stair-like**" **progressive parallelism** common in Hebrew writings)
3. If such is the case, then Paul is now explaining "why" our love should abound...

B. “MAY APPROVE THE THINGS THAT ARE EXCELLENT...”

1. To “**approve**” is to “**try, test, demonstrate**”
2. This passage is reminiscent of **Ro 12:2**, where we learn that we are to “prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God”
3. Prove to whom?
 - a. To ourselves? Certainly...
 - b. But even more so, to prove to others that God’s way is the best way! - cf. **1 Pe 2:15**

[Therefore, by abounding in love still more and more with all knowledge and discernment, we are able to demonstrate by our “actions” that God’s way is the more excellent way! But there is another reason, as we continue to see that Paul is concerned for the Philippians...]

III. THAT THEY MAY BE SINCERE AND WITHOUT OFFENSE (10b)**A. DEFINING “SINCERE” AND “WITHOUT OFFENSE”...**

1. “**sincere**” involves:
 - a. Having perfect openness toward God and man
 - b. With a clear conscience (not hypocritical)
2. “**without offense**” means not to provide occasions for others to stumble - **Ro 14:13**

B. SUCH VIRTUES WILL BE FOUND IN THOSE WHO ARE...

1. Abounding in love still more and more, in knowledge and all discernment!
2. Approving the things that are excellent by their conduct!
- See Paul’s progression in thought?

C. PAUL’S CONCERN IS THAT THESE VIRTUES WILL LAST “TILL THE DAY OF CHRIST”...

1. This is the second time in this epistle Paul has referred to this “**day**” (cf. **1:6**)
2. He is referring to the day when Christ comes again, a day of “**destruction**” for some, but “**glory**” for others! - **2 Th 1:7-12**
3. Perhaps Paul’s concern that these virtues of being “**sincere and without offense**” lasting till the day of Christ is based upon what will happen to those in the kingdom who are guilty of such things - cf. **Mt 13:41-43**

[Such a strong warning by Jesus Himself should encourage us to take the thoughts of Paul very seriously! Finally, we notice in Paul’s prayer for the Philippians a concern for their...]

IV. BEING FILLED WITH THE FRUITS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS (11)**A. WHICH APPEAR TO BE THE RESULT OF...**

1. Abounding in love still more and more in knowledge and all discernment
2. Approving the things that are excellent
3. Being sincere and without offense
- Notice again the “stair-like” progressive parallelism!

B. SUCH FRUITS POSSIBLE ONLY “BY JESUS CHRIST”...

1. For without Him, we would not know what true love really is! - **1 Jn 3:16**
2. For without Him, we would not have the ability to demonstrate what is excellent - **Ph 4:13**

C. SUCH FRUITS TO BE OFFERED “TO THE GLORY AND PRAISE OF GOD”...

1. Just as Jesus said in letting our light shine - **Mt 5:16**
2. Just as Peter wrote in speaking of our good works - **1 Pe 2:12**
3. And rightfully so, for it is God who through the gift of His Son has...
 - a. **Shown us** what love really is
 - b. **Taught us** what things are really excellent in His sight
 - c. **Empowered us** to be able to demonstrate the excellence of His Will, that we may be sincere and without offense!

CONCLUSION

1. Such is Paul’s prayer for the Philippians, for a church that had demonstrated it’s love and faithfulness to Paul again and again
2. Even as excellent as the church was, Paul could still pray for them to abound still more and more!
3. How much more, then, should we! May we take the prayer of Paul, and make it our own for ourselves and for brethren we know!

Making Good Out Of Ill

Philippians 1:12-18

INTRODUCTION

1. As we continue our study, we should really begin to appreciate the statement that **“this epistle is like a window into the apostle’s own bosom.”**
2. We have already seen Paul’s **fondness** for the saints at Philippi, as expressed in his thanksgiving (**Ph 1:3-8**) and prayer (**Ph 1:9-11**)
3. In this lesson, we shall see Paul’s **joy**, despite circumstances which would cause most people to be despondent
4. The title of this lesson is **“Making Good Out Of Ill”**, for this is what Paul did, as we find in our text (**Ph 1:12-18**)

[Notice first, that Paul was **“Making Good Out Of Ill”**, even...]

I. IN IMPRISONMENT (12-14)

A. PAUL INFORMS THEM OF THE PROGRESS OF THE GOSPEL... (12)

1. The Philippians were aware of Paul’s circumstances - cf. **Ph 4:14**
2. Yet he does not want them to be overly concerned
 - a. For he had “good news” - not bad news!
 - b. The “gospel” was still being spread!
3. Now, Paul could have looked at the bad side of his situation...
 - a. His own imprisonment
 - b. His restriction in travel
4. But Paul looked at life from the viewpoint of the gospel...
 - a. If the gospel was spreading, it was “good news”!
 - b. And his imprisonment was actually increasing the progress of the gospel!

[How? Let’s read on...]

B. THERE WERE SERMONS IN HIS CHAINS... (13)

1. Being under **“house arrest”** (cf. **Ac 28:30-31**) constantly made reference to the cause of Jesus Christ
 - a. He was not there for normal reasons (e.g., crimes)
 - b. So his situation naturally sparked interest and discussion
2. In this way, the message of the gospel was made known to **“the whole palace guard”**
 - a. Most likely the emperor’s own guards, who were put in charge of special prisoners awaiting their appeal before Caesar
 - b. Though allowed some freedom, Paul was still under constant guard - cf. **Ac 28:16**
 - c. But these guards were also under the constant influence of Paul and the gospel!
 - 1) They could not help overhearing what Paul taught others! - again cf. **Ac 28:30-31**
 - 2) It is almost certain Paul would have tried to teach his “captive audience” (those

- soldiers chained to him)
- d. So it is possible that some of them were converted (for they would be included of those **“who are Caesar’s household”** - cf. **Ph 4:22**)
3. The message was also being spread **“to all the rest”**
 - a. Perhaps by word of mouth
 - b. And by visitation - again cf. **Ac 28:30-31**
 4. And so, Paul could see **“good out of ill”!**
 - a. Being in protective custody gave him free rein to preach the gospel to guards and his visitors!
 - b. But he saw even more **“good out of ill”...**

C. HIS EXAMPLE WAS PROMPTING OTHERS TO ACTION... (14)

1. His imprisonment caused most brethren to be more confident and bold themselves
 - a. They saw that **he** was at liberty to teach, **“with all confidence, no one forbidding him”** - **Ac 28:31**
 - b. That prompted **them** to **“speak the word without fear”** - **Ph 1:14**
2. So the gospel was being spread, and to Paul, that’s good news!

[There is an application for us to make today, but before we do so, let’s notice another example of how Paul was **“Making Good Out Of Ill”**, even...]

II. IN PERSECUTION (15-18)

A. SOME WERE PREACHING TO HURT PAUL... (15a,16)

1. Such individuals were motivated by **“envy”**, **“strife”**, and **“selfish ambition”**
2. They thought they could add affliction to Paul’s chains
3. These individuals could either be **“Judaizers”** or jealous church leaders

B. BUT WE SEE PAUL’S CONQUERING JOY SHINING THROUGH THE GLOOM... (15b, 17-18)

1. First, because **he did not lose sight of those preaching out of “love” and “goodwill”**
 - a. Those who knew Paul was imprisoned because of the gospel
 - b. Those who knew their preaching would increase the gospel and thus encourage Paul
 - c. And so, Paul did not fall into the trap of **“self-pity”** and **“despair”** so common among preachers
 - 1) Who when persecuted, think they are the only ones who are faithful
 - 2) Who when persecuted, lose sight of the faithful because of the unfaithful
2. Secondly, because **he could see those seeking to persecute him were inadvertently spreading the gospel! - Ph 1:18**
 - a. Though in pretense, though from envy and strife, Christ was still being preached!
 - b. And since **“preaching Christ and Him crucified”** was Paul’s main purpose in life (cf. **1 Co 2:2**), he could find cause to rejoice even when Christ was preached by those who meant him harm!

[So we see how Paul could was **“Making Good Out Of Ill”**, even **in imprisonment and in persecution**. What applications can we make from this today?]

III. DRAWING SOME APPLICATIONS FROM THIS TEXT

A. UNDERSTANDING THE “KEY” TO “MAKING GOOD OUT OF ILL”...

1. For Paul, it was **making the proclamation of Jesus Christ his goal**, his purpose in life, his highest joy!
2. So it can be for us! If we do the same...
 - a. We can **experience a joy greater than any other** (just as John did - cf. **3 Jn 4**)
 - b. We can **“make good out ill”** in just about any circumstances, for example...
 - 1) **Hospital confinement** (as we communicate the gospel in both word and life to those ministering to our needs)
 - 2) **Difficult situations at work, with family, and even with the church** (as we demonstrate the impact the gospel can have in dealing with these problems)
 - 3) **Even in death and dying** (as we will learn more about in our next lesson)
3. If we **make magnifying Christ our primary focus** in life, we can always “make good out of ill”!

B. TAKE HEART KNOWING THAT GOD CAN USE “IMPERFECT” TEACHERS...

1. Many get discouraged by all the “false teachers” we see on TV and radio, etc.
 - a. But much of their error is interspersed with some truth
 - b. God is able to use them to lead others who are seeking the truth a little closer to His truth
 - c. The false teachers will be held accountable for their error; we can at the least rejoice that to some degree, Christ is preached!
2. Many who would teach others about Christ, hesitate to do so out of fear they may say the wrong thing
 - a. Yet we see in our text that God could use those who were **imperfect in motive** to proclaim Jesus to others - **Ph 1:18**
 - b. If God can use those imperfect in motive, can He not also use those **imperfect in ability**?
 - 1) Paul certainly claimed lack of ability to some degree - cf. **1 Co 2:3-4**
 - 2) So God can use us, to whatever degree we are able!
 - 3) And wherever we may be lacking, can use someone else to supplement our efforts!

CONCLUSION

1. To put it another way, not only was **Paul** “making good out of ill”, but **God** is able to “make good out ill”!
2. And so can we, if we like Paul make “preaching Christ” the major focus in life! Do we?

Even if you are lost in sin, or a child of God who has strayed away, **you can let Christ make good out of your ill circumstances by obeying His gospel...**

Magnifying Christ In Life And Death

Philippians 1:19-26

INTRODUCTION

1. As we continue to look into the heart of the apostle Paul, we find a man who despite difficult circumstances still maintained a **strong expectation, hope, and confidence** concerning the future
2. In our text for this study, we find Paul expressing that strong hope and confidence - **Ph 1:19-26**
3. Many lessons can be gleaned from this passage, but we will “zero in” on Paul’s expectation and hope that **“Christ will be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death.” - Ph 1:20**
 - a. Why would Paul desire to “magnify Christ” with his **life**?
 - b. Why would he want to “magnify Christ” by his **death**?
 - c. How would he do it?

[These are some of the questions we’ll look at in this lesson. To begin, let’s consider the idea of Paul...]

I. MAGNIFYING CHRIST BY HIS LIFE

A. WHY WOULD PAUL WANT TO MAGNIFY CHRIST BY HIS LIFE...?

1. Because of Christ’s love for him - **2 Co 5:14-15**
2. Because of the strength Christ gave him for daily living - **Ph 4:13**
3. Because of what Christ would one day do for him - **Ph 3:20-21**

B. HOW DID PAUL MAGNIFY CHRIST BY HIS LIFE...?

1. By his **attitude** toward Christ
 - a. Which was **“to live is Christ” (21)**
 - b. He made Jesus the preeminent focus of his life - cf. **Ph 3:7-8**
2. By **devoting his life in serving Christ** - cf. **Ga 2:20**
 - a. As long as he lived, he would offer fruitful service to Jesus Christ - **Ph 1:22**
 - b. As long as he lived, he would so live as to promote the progress of his brethren in Christ - **Ph 1:25-26**
 - 1) For he knew that what one did for his brethren, he did for Christ!
 - 2) Cf. **Ac 9:4-5; 1 Co 8:12; Mt 25:40,45**

C. WHAT OF OURSELVES...?

1. Do we desire to magnify Christ with our lives?
2. Are we living in a manner that magnifies Christ?
 - a. I.e., letting Christ live in us, and we living for Him
 - b. I.e., so living as to promote progress and joy in the cause of Christ among His brethren who are also our own
 - 1) Do we encourage or discourage the brethren?
 - 2) E.g., do we discourage the brethren by apathy, or negligence of the assemblies? - cf. **Pro 18:9**
3. Does not Christ provide sufficient motive to do so?

- a. He loved us, and gave **His** life for us!
- b. He promises to help us!
- c. He will greatly bless us if we do!

[Every Christian has reason to magnify Christ in his or her life! May we all seek to make better use of our lives in this area. But remember that Paul was also concerned about...]

II. MAGNIFYING CHRIST BY HIS DEATH

A. WHY WOULD PAUL WANT TO MAGNIFY CHRIST IN HIS DEATH...?

1. Certainly for some of the reasons already noted
2. But also **because of what death would mean** to Paul because of Christ!
 - a. Because of Christ, **“to die is gain” (21)**
 - b. To die means to **“be with Christ, which is far better” (23)**
 - 1) Paul understood that when a Christian dies, they go to be with the Lord! - cf. **2 Co 5:6-8; 1 Th 5:9-10**
 - 2) So Jesus Himself promised to the churches of Asia - cf. **Re 2:10,26-27; 3:21**
 - 3) This appears to the point of the vision seen by John and recorded in **Re 7:9-17**
3. In view of this wonderful hope, Paul would gladly magnify Christ, even by his death!

B. HOW WAS PAUL WILLING TO MAGNIFY CHRIST BY HIS DEATH...?

1. By his willingness to die in service to Christ and his brethren - **Ph 2:17-18**
 - a. He was determined to serve them, even if it killed him!
 - b. But then, what better way to die, in the service of the Lord?
2. Of course, this is how Paul eventually did magnify Christ by his death - cf. **2 Ti 4:6-8**
 - a. He faithfully served His Lord and his brethren
 - b. And he died because of his service to them (tradition says that he was beheaded by Nero)

C. WHAT ABOUT US...?

1. We have the same motives to magnify Christ by our deaths
 - a. The assurance of eternal life
 - b. The assurance of being with our Lord
2. Will we magnify Christ by our deaths?
 - a. Unless the Lord returns first, we will all die anyway
 - b. What better way to die, in a manner which magnifies the One who makes even death a blessing!
3. How can we magnify Christ today by our deaths?
 - a. It is unlikely we will suffer **martyrdom** for our faith
 - b. But we can still determine to **wear out** in our service to the Lord, rather than **rust out!**
 - 1) Too many Christians “retire” in their service to God when they retire from their secular jobs
 - 2) They allow the infirmities of age or sickness to render them virtually fruitless
 - 3) Or they allow the fear of death to be overly cautious about what they do
 - a) E.g., fear of an accident keeps many aged Christians from coming to services
 - b) But wouldn’t be better to die in service to the Lord, than to just rust away, sitting at home?
 - c. More Christians need to have the attitude of Paul and other Christians I have known - cf. **Ac 20:22-24; 21:13**

- 1) Who would rather be **“poured out”** in their service to Christ, rather than become a **“stagnant pool”**
- 2) They are those described in **Re 12:11**
- 3) And they are also like those described in **Psa 92:12-15**
4. Indeed, the way we face impending death, whether young or old, can be a means of magnifying Christ!

CONCLUSION

1. If we are going to be able to say with Paul, **“To live is Christ, to die is gain”**, we have to **magnify Christ both in life and in death!**
2. Jesus has certainly given us every motive for doing so!
3. So let’s encourage one another in both word and deed to so live, and to so die, that we magnify Jesus Christ!

Conduct Worthy Of The Gospel

Philippians 1:27-30

INTRODUCTION

1. Up to this point in his epistle, Paul has been informing the church at Philippi concerning his situation
2. We have seen that his attitude was one of **joy** and **confidence**
3. With verse 27, **Paul begins a series of practical exhortations** concerning the Christian life
4. The first exhortation is found in verses **27-30**, and it pertains to **“Conduct Worthy Of The Gospel”** (please read)

[As we examine these verses, let's first notice some...]

I. “GENERAL” OBSERVATIONS CONCERNING OUR “CONDUCT”

A. LOOKING AT THE WORD “CONDUCT” ITSELF...

1. The **KJV** translates this word as **“conversation”**
2. In the **Greek**, it literally means **“behave as citizens”**
3. To those at Philippi, this word would likely have special meaning...
 - a. For the city at Philippi was a Roman colony
 - b. Most of its citizens were actually transplanted citizens of Rome, retired soldiers who had been encouraged to settle there
 - c. So though they were living in Philippi, they were expected to “behave as citizens” of Rome
4. Paul applies this term to the life of a Christian...
 - a. Whose “citizenship” is actually in heaven - cf. **Ph 3:20**
 - b. So though we may live on earth, we are to “behave as citizens” of heaven!
5. This leads us to our next observation...

B. OUR “BEHAVIOR AS CITIZENS” IS TO BE “WORTHY” OF THE GOSPEL...

1. This implies that there is behavior that is **NOT** worthy of the gospel!
2. And to act unworthy of the gospel would bring shame upon the gospel!
 - a. Just as an American citizen who misbehaves in a foreign country sheds a bad reflection on his home country
 - b. The apostle Peter would have us remember the importance of proper conduct as we “sojourn” here in a country not our own - **1 Pe 2:11-12**
3. If we are **not** “behaving as citizens” in a manner “worthy” of the gospel, then the only alternative is behaving in an **“unworthy”** manner!

C. OUR “BEHAVIOR AS CITIZENS” IS TO BE WORTHY “WITH OR WITHOUT” THE PRESENCE OF OTHER CHRISTIANS...

1. Note that Paul said **“whether I come and see you or am absent”**
2. Paul evidently did not want their faith to be simply an **“environmental faith”**
3. What is an “environmental faith?”

- a. A faith totally dependent upon the environment
 - 1) E.g., remaining faithful while under the positive influences of one's home, church, or "Christian" college
 - 2) But take that person out of such an environment, and his or her faith is lost!
- b. Some signs of an "environmental" faith
 - 1) Praying in public, but not in private
 - 2) Studying the Bible when at church, but not in private
 - 3) A lack of personal closeness and dependence upon God and Jesus Christ
4. Paul's hope was that the Philippians' "behavior as citizens" was not dependent upon his presence
5. Likewise, our behavior should not be dependent upon the presence of other Christians, but upon the presence of Christ alone!

[Having considered these "general" observations about "**Conduct Worthy Of The Gospel**", let's now look at...]

II. "SPECIFIC" OBSERVATIONS CONCERNING OUR "CONDUCT"

A. IT INVOLVES "STANDING FAST IN ONE SPIRIT"... (27)

1. "Behaving as citizens" involves "**standing fast**" against those things which would beset us:
 - a. The lure of the world in which we live, with its immorality and materialism
 - b. The sin of unbelief, which can strike at even the most mature Christians, during crises of doubt
 - c. The deceitfulness of false doctrines, showing great promise but leading us away from Christ
 -- All such things we must "stand fast" against!
2. Note also that we must stand fast "**in one spirit**"
 - a. We are not to stand strong by ourselves, in isolation from one another, but in **unity**! togetherness
 - c. The importance of **unity** in our conduct will be developed further in this epistle

B. IT INVOLVES "WITH ONE MIND STRIVING TOGETHER FOR THE FAITH OF THE GOSPEL"... (27)

1. "Behaving as citizens" includes:
 - a. Aggressively promoting the gospel of Jesus Christ ("striving")
 - b. Doing this in unity with other Christians ("together with one mind")
2. Our conduct is unbecoming the gospel if we are:
 - a. **Not** striving for the faith of the gospel
 - b. **Not** doing it in unity with other brethren
3. Do we not see here the need for "identifying with a congregation" and closely working together with them?
4. Are those who drift around from church to church, never "placing membership", truly behaving in a conduct worthy of the gospel?

C. IT INVOLVES "NOT IN ANY WAY TERRIFIED BY YOUR ADVERSARIES"... (28-30)

1. Christians walking in a manner worthy of the gospel will not be troubled by those who may ridicule or even persecute them!
 - a. For even though the world may consider such "fearlessness" as evidence that we are

crazy...

- b. Such courage is actually evidence of our salvation! - cf. **Mt 5:10-12**
2. There may come times when we who have been “granted to believe in Jesus” are also “privileged to suffer for His sake”
 - a. Such was the case with Paul, and evidently the Philippians as well
 - b. Should it ever be our “lot” to suffer for Christ, remember that it will be a “privilege”
 - c. Therefore our attitude should be like that of the apostles in **Ac 5:41-42**

CONCLUSION

1. So here are some of the things involved as “behaving as citizens” of the kingdom of heaven, and having a “conduct worthy of the gospel of Christ...”
 - a. Standing fast in one spirit
 - b. With one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel
 - c. Not in any way terrified by our adversaries
 - And this being the case, no matter what the “environment” (moral climate) might be!
2. This is certainly not all that is involved, for in chapter two we will learn more of what is expected of Christians
3. But in view of these things...
 - a. Is our conduct worthy of the gospel of Christ?
 - b. Are we behaving as citizens of heaven while sojourning on this earth?

If not...could it be that we have forgotten the privileges we enjoy by “believing in Jesus” and even “suffering for Jesus”?

The Unity That Produces Joy

Philippians 2:1-4

INTRODUCTION

1. At this point in his epistle to the Philippians, Paul is exhorting his brethren in regards to Christian living
2. In the previous section, we notice that he encouraged them to manifest **“Conduct Worthy Of The Gospel” - Ph 1:27-30**
3. In our text for this study, Paul exhorts them to manifest **“The Unity That Produces Joy” - Ph 2: 1-4**
4. In doing so, Paul describes three aspects of such unity:
 - a. The **motivation** for having unity that produces joy (1)
 - b. The **nature** of unity that produces joy (2)
 - c. The **attitudes** required for unity that produces joy (3,4)

[As we begin, let’s carefully consider Paul’s description of...]

I. THE “MOTIVATION” FOR HAVING UNITY THAT PRODUCES JOY (1)

A. DO WE NOT HAVE ANY “CONSOLATION IN CHRIST”...?

1. When Paul says **“if there is any consolation...”**, he is not doubting that there is
 - a. This is a common use of the conditional **“if...then”** where given the reality of the “if” clause, “then” a point should naturally follow
 - b. For example, consider **Ga 3:29...**
 - 1) Where Paul wrote “If you are Christ’s, then...”
 - 2) The “if” does not suggest doubt that they could be Christ’s for in the previous verse he said that they were!
 - c. In such cases, the “if” means the same thing as “since”
2. Indeed, there is **much** consolation (comfort) to be found in Christ!
 - a. As expressed to the brethren at Thessalonica, there is consolation from Christ in “every good word and work” - **2 Th 2:16-17**
 - b. And as written to the Corinthians, such consolation abounds even in the midst of tribulation - **2 Co 1:3-5**

B. DO WE NOT HAVE ANY “COMFORT OF LOVE”...?

1. Do we not enjoy any comfort that comes from love?
2. Does not the love that comes from God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, and even our brethren provide any comfort? - again, cf. **2 Co 1:3-5**
3. Indeed, it does to those who will receive it!

C. DO WE NOT HAVE ANY “FELLOWSHIP OF THE SPIRIT”...?

1. Indeed, all who have been baptized into Christ has received the gift of the Holy Spirit - **Ac 2:38-39; 5:32**

2. As the church (the temple of God), the Spirit dwells in us - **1 Co 3:16**
3. Even our individual bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit - **1 Co 6:19**
4. Not only by the Spirit have we all been baptized into one body, but have all been made to drink of the one Spirit - **1 Co 12:13; cf. Jn 7:37-39**
5. Indeed there is a true “communion of the Holy Spirit” available for Christians - **2 Co 13:14**

D. DO WE NOT HAVE ANY “AFFECTION AND MERCY”...?

1. There is the “affection” that comes from Jesus and from other brethren - e.g., **Ph 1:8**
2. There is the “mercy” that comes from our loving Father in heaven - **Ep 2:4-7**

[Enjoying all these benefits, should they not serve to encourage us to have “the unity that produces joy”? It certainly moved Paul to write and encourage the Philippians toward this “unity”! But exactly what kind of unity is it that produces joy...?]

II. THE “NATURE” OF THE UNITY THAT PRODUCES JOY (2)

A. IT INVOLVES “BEING LIKE-MINDED”...

1. Which means to “think the same thing”
2. That this is a necessary quality of unity is evident from Paul’s comments in **1 Co 1:10**

B. IT INVOLVES “HAVING THE SAME LOVE”...

1. This is a natural consequence if we are first “like-minded”
2. Having the same love, we will love:
 - a. The same things, in matters pertaining to Christ and His church!
 - b. One another with the same kind of love
 - 1) Our love for one another will be of the same kind: sincere, fervent, and from a pure heart - **1 Pe 1:23**
 - 2) Our love for one another will be mutual, not one-sided, as is often the case

C. IT INVOLVES “BEING OF ONE ACCORD”...

1. Literally, “**of one soul; having your souls joined together**”
2. It suggests acting together as if **one** soul is driving them
3. Therefore, working together in complete harmony, not as separate entities going our separate ways

D. IT INVOLVES BEING “OF ONE MIND”...

1. The NASV says “**intent on one purpose**”
2. Not only working together outwardly, but inwardly, having the same purpose and intentions

[When such conditions exist in a local congregation, then the “unity that produces joy” will be fully experienced! But what are the attitudes required for having such unity?]

III. THE “ATTITUDES” REQUIRED FOR THE UNITY THAT PRODUCES JOY (3,4)

A. “LET NOTHING BE DONE THROUGH SELFISH AMBITION OR CONCEIT”...

1. First, it is necessary to point out those attitudes we should NOT have!
2. Possessing these attitudes will destroy unity
 - a. For both involve “self-centered” attitude
 - b. Rather than a “Christ-centered” attitude

3. Therefore, it is required that we rid ourselves of:
 - a. The **desire for exalting self** (“selfish ambition”)
 - b. The **improper estimation of self** (“conceit”)
4. In place of these, we should substitute...

B. “LOWLINESS OF MIND”...

1. In other words, humility
2. This will effectively replace the problem of “**conceit**”
3. Humility should be easy to maintain if we remember our own faults

C. “LET EACH ESTEEM OTHERS BETTER THAN HIMSELF”...

1. This should be easy for us to do...
 - a. For we are aware of our own defects, but we do not have the same clear view of the defects of others
 - b. We can only see their **outward** conduct; in our case, we can look **within**
 - c. We see our own hearts, with all its faults; we cannot so look into the hearts of others
2. In writing to the brethren at Rome, Paul exhorted them to outdo one another in this regard - “**in honor giving preference to one another**” - **Ro 12:10b**

D. “LOOK OUT...FOR THE INTERESTS OF OTHERS”...

1. This attitude eliminates the problem of “**selfish ambition**”
2. It is the attitude of **maturity** and was the attitude of Christ! - **Ro 15:1-3**
3. So it should be the attitude of every Christian!

CONCLUSION

1. These attitudes are essential if we are going to have “**The Unity That Produces Joy**”!
2. This is not to suggest that these attitudes **alone** will bring about such unity...
 - a. For “**The Unity That Produces Joy**” comes only when it is unity based upon the truths Jesus taught
 - b. These attitudes without that truth will only produce a false sense of joy
 - c. But without these attitudes, holding to the truth itself will not give us the joy we seek!

Therefore, let us “fulfill our joy” by making sure that we manifest these attitudes as we attempt to live according to the truth that is in Jesus!

The Mind Of Christ

Philippians 2:5-11

INTRODUCTION

1. In vs. 1-4 of this second chapter, Paul wrote about “**The Unity That Produces Joy**”, in which he described:
 - a. The **motivation** for having this unity
 - b. The **nature** of this unity
 - c. The **attitudes** necessary to have this unity
2. In describing the latter, he called upon the Philippians to:
 - a. Do nothing through selfish ambition or conceit
 - b. Have lowliness of mind in which they esteem others better than themselves
 - c. Look out for the interests of others, and not only those of their own
3. In vs. 5, Paul continues to exhort them to have “this mind” (the attitudes of vs. 3-4), pointing out that this is also the “mind of Christ”
4. In vs. 6-11, Paul elaborates on the “mind of Christ” (or the attitude of Christ), which will serve as the focus of this particular study

[First, note that “**The Mind Of Christ**”...]

I. LACKED SELFISH AMBITION OR CONCEIT (6)

A. PRIOR TO HIS INCARNATION...

1. Jesus was “**in the form of God**”
 - a. That is, “He existed as essentially one with God” (Vincent’s Word Studies)
 - b. This is in accord with what we read in **Jn 1:1-3**
2. He was also “**equal with God**”
 - a. Again notice **Jn 1:1**
 - b. He certainly shared similar glory with the Father (**Jn 17:5**), something the Father refused to share with any created being (**cf. Is 42:8**)

B. YET CHRIST DID NOT CONSIDER SUCH EQUALITY “ROBBERY”...

1. Lit., “**a thing to be grasped**”; that is, something to be laid hold of, and retained jealously
2. The “**glory**” of equality with God which Christ enjoyed from eternity was not something He felt like He **had** to cling on to
3. A true demonstration of a lack of selfish ambition and conceit on the part of our Lord!

C. DO WE HAVE “THE MIND OF CHRIST”...?

1. Do we consider our “standing” before others (whatever that may be) something to be held on to?
 2. Do we consider ourselves more important than others, and consider that distinction something to be preserved at all costs?
- **If so, then we lack “The Mind Of Christ”!**

[As we continue to read on in our text, we see also that **“The Mind Of Christ”**...]

II. LOOKED OUT FOR THE INTERESTS OF OTHERS (7-8)

A. WHEN CHRIST BECAME FLESH...

1. He **“made Himself of no reputation”**
 - a. Some versions say “emptied Himself”
 - b. He divested Himself of the “glory” He had with the Father - cf. **Jn 17:5**
 2. He took upon Himself **“the form of a servant”**
 - a. He did not come as a “king”, “nobleman”, etc.
 - b. But as the lowly son of a simple carpenter
 3. He came **“in the likeness of men”**
 - a. As such, He could experience their temptations and sufferings - **He 2:14,17-18; 4:15; 5:7**
 - b. In other words, though deity, He was truly “man” (not some sort of “superman”)
 4. He **“humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross”**
 - a. Consider **He 5:8**
 - b. Though in every way a man like you or me (while still the Son of God), He humbled Himself and obediently suffered and died on the cross!
- **Why did Jesus do all this?**

B. HE DID IT ALL FOR THE SAKE OF OTHERS...!

1. He became man, humbled himself as a man, was obedient, and then died on the cross - because it was in our own best interest!
2. He did it, to bear **our** reproach - cf. **Ro 15:1-3; Is 53:4-6**
3. Yes, He was looking out for **our** interests!

C. DO WE HAVE “THE MIND OF CHRIST”...?

1. We do, if we are looking out for the interests of others
2. We do, if we are willing to humble ourselves, even sacrifice ourselves if it be in the best interests of others - cf. **1 Jn 3:16**

[Such is **“The Mind Of Christ”**, one of humility and service to others; but it is also one that is...]

III. HIGHLY EXALTED BY GOD (9-11)

A. IN THE CASE OF JESUS...

1. He is a good example of the Scriptural maxim: **“He that humbles himself shall be exalted”**
2. For God has highly exalted Jesus in two ways:
 - a. **In the present** - by giving Him “the name which is above every name” (the name by which men must be saved - **Ac 4:12**)
 - b. **In the future** - that at His name “every knee should bow...that every tongue should confess” He is Lord! - **Re 5:11-14**

B. BUT ALSO IN OUR CASE...

1. Those who possess **“The Mind Of Christ”** will participate in that great future exaltation of

Christ! - cf. **Ro 8:16-18; 2 Th 1:10-12**

2. Isn't this a wonderful motivation for us to have **"The Mind Of Christ"**?

CONCLUSION

1. We have seen in this passage that **"The Mind Of Christ"** involves...
 - a. **Humility**
 - b. **Obedience**
 - c. **Sacrifice**
 - d. **Great Reward**

2. Do we possess **"The Mind Of Christ"**? We should, for it is the **"key"** to:
 - a. The unity that produces joy!
 - b. One day sharing in "glory" together with Christ!

3. As Christians, let's be diligent to manifest **"The Mind Of Christ"** in our relationship to God and to each other

If you are not a Christian, why not begin possessing "The Mind of Christ" by following His example of humble obedience to the Will of God...

Work Out Your Own Salvation

Philippians 2:12-18

INTRODUCTION

1. One of the things that interests me about Paul's writings is that he is intensely practical
2. He always relates...
 - a. Doctrine and duty
 - b. Creed and character
 - c. Faith and life-- To Paul, these are inseparable!
3. So it is now, that having described the example of Christ, he bases upon that example his exhortation to earnest endeavor towards spiritual progress - **Ph 2:12-18**
4. In this passage, Paul exhorts Christians to **"Work Out Your Own Salvation"**; in this lesson, there are several observations I would like to make concerning what this involves

[First, consider that as you **"Work Out Your Own Salvation"** that...]

I. THERE ARE TWO KINDS OF OBEDIENCE (12a)

A. THAT DONE ONLY IN THE PRESENCE OF OTHERS...

1. This is a very common form of obedience
 - a. Done only when others are around
 - b. Because we fear what others might think if we don't behave a certain way
2. Yet Paul did want the Philippians' obedience to be of that sort
 - a. For then it would only be what he calls elsewhere **"eye-service"** - cf. **Co 3:22**
 - b. Their faith would then only be an **"environmental faith"** (a faith which is active only if the environment is conducive to it)

B. THAT DONE IN THE ABSENCE OF OTHERS...

1. This is the proper form of obedience
 - a. Done to please God, conscience, and no one else!
 - b. This type of obedience remains faithful no matter what others do or think
2. It is this type of obedience...
 - a. That Paul hoped for in the lives of his beloved friends
 - b. That we should render in our service to the Lord and His cause

[Secondly, we should also bear in mind that as you **"Work Out Your Own Salvation"**...]

II. IT INVOLVES THE WORKING OF BOTH MAN AND GOD (12b-13)

A. MAN HAS A ROLE TO PLAY IN HIS SALVATION...

1. He must **"work out"** his salvation
 - a. As Peter preached on the Day of Pentecost - **Ac 2:40**

- b. And also wrote later to Christians - **2 Pe 1:10**
 - Therefore man is not totally passive (or helpless) when it comes to his salvation!
- 2. He must also have **“fear and trembling”** in working out his salvation
 - a. There is a place for the right kind of fear in the life of a Christian
 - 1) The “fear of the Lord” is the beginning of knowledge - **Pro 1:7**
 - 2) The “fear of the Lord” will cause one to hate evil - **Pro 8:13**
 - 3) The “fear of the Lord” will prolong life - **Pro 10:27**
 - 4) The “fear of the Lord” provides strong confidence and is a fountain of life - **Pro 14:26-27**
 - 5) The “fear of the Lord” prompts one to depart from evil - **Pro 16:6**
 - 6) The “fear of the Lord” leads to a satisfying life, and spares one from much evil - **Pro 19:23**
 - 7) The “fear of the Lord” is the way to riches, honor, and life! - **Pro 22:4**
 - b. Prompted by the “fear of the Lord” to hate evil, depart from it, and turn to God where they will find wisdom, life and honor, they will also come to find that love which dispels any improper kind of “fear” - cf. **1 Jn 4:17-18**
 - c. But many never experienced such love from God because they have not had the “fear and trembling” in the first place!

B. BUT GOD IS ALSO VERY MUCH INVOLVED IN OUR SALVATION...!

- 1. Notice that Paul writes **“for it is God who works in you”**
 - a. We are not alone in our efforts to serve God
 - b. God is always there to help us along
- 2. In what way does God “work” in us? Paul identifies two ways:
 - a. **“to will”** - God helps us in our desire and motivation to do His will
 - b. **“to do”** - He works right along together with us!
- 3. This does not deny that man is a free moral agent...
 - a. Paul has already said to “work out your own salvation”
 - b. But when we offer ourselves in service to God, He becomes our partner, our “copilot” - cf. **He 13:20-21**
 - 1) At our conversion, He begins a new work in us, and intends to complete it - **Ph 1:6**
 - 2) Through His indwelling Spirit and Son, He gives us whatever strength we need - **Ep 3:16; Ph 4:13**
 - 3) So that, whatever we may become in the Lord, it is by His grace! - **1 Co 15:10**
 - c. Unfortunately, many Christians hinder God’s work in them by their lukewarm attitude (or is it their lack of faith in God?)
 - d. God can work (and is willing!), but only if we let Him!
- 4. Knowing that God is at work **in** us, this ought to provide further motivation to work **out** our salvation!

[As we read on, we learn that one is to **“Work Out Your Own Salvation”**...]

III. DOING SO WITHOUT MURMURING AND DISPUTING (14)

A. MURMURING WAS THE DOWNFALL OF ISRAEL...

- 1. Notice **1 Co 10:10-12**
- 2. This can also be a problem among many Christians today whenever they face hardships
- 3. But we are told that God is ever ready to help us (**1 Co 10:13**), and that He is in us both to “will” and to “work” (**Ph 2:13**), so why complain?

4. Rather, rejoice for the opportunity such “tribulations” give us to develop spiritually! - **Ro 5:3-5; Ja 1:2-4**

B. DISPUTING OFTEN FOLLOWS MURMURING...

1. Those who murmur are likely to be the same ones who begin disputing with others
2. All it accomplishes is ill will, and in many cases, unnecessary division
3. Shall we dare destroy the unity for which Christ died on the cross to attain?

[We need to heed Paul’s exhortation to **“Work Out Your Own Salvation”**...]

IV. SO YOU CAN SHINE AS LIGHTS IN THE WORLD (15-16)

A. TO SHINE AS LIGHTS, WE MUST BE CHILDREN OF GOD WITHOUT FAULT...

1. Which is possible only if we **“become blameless and harmless”**
2. Which requires doing all things **“without murmuring and disputing”**
3. Which can only happen if we allow God to **“work in”** us as we **“work out”** our own salvation; in other words...
 - a. Allow God go forgive us in obedience to the gospel
 - b. Allow God to strengthen us through His Word and prayer
 - c. Allow God to change us in conformity to His Will

B. TO SHINE AS LIGHTS, WE MUST BE “IN THE MIDST” OF CROOKED AND PERVERSE GENERATION...

1. Lights are value only if they are used to dispel darkness - cf. **Mt 5:14-15**
2. Though we are to **“be separate”** from the world (**2 Co 6:14-18**), we must **“not isolate”** ourselves from it - cf. **Jn 17:15,18; 1 Co 5:9-11**
3. We must associate with those in the world in order to be a positive influence

C. TO SHINE AS LIGHTS, WE MUST “HOLD FAST” THE WORD OF LIFE...

1. Some translations read “hold forth”
2. Certainly we should do both...
 - a. **“hold fast”** the Word of life (by our study and obedience to it) - **2 Ti 2:15**
 - b. **“hold forth”** the Word of life (by offering it to those in the world) - **Mk 16:15**
3. In both ways, we are to be like “The Statue Of Liberty”
 - a. Showing the way
 - b. Offering hope to those in need

[Acting as **“lights in the world”**, we bring great joy to those who taught us the Word of God (**16**). Finally, Paul writes that as you **“Work Out Your Own Salvation”**, it should include...]

V. REJOICING IN YOUR SACRIFICES (17-18)

A. WE MAY BE CALLED UPON TO SACRIFICE OURSELVES...

1. It may be in service to our own faith, or in the service of the faith of others
2. It may be a sacrifice of time, energy, money, or even life itself
3. But it is for a good cause, and this is how Paul viewed his possible execution for the cause of Christ

B. SUCH SACRIFICES CAN BE AN OCCASION FOR GLADNESS AND

REJOICING...!

1. This is how Paul viewed it
2. For he knew his sacrifices was in the cause of saving others
3. And he knew that their salvation would ultimately bring him greater joy at Christ's coming
- cf. **1 Th 2:19-20**
4. Does not the prospect of seeing each other in the presence of the Lord at His coming...
 - a. Make any sacrifice for one another worthwhile?
 - b. Constitute good reason to be glad and rejoice in sacrificial service?

CONCLUSION

1. Such are some of the things involved in the salvation God offers
2. Are they included in your efforts to **“Work Out Your Own Salvation”**?
3. As someone has suggested: **“Work as though it all depended upon you, but pray as though it all depended upon God”**
4. Indeed we should, for as we work out our salvation, it is God who is working in us!

Are you doing **your** part?

Paul's Son And Brother

Philippians 2:19-30

INTRODUCTION

1. We have already observed that this epistle is very personal in nature
2. Further proof of this is now seen as we consider Paul's remarks concerning two men; one described as a **"son"** to Paul, the other as a **"brother"** - **Ph 2:19-30**
3. Paul's comments reveal that these two men demonstrated the "mind of Christ" about which Paul encouraged the Philippians to have earlier in this chapter

[In this study, we shall notice in what ways these two men demonstrated the "mind of Christ" in their service to their brethren, beginning with...]

I. TIMOTHY, PAUL'S "SON" (19-24)

A. WHAT WERE PAUL'S PLANS CONCERNING TIMOTHY...?

1. To send him to Philippi shortly (**19,23**)
 - a. That when Timothy returns, Paul might be encouraged by their condition (**19b**)
 - b. But notice that Paul trusts in the Lord Jesus to do this - perhaps another way of saying, **"If the Lord wills"** (cf. **Ja 4:15**)
2. But sending Timothy would be delayed until Paul's condition was more fully known (**23b**)

B. WHY USE TIMOTHY...?

1. Paul had no one else...
 - a. Who was **"like-minded"** (**20a**)
 - 1) Who had the same mind as Paul
 - 2) Paul and Timothy were truly "united in spirit" and had that unity described in **Ph 2:2**
 - 3) Therefore, Timothy was the best "alternate" in the place of Paul
 - b. Who would **"sincerely care for your state"** (**20b**)
 - 1) Remember, Timothy had first joined Paul just before going to Philippi (**Ac 16:1-12**)
 - 2) So Timothy had good reasons to be close to the brethren there
 - a) It was "his" first missionary effort
 - b) He had known of them from the very beginning of their existence as a church
 - c. No other person was better suited, therefore, for this particular task
2. His devotion to Christ surpassed others (**21**)
 - a. He sought the interests of Christ, which meant the interests of others - cf. **Ph 2:4-5**
 - b. So no one else surpassed Timothy in having the "mind of Christ"
3. He had proved his service in similar errands (**22**)
 - a. For example, with the church at Corinth - **1 Co 4:17**
 - b. He had done so with humility: "as a son with his father he served with me"
 - c. Again, Timothy demonstrated the "mind of Christ" - cf. **Ph 2:3**

[Such was the young man **Timothy: a beloved "son"** to the apostle, whose attitudes of humility and service made him a useful instrument in Paul's ministry. Now let's consider...]

II. EPAPHRODITUS, PAUL'S "BROTHER" (25-30)

A. WHO WAS EPAPHRODITUS...?)

1. **"my brother"** - a brother in Christ to the apostle Paul
2. **"fellow-worker"** - a companion in the work of spreading the gospel
3. **"fellow-soldier"** - one shared in the conflicts with the enemies of Christ
4. **"your messenger"** - the one bearing the gift from the Philippians to Paul - cf. **Ph 4:18**
5. **"who ministered to my needs"** - now with Paul, he offered himself in service to him

B. WHAT KIND OF MAN WAS HE...?

1. A man of love and concern for his brethren at Philippi (**26-27**)
 - a. He longed for his brethren while away from them
 - b. He had been sick, and was distressed they knew about it
 2. A man devoted to the work of Christ (**30**)
 - a. Who realized that serving others (like Paul and the Philippians) was serving Christ
 - b. Who was willing to risk his life in such service - cf. **1 Jn 3:16**
 3. A man who did not mind being a "messenger"
 - a. He had brought the gift to Paul from Philippi - **Ph 4:18**
 - b. More than likely, he carried this epistle back to the Philippians (**28**)
 - c. Such willingness again demonstrates humility, so important to having the "mind of Christ"
- Truly he was a man who lived up to his name: **"Epaphroditus"** means **"handsome, charming"**

CONCLUSION

1. Individuals like Timothy and Epaphroditus we are to hold in high esteem (**29**) - **Why?**
 - a. Because they demonstrate the humility and love so essential to the cause of Christ
 - b. Because they rendered service to God and His church which is just as essential as that offered by men like Paul and Peter
2. The church today needs more people like these two men, to provide the backup and support necessary for the cause of Christ
3. We can not be a "Paul" or a "Peter", but we can be a "Timothy" or an "Epaphroditus" (i.e., God's **"second string"**)!
4. All we need are the same attitudes they had:
 - a. Sincere concern for the condition of others
 - b. Seeking first the things of Christ
 - c. A willingness to serve others
 - d. A willingness to sacrifice themselves, even to the point of death

--- I.e., **the "mind of Christ"**!

The True Circumcision Of God

Philippians 3:1-16

INTRODUCTION

1. Throughout his ministry as an apostle of Jesus Christ, Paul had to contend with certain Jewish Christians...
 - a. Known today as **Judaizers**, they were false teachers who often followed Paul wherever he went
 - b. They would try to bind the act of circumcision and the Law of Moses itself upon Gentile Christians - e.g., **Ac 15:1-2**
2. Even as he writes this **“epistle of joy”**, encouraging the brethren to rejoice in the Lord, he finds it necessary to warn them of these false teachers - **Ph 3:1-3**
 - a. In these verses, we find Paul making a play on words...
 - 1) He calls the Judaizers **“katatome”** (mutilation) - **Ph 3:2**
 - 2) And refers to true Christians as **“peritome”** (circumcision) - **Ph 3:3**
 - b. In doing so, he also declares that **“the true circumcision”** are those who:
 - 1) Worship God in the Spirit
 - 2) Rejoice in Christ Jesus
 - 3) Have no confidence in the flesh
3. Using himself as an example, Paul further defines the attitudes and characteristics of those who are **“The True Circumcision Of God”** - **Ph 3:4-16**

[In doing so, Paul actually does it in an order reverse to what we find in **verse 3**; thus first illustrating **“The True Circumcision Of God”** as those who...]

I. HAVE NO CONFIDENCE IN THE FLESH (4-8)

A. IF ANY COULD, IT WOULD HAVE BEEN PAUL...

1. He could have boasted in things of a **racial** nature
 - a. **“circumcised the eighth day”**
 - 1) A genuine Jew from birth
 - 2) Not a proselyte
 - b. **“of the stock of Israel”**
 - 1) Directly descended from Jacob
 - a) The Arabs could boast of their descent from Abraham
 - b) The Edomites could boast of Isaac
 - 2) But only the Jews could boast of Jacob, who had prevailed with God and was given the name “Israel” (literally, “one who strives with God”)
 - c. **“of the tribe of Benjamin”**
 - 1) The son of Jacob’s beloved wife, Rachel
 - 2) The only son actually born in the promised land
 - 3) Israel’s first king, Saul, was from this tribe
 - 4) The only tribe that remained true to Judah when the kingdom was divided
 - d. **“a Hebrew of the Hebrews”**

- 1) Both his parents were Jews
- 2) He was true to the customs of the Jews, not a Grecian or Hellenistic Jew
2. He could have boasted in things of a **religious** nature
 - a. **“concerning the law, a Pharisee”**
 - 1) A very religious person
 - 2) Belonging to a sect known for their loyalty, patriotism, and conservatism to the Law of Moses
 - b. **“concerning zeal, persecuting the church”**
 - 1) Illustrates his sincerity and enthusiasm for his religion
 - 2) Always true to his conscience - cf. **Ac 23:1; 26:9-11**
 - c. **“concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless”**
 - 1) Not that he was perfect
 - 2) But was diligent in fulfilling the requirements of the Law (e.g., animal sacrifices)

B. YET PAUL CONSIDERED THESE THINGS AS “LOSS FOR CHRIST”...

1. All these things which could have provided Paul with prestige and social standing, he counted as loss - **Ph 3:7-8**
2. In fact, he lost many things when he chose to follow Christ - cf. **1 Co 4:11-13**
3. Yet, compared to the excellence of the knowledge of Christ, they were to Paul nothing more than **“rubbish”** (literally, “dung”)!

C. WHAT ABOUT US...?

1. Do we place confidence in our fleshly accomplishments?
2. Do we take pride in our racial background, religious heritage, etc.?
3. Or do we consider such things as “rubbish” compared to the knowledge of Jesus Christ?

[How we answer helps to determine whether we are **“The True Circumcision Of God”!** But there is more; those who are the “true circumcision”...]

II. REJOICE IN CHRIST JESUS (9-11)

A. THEIR JOY IS NOT IN THINGS MATERIAL OR FLESHLY, BUT IN CHRIST...!

1. As in Paul’s case, he considered fleshly accomplishments as **“rubbish”**
2. His compelling desire was to **“gain Christ”** - **Ph 3:8**

B. WHAT IT MEANS TO “GAIN CHRIST”...

1. To **“be found in Him”**, which includes...
 - a. **“not having my own righteousness, which is from the law”** (not trusting in his keeping the Law of Moses to save him)
 - b. **“but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith”** (experiencing salvation as a gift from God through faith in Jesus)
2. To **“know Him”**
 - a. The word **“know”** as used here, means...
 - 1) “to recognize” or “to become acquainted with”
 - 2) I.e., a personal knowledge, not a theoretical or vicarious one
 - b. In particular, to know **“the power of His resurrection”**
 - 1) The same power Paul wanted the Ephesians to know - **Ep 1:18-20**
 - 2) A power that is first experienced in baptism into Christ - **Co 2:12-13**
 - 3) And throughout our lives - **Ep 3:20-21**

- 4) And ultimately in our own bodily resurrection - **Ph 3:20-21**
- c. To know **“the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death”**
 - 1) In his effort to know Christ, Paul wanted to experience and share even in His sufferings!
 - 2) “Such fellowship in the sufferings of Christ includes a turning from sin, and the death of self. It may involve much hardship for the sake of Christ. For Paul it finally meant martyrdom.” - **Charles Erdman**
 - 3) We all should be willing to do the same! - cf. **1 Pe 4:1-2**
3. To **“attain to the resurrection from the dead”**
 - a. This would be the ultimate experience in **“gaining Christ”!**
 - b. I.e., a personal and experiential knowledge of the **“power”** of the resurrection!

C. WHAT ABOUT US...?

1. Such was the goal of Paul’s life, the source of his true joy!
2. Can this said about us?
3. Is our goal in life to truly “know Christ”?

[If it is, then what Paul continues to say will be our attitude also; for **“The True Circumcision Of God”** are also those who...]

III. WORSHIP GOD IN THE SPIRIT (12-16)

A. JESUS WAS THE FIRST TO DEFINE “TRUE WORSHIP” AS SPIRITUAL WORSHIP...

1. In His discussion with the Samaritan woman at the well - **Jn 4:23-24**
2. Since God is Spirit, our worship must be of the spirit as well, and not limited to particular locations

B. PAUL DESCRIBES THE ATTITUDES OF THOSE WHO WORSHIP GOD IN THE SPIRIT...

1. They are never satisfied with their present spiritual condition - **Ph 3:12**
2. With perseverance, they press on - **Ph 3:13-15**
 - a. Not looking back
 - 1) Resting on past laurels
 - 2) Or bemoaning past failures
 - b. But ever reaching forward, which is a mark of spiritual maturity
3. All the while living up to the standard of knowledge they have attained - **Ph 3:16**

CONCLUSION

1. Do these attitudes characterize our devotion to God and His Son?
 - a. Do we worship God by allowing His Spirit and the Spirit-given Word to rule over our complete lives?
 - b. Do we consider the relationship we are developing with Christ to be our primary joy and focus in life?
 - c. Do we place no confidence in the flesh?

--- If so, then we are “The True Circumcision of God”!
2. As Paul invites us to do in **verse 17**, let’s be sure to follow his example!

How does one **begin** in becoming “**The True Circumcision Of God**”? It begins when we in faith submit to the working of God in baptism, in which we experience the “circumcision of Christ” (cf. **Co 2:11-13**). Have you had the “circumcision made without hands” (i.e., been baptized into Christ for the forgiveness of your sins - **Ac 2:28**)?

Two Ways To Walk

Philippians 3:17-21

INTRODUCTION

1. As we continue our examination of Paul's "epistle of joy", we now find him discussing two different ways to walk in this life...
 - a. The walk of one who is "a citizen of heaven"
 - b. The walk of one who is "an enemy of the cross of Christ"
2. Hopefully, there should be no question as to which way we are to walk; but to better understand why, we will look closely at some reasons Paul gives in this passage

[First, we notice...]

I. AN ADMONITION TO WALK LIKE PAUL AND OTHERS (17)

A. "JOIN IN FOLLOWING MY EXAMPLE..."

1. Paul frequently encouraged others to follow his example - cf. **Ph 4:9; 1 Co 4:16; 11:1**
2. Some brethren evidently took him up on it - e.g., **1 Th 1:6-9**
3. In what way were people to imitate Paul?
 - a. To the degree he tried to imitate Christ - **1 Co 11:1**
 - b. Perhaps also in his devotion to Jesus Christ - cf. **Ph 3:7-16**

B. "NOTE THOSE WHO SO WALK, AS YOU HAVE US FOR A PATTERN..."

1. Just as there were some in Thessalonica who imitated Paul (**1 Th 1:6-9**), so there were those at Philippi who did the same, and were thus worthy of emulation
2. Noticing the examples of others can be very beneficial - cf. **Psa 37:37**
3. Especially when we consider the outcome of their conduct - cf. **He 13:7**

C. WE SHOULD NOT ONLY BE GOOD IMITATORS, BUT GOOD EXAMPLES OURSELVES...!

1. This is especially true of those who teach and preach God's Word - **1 Ti 4:12; Ti 2:7-8**
2. Which includes those who serve as elders - **He 13:7; 1 Pe 5:1-3**

[The reasons for noting those who are worthy of emulation is given later in this passage. But first there is...]

II. A WARNING CONCERNING THOSE WHO WALK AS "ENEMIES OF THE CROSS" (18-19)

A. "OF WHOM I HAVE TOLD YOU OFTEN..."

1. Paul found **repetition** to be a valuable tool - cf. **Ga 1:8,9; 5:21; Ph 3:1**
2. Also, that it was necessary to be **negative** at times - cf. **Ph 3:2**

B. "AND NOW TELL YOU EVEN WEEPING..."

1. Negative preaching, when necessary, should not be done without compassion - e.g., **2 Co**

2:4

2. Even here, Paul is setting the right example...
 - a. To love our enemies
 - b. Even those who are “enemies of the cross”!

C. WHO ARE THESE “ENEMIES OF THE CROSS”...?

1. We know they are **many** people
 - a. **“For many walk”** - cf. **Mt 7:13-14**
 - b. So not just a few
2. We know their **end**
 - a. **“whose end is destruction”** - cf. **2 Th 1:7-9**
 - b. Have we seriously considered the outcome of their conduct?
3. We know who is their **God**
 - a. **“whose god is their belly”**
 - b. I.e., those who are set on satisfying only their fleshly appetites
4. We know wherein is their **glory**
 - a. **“whose glory is in their shame”**
 - b. They take pride in things that are actually shameful
5. We know upon what they set their **minds**
 - a. **“who set their mind on earthly things”**
 - b. Contrast this with where Christians are to set their minds - **Ph 4:8; Co 3:1-2**

[Where is our **“mindset”**? How we answer may determine whether or not WE are **“enemies of the cross of Christ”**! As a motivation not to be **“enemies of the cross”**, we notice Paul now shares a few...]

III. REASONS TO WALK LIKE PAUL AND OTHERS (20-21)**A. “FOR OUR CITIZENSHIP IS IN HEAVEN...”**

1. Our true loyalty is to that above, not that on earth!
2. It is there where our **“inheritance”** is reserved - **1 Pe 1:3-4**
3. Therefore, we have special responsibilities - cf. **1 Pe 2:9-12**

B. “WE EAGERLY WAIT FOR THE SAVIOR...WHO WILL TRANSFORM OUR LOWLY BODY...”

1. Though now in heaven, our Savior is coming again one day! - **Ac 1:9-11**
2. When He does, what glory there will be for those who are **“citizens of heaven”**!
 - a. He will **“transform our lowly body”**!
 - b. It will be **“conformed to His glorious body”**
3. This He will do by the same **power** by which He subdues all things to Himself - cf. **Mt 28:18; 1 Pe 3:22**

CONCLUSION

1. Are not these good reasons to walk like Paul?
2. Brethren, how are we walking in this life?
 - a. As “citizens of heaven”?
 - b. Or “enemies of the cross of Christ”?

3. The answer depends upon where we have set our **MINDS**:
 - a. **If on EARTHLY things**...we are “enemies of the cross of Christ”!
 - 1) We make our bellies to be our god
 - 2) We glory in that which is shameful
 - 3) Our end will be destruction
 - b. **But if on HEAVENLY things**...we are “citizens of heaven”!
 - 1) We eagerly await Christ’s coming
 - 2) We eagerly await our transformation
4. Have you become...
 - a. A “citizen of heaven”? If not, why not become one today? - **Jn 3:5**
 - b. An “enemy of the cross”? If so, why not “defect” today? - **1 Pe 4:1-3**

The Art Of Making Peace

Philippians 4:1-3

INTRODUCTION

1. Even in “good” churches you often find brethren who have differences with each other; such was the case with the church at Philippi
2. As Paul continues with various exhortations to the Christian life, at this point he addresses his comments concerning a rift that apparently existed among two members at Philippi - **Ph 4:1-3**
3. How Paul approaches the sensitive task of trying to make peace between Euodia and Syntyche provides several lessons in the use of tact...
 - a. As disciples of Jesus Christ, we are to be known as “**peacemakers**” (**Mt 5:9**)
 - b. From Paul, then, let us learn what we can about “**The Art Of Making Peace**”

[The first lesson, gleaned from verse one, is...]

I. THE PEACEMAKER MUST LOVE THOSE ON BOTH SIDES (1)

A. PAUL STARTS OUT BY EXPRESSING HIS LOVE...

1. Note the terms used by Paul...
 - a. “**my brothers**”
 - b. “**beloved and longed for**”
 - c. “**my joy and crown**”
 - d. “**beloved**”
2. Truly Paul loved the people at Philippi!

B. PEACEMAKERS MUST DO THE SAME...

1. They must have sincere love for those on both sides of an issue
2. They must be able and willing to express their love, as did Paul
3. Otherwise, they cannot be useful arbitrators in making peace
 - a. Loving one side, and not the other, makes impartial judgments impossible
 - b. The peacemaker’s advice and counsel will be open to suspicion

[With mutual love for those on both sides, the peacemaker is in a position to render a fair evaluation of the problem and the solution. Next, we see that...]

II. THE PEACEMAKER SHOULD TREAT BOTH SIDES TENDERLY AND EQUALLY (2)

A. IN THE CASE OF PAUL...

1. Note the use of the verb “**implore**” (KJV, “**beseech**”) - **parakaleo** {par-ak-al-eh’-o}
 - a. To call to one’s side, call for, summon
 - b. To address, speak to, (call to, call upon), which may be done in the way of exhortation, entreaty, comfort, instruction, etc.
-- Rather than command, Paul chooses to plead with them

2. Note the repeated and equal use of the verb **“implore”**
 - a. **“I implore Euodia and I implore Syntyche”**
 - b. Rather than take sides, Paul treats them both tenderly and equally

B. THERE IS A NEED FOR SUCH PEACEMAKERS TODAY...

1. Individuals who will use tenderness and fairness in treating those in a dispute
2. Again, remaining impartial, so the counsel will not tainted with any accusation of bias

[The next insight we can glean from Paul in **“The Art Of Making Peace”** is...]

III. THE PEACEMAKER MUST SEEK FOR ONENESS OF MIND (2)

A. NOTE PAUL’S OBJECTIVE...

1. That Euodia and Syntyche **“be of the same mind in the Lord”**
2. A concern of Paul already expressed in this epistle, that there be - **Ph 1:27; 2:2**
3. But now applied especially to these two ladies

B. IN MAKING PEACE, THERE MUST BE ONENESS OF MIND...

1. In many **“peace agreements”**, the participants have not truly reached a oneness of mind, only a compromise
2. Such **“agreements”** are often only temporary, destroyed when the remaining differences eventually resurface
3. For Christians, seeking to **“be of the same mind in the Lord”** becomes easy if we all strive to have **“the mind of Christ”** - **Ph 2:2-5**

[Not content with only a “cessation of hostilities”, the peacemaker seeks to go much further, dealing with the divisiveness of mind that is the true cause of the problem. Note also, that...]

IV. THE PEACEMAKER MUST USE ASSISTANCE WHEN AVAILABLE (3)

A. PAUL WAS NOT TOO PROUD TO CALL FOR HELP...

1. He sought out the assistance of **“Syzygus”**
 - a. Literally, **“yoke-fellow, true companion”**
 - b. Possibly his true name, which if so, he was being called upon by Paul to live up to his name!
2. Paul wanted this individual to help these ladies out

B. PEACEMAKERS WILL GLADLY USE THE HELP OTHERS CAN GIVE...

1. Humble, they do not feel like they have to do it all
2. Aware of others who may be in a position to provide counsel or other means of help, they will glad utilize them
3. Their goal is to make peace, not a reputation for themselves!

[Finally, we can glean from Paul that...]

V. THE PEACEMAKER MUST SEE THE GOOD AND GIVE CREDIT WHEN DUE (3)

A. PAUL DID NOT LOSE SIGHT OF WHOSE THESE WOMEN WERE...

1. They had labored with Paul in the gospel

2. They had labored with Clement
3. They had labored with Paul's other fellow-workers as well (who though not mentioned by name, had their names in the **"Book of Life"** - cf. **Re 3:5; 13:8; 17:8; 20:12,15; 21:27; 22:19**)

B. SO PEACEMAKERS MUST REMEMBER THE GOOD IN THOSE WITH WHOM THEY DEAL...

1. It is so easy to forget that those having problems likely have much good to their credit
2. Recognizing this and giving credit where it is due increases the likelihood that one's advice will be heeded

CONCLUSION

1. In a world that is as divided as ours, there is a grave need for those who can serve as faithful and effective **"peacemakers"**
2. Hopefully, by considering and applying **"The Art Of Making Peace"** as exemplified by the apostle Paul in this passage, we may be useful to the Lord when called upon to bring divided people together!

Rejoice In The Lord Always!

Philippians 4:4

INTRODUCTION

1. In the final chapter of Philippians, we find Paul giving exhortations that are both specific and general in nature...
 - a. We saw in vs. 1-3 where Paul gave specific exhortations to individuals there at Philippi
 - b. Now in vs. 4, we find the first of several exhortations which are certainly needful for all Christians: *“Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!”*
2. You may recall that **“joy”** is the keynote of this epistle
 - a. No less than **sixteen times** in this epistle, Paul uses the word or a derivation of it!
 - b. Cf. **Ph 1:4,18 (twice) ,25; 2:2,17 (twice), 18 (twice) ,28,29; 3:1; 4:1,4 (twice), 10**

[In this study, I will share a few observations about how we are to **“Rejoice In The Lord Always!”** First, notice that...]

I. THIS JOY IS TO BE EXPERIENCED “ALWAYS”

A. NOT JUST AN OCCASIONAL EXPERIENCE, FOR EXCEPTIONAL PEOPLE...

1. But in darkness as well as in light; in trials as well as in triumphs - cf. **Ja 1:2-3; Ro 5:3-4**
2. Not just for apostles, but for all Christians - cf. **Ja 1:2-3; 1 Pe 4:12-13**

B. CONSIDER THE EXAMPLE OF PAUL, WHO FOUND JOY “ALWAYS”...

1. In his prayers - **Ph 1:4**
2. In the proclamation of the gospel under adverse circumstances - **Ph 1:18**
3. In the unity of the saints - **Ph 2:2**
4. In the prospect of being a martyr for Christ - **Ph 2:17**
5. In the love of the brethren - **Ph 4:10**

[Truly Paul rejoiced “always”! But what was his secret? What was the source of this abiding joy?]

II. THIS ABIDING JOY IS FOUND “IN THE LORD”

A. THERE MAY BE “TEMPORARY” JOY...

1. In drugs (including alcohol and tobacco)
2. In sexual pleasures (whether lawful or unlawful)
3. In material acquisitions
- But these are at best like riches, which *“make themselves wings; they fly away like an eagle toward heaven”* (**Pro 23:5**); and at worst, are *“the passing pleasures of sin”* (**He 11:25**)

B. BUT THE JOY THAT “ABIDES” IS ONLY “IN THE LORD”...

1. I.e., that which comes from a personal, living and fruitful relationship with the Lord
2. For **“in the Lord”** we enjoy:
 - a. Peace with God - **Ro 5:2**

- b. Help in temptations - **1 Co 10:13; Ph 4:13**
 - c. Assurance of God's companionship in time of trial - **He 13:5-6**
3. These are the sort of things which provide a true and lasting joy

[Wouldn't it be wonderful to be able to experience this **"abiding joy"**? Well, why don't we? Why do many of those who have a personal relationship with the Lord often find themselves lacking joy in all circumstances? Perhaps it is because...]

III. THERE ARE OFTEN HINDRANCES TO "ABIDING JOY"

A. MEMORIES OF PAST FAILURES; AWARENESS OF PRESENT FAULTS...

- 1. Such often leaves people in a state of discouragement or depression
- 2. Paul, however, provides the solution in **Ph 3:12-14**
 - a. Realize your imperfection, yet press on to better things!
 - b. Forget your past failures, reach forward to future successes!

B. NATURAL TEMPERAMENT OR DISPOSITION...

- 1. Many people are naturally **"melancholy"**
 - a. Through genetic predisposition toward such an attitude
 - b. Or through environmental influences as we were growing up
- 2. Yet in Christ, we can be transformed (**Ro 12:1-2**) and produce the **"fruit of the Spirit"** which includes **"joy"** - **Ga 5:22**

C. DEPRESSING CIRCUMSTANCES...

- 1. It is easy to be joyful when everything is going well, but when things wrong, well...
- 2. However, we see from the Scriptures that even those times can be a time for rejoicing if we have the right **"perspective"** - **Ja 1:2-4**

D. SYMPATHY WITH OTHERS...

- 1. Certainly, a compassionate heart cannot be untouched by the hardships of others - cf. **Ro 12:15**
- 2. And yet, properly spoken words of comfort and counsel can provide a joyful reprieve from the hardships others bear - cf. **Pr 16:24**

CONCLUSION

- 1. **"Rejoice in the Lord always"...**
 - a. Does not mean one is to be insensitive to the harsh realities of life
 - b. But it does mean that one does not let the dark realities of life blind him to the radiance of joy that is found in the Lord!
- 2. Have you found yourself going through life without the **"abiding joy"** discussed in our text, that joy which Peter himself defines as **"inexpressible"** (**1 Pe 1:8**)?
- 3. If so, then make your relationship with the Lord what it ought to be...
 - a. First by rendering complete obedience to His Will
 - b. And then by letting the counsel of His Spirit-given Word give you the perspectives necessary to **"Rejoice In The Lord Always!"**

The Virtue Of Gentleness

Philippians 4:5

INTRODUCTION

1. Among several general exhortations which Paul includes in this last chapter of his epistle to the Philippians, we find the following admonition:

“Let your gentleness (moderation, KJV) be known be known to all men. The Lord is at hand.” - Ph 4:5

2. The virtue referred to in this verse is a very important one, and well worth the time in this lesson taking a closer look at it.

[We begin by noticing...]

I. THE NATURE OF THIS VIRTUE

A. DEFINITION OF “GENTLENESS” (from Barclay)...

1. The word **epi-ei-kei-a** is one of the most untranslatable words in Greek
2. The difficulty can be seen by the various translations given it:
 - a. Patience (Wycliffe)
 - b. Softness (Tyndale, Cranmer)
 - c. The patient mind (Geneva Bible)
 - d. Modesty (Rheims Bible)
 - e. Forbearance (Revised Version)
 - f. Moderation (King James Version)
 - g. Sweet Reasonableness (Matthew Arnold)

B. DESCRIPTION OF “GENTLENESS” (from Erdmans)...

1. It describes that courtesy and graciousness which should characterize a Christian gentleman
2. The term indicates something of “the power of yielding”
 - a. The ability to give way to the wishes of others
 - b. The poise of soul which enables one to sacrifice his own rights, not by necessity, but out of generosity and sympathy
3. It is the opposite of stubbornness and thoughtlessness
4. It was embodied in the man Jesus Christ - cf. **2 Co 10:1**

C. “GENTLENESS”, THEN... (as defined by Pulpit Commentary)

1. It is the opposite of contention, rigor and severity
2. It is the spirit that enables a man to bear injuries with patience, and not demand all that is rightly his due, for the sake of peace
3. A good example of where this virtue is to applied is seen in **1 Co 6:1-7** (note the willingness to be defrauded enjoined by the apostle Paul)

[Perhaps with a better grasp of the nature of this virtue, let’s now examine...]

II. THE DISPLAY OF THIS VIRTUE

A. IT IS TO BE A PERSONAL QUALITY OF ALL CHRISTIANS...

1. Notice that Paul says “Let **your** gentleness...”
2. Elders especially must display this virtue - **1 Ti 3:3**
3. So also should teachers - **2 Ti 2:24-26** (not the same word used here, but the same idea)
4. Indeed, **all** Christians are to display this virtue - **Ti 3:1-2**
5. For good reason, for it is a part of that “**heavenly wisdom**” which comes from above - **Ja 3:17**

B. IT IS TO BE KNOWN TO ALL MEN...

1. This is the difficult part of the exhortation
 - a. It is easier to be considerate, kind, and gentle toward some persons
 - b. There are others, however, toward whom it is difficult to show a spirit of gentleness
2. The hard task, and the real test, is to display this “**gentleness**” or “**sweet reasonableness**” toward...
 - a. The unkind
 - b. The thankless
 - c. The perverse

[But as we continue on with our text, there is good reason to do so...]

III. THE REASON AND MOTIVE FOR DISPLAYING THIS VIRTUE

A. “THE LORD IS AT HAND”...

1. This may possibly mean “**the Lord is nearby**”
2. Or it could refer to either meeting the Lord at death or at His final coming, both events are always imminent!
3. He who is our Judge is ever watchful, ever aware of our conduct and treatment of others
4. One day we will have to answer to this Judge!

B. THE DANGER OF NOT DISPLAYING “GENTLENESS”...

1. If we are not gentle in our treatment of others, do we expect Him to be gentle in His treatment of us?
2. Remember the “**Parable Of The Unforgiving Servant**”? - **Mt 18:21-35**
3. Also, James warning in **Ja 2:13**

CONCLUSION

1. The display of this virtue has great advantages...
 - a. It can contribute much to the comfort of life and the peace of society, by reducing friction between people - e.g., **Pro 15:1**
 - b. It can contribute to the usefulness of Christians in promoting the gospel of Christ (we demonstrate the “gentleness” found throughout the gospel message)
2. Are we a “**gentle people**”? May we ever be, for “**the Lord is at hand!**”

Speaking of the Lord being at hand, are you living a life pleasing to Him...?

How To Be Free From Anxiety

Philippians 4:6-7

INTRODUCTION

1. If anyone had good reason to be anxious, it could have been the apostle Paul...
 - a. His beloved friends at Philippi were disagreeing with one another - **Ph 4:1-3**
 - b. There were preachers in Rome who were filled with envy and strife, and out to “get” Paul - **Ph 1:15**
 - c. To top it off, Paul himself was under house arrest, awaiting trial and his possible execution!
-- Yet we have seen that throughout this epistle the keynote repeated again and again is “**rejoice!**”
2. Evidently Paul had found the secret of overcoming anxiety, and fortunately for us, he shares that secret in **Ph 4:6-7**

[We shall examine what that secret is, but first, let’s take a closer look at “**anxiety**” itself...]

I. UNDERSTANDING THE NATURE OF ANXIETY

A. DEFINING THE WORD...

1. The word “**anxious**” (careful, KJV) is from “**merimnao**” {**mer-im-nah’-o**}
2. As defined by Thayer...
 - a. It means “**to be pulled in different directions**”
 - b. For example, our hopes pull us in one direction; our fears pull us in the opposite direction
 - c. Thus, to be anxious is to be “pulled apart”!
3. The word “**worry**” (a synonym for anxiety) in its English origins presents a different, yet enlightening picture
 - a. It comes from a word meaning “**to strangle**”
 - b. If you have ever really worried, you know how it does indeed strangle a person!
 - 1) In fact, worry (or anxiety) has definite physical side effects: headaches, neck pains, ulcers, even back pains
 - 2) Worry affects our thinking, our digestion, and even our coordination

B. ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS ON ANXIETY...

1. From a spiritual perspective, anxiety is:
 - a. **Wrong thinking** and **wrong feeling** about circumstances, people and things
 - b. The greatest thief of joy
2. It is not enough for us to tell ourselves, “**Quit being anxious**”, in an effort to stop the thief from stealing our joy
 - a. Anxiety is “an inside job”
 - b. It takes more than good intentions to get the victory over anxiety

[The **antidote** to anxiety is revealed by Paul in our text, which we will now look at closely...]

II. WINNING THE VICTORY OVER ANXIETY

A. THE “ANTIDOTE” IS THE RIGHT KIND OF “PRAYING”...!

1. **In which we pray about “everything”!**
 - a. Like the hymn, Paul counsels us to “take everything to God in prayer”
 - b. To put it another way, “Don’t worry about **anything**, but pray about **everything!**” is Paul’s admonition
 - c. We are prone to pray about the “big things”, and forget to pray about the “little things”
 - 1) But “little things” left unattended grow up to become “big things”
 - 2) Therefore, God would have us talk to Him about “everything”
2. **In which we pray by “prayer and supplication”**
 - a. **“Prayer”** is the general word for making requests known to God
 - 1) It carries the idea of adoration, devotion, and worship
 - 2) Whenever we find ourselves filled with anxiety, our first action ought be to spend time alone with God in prayerful adoration and worship
 - 3) Adoration for God helps us to remember the greatness and majesty of God
 - a) We must remember that He is big enough to solve problems we cannot
 - b) Too often, we rush into His presence and hastily tell Him our needs
 - c) But freedom from anxiety comes when we spend more time on Who He is, rather than on what our problems are!
 - 4) Having spent time in prayerful adoration, we are now ready to move on...
 - b. **“Supplication”** is where we begin making our requests known to God
 - 1) It involves an earnest sharing of our problems and needs
 - 2) Freedom from anxiety does not come from halfhearted, insincere praying!
 - a) While we know that we are not heard for our “much speaking” - **Mt 6:7-8**
 - b) Still we should realize that our Father wants us to be earnest and persistent in our asking - **Mt 7:7-11**
 - 3) An example of this sort of praying is found in **He 5:7**
 - a) Jesus offered up **“prayers and supplications”**
 - b) He did so, **“with vehement cries and tears”**, suggesting true earnestness in making His requests
3. **In which we pray “with thanksgiving”**
 - a. This implies **appreciation** on our part
 - 1) Certainly the Father delights in hearing His children say “Thank you!”
 - 2) Yet so many people are like the nine lepers healed by Jesus - cf. **Lk 17:11-19**
 - 3) Are we eager to ask, but slow to appreciate?
 - b. Note that this thanksgiving is to be **offered at the same time we make our requests!**
 - 1) Doing this serves to remind us of other things God has done and is doing for us
 - 2) Which in turn helps to keep our problems in perspective

B. SUCH “PRAYING” WILL RESULT IN A FORTRESS GUARDING OUR MINDS AND HEARTS...

1. God may not always remove the problems that were the initial cause of our anxiety, but He promises a **“peace which surpasses all understanding”!**
2. It is a peace that the world cannot provide, but He can! - cf. **Jn 14:27; 16:33**
3. It is a peace that **“guards”** (to guard, garrison like a fortress) our “hearts” and “minds”
 - a) Guarding the **heart** (which is susceptible to wrong feeling)
 - b) Guarding the **mind** (which is susceptible to wrong thinking)
4. This does not mean the absence of trials on the outside, but it does mean...
 - a) A quiet confidence within

- b) Regardless of circumstances, people, or things that would otherwise steal our joy!

CONCLUSION

1. This wonderful peace, this freedom from anxiety, is the result of letting our requests be known to God through the right kind of praying...
 - a. Praying about everything
 - b. Praying with prayer and supplication
 - c. Praying with thanksgiving

2. But note well, all this is possible **through** Christ Jesus...! - **Ph 4:7**
 - a. He is the source of every spiritual blessing from God, including the peace that surpasses understanding - cf. **Ep 1:3**
 - b. And we must be **in Christ** if we desire this peace of which Paul writes in our text

3. Do you desire the “peace of God”?
 - a. Then you must be **in Christ** (to see how one gets **into Christ**, consider **Ga 3:26-27**)
 - b. And then you must commune with God frequently in the kind of praying taught by Paul

Are you in Christ? Do you commune with God as you should? If we can assist you in either way...

Christian Meditation

Philippians 4:8

INTRODUCTION

1. Our text for this lesson enjoins upon Christians that they engage in a form of “meditation”:

“Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy -- meditate on these things.” (Ph 4:8)

2. The practice of “meditation” by Christians is not something you might hear frequently discussed...
 - a. It may be that some Christians are simply not aware that they are **commanded** to “meditate”
 - b. It may be that some believe meditation belongs solely to the Eastern religions like Hinduism or Buddhism
3. Yet Paul clearly teaches us to “**meditate on these things**”, and “**meditation**” is certainly a Biblical subject...
 - a. **Isaac** meditated in the field at eventide - **Gen 24:63**
 - b. **Joshua** was charged by God to mediate “day and night” - **Josh 1:8**
 - c. The “**blessed man**” in Psalms 1 is one who meditates - **Psa 1:1-2**
 - d. **David** became wiser than his teachers through meditation - **Psa 119:99**
 - e. Paul commanded **Timothy** to “meditate on these things” - **1 Ti 4:15**
4. But some questions may come to mind...
 - a. **What** does meditation mean for the Christian?
 - b. **Why** should we be concerned about making time to meditate?
 - c. **How** should we meditate?

[This lesson will attempt to provide answers to these questions...]

I. WHAT MEDITATION IS IN THE BIBLE

A. WHAT MEDITATION IN THE BIBLE IS NOT...

1. The kind practiced by many **Eastern religions**
 - a. Like Hinduism, Buddhism, or Transcendental Meditation
 - b. Where the object is to experience truth, peace, or being, that is “inexpressible”
2. The kind practiced by “**Christian mystics**”
 - a. Such as Quakers, and others often found among Catholics and Protestants
 - b. These meditate in order to “experience” God, or to receive some revelation from God
3. Both Eastern and “Christian mystical” meditation usually attempts to empty the mind so as to find or receive truth within (i.e., a “**subjective**” form of meditation)

B. WHAT MEDITATION IN THE BIBLE IS...

1. To dwell or contemplate on some truth or reality already revealed (i.e., an “**objective**” form of meditation)

2. Specifically, the man “after God’s own heart” is one who meditates on such things as:
 - a. The Lord Himself - **Psa 63:6**
 - b. His wonderful Works - **Psa 77:12**
 - c. His revealed Word - **Psa 119:15,23,48,97-99,148**
3. To put it in the words of the apostle Paul, we are to meditate on “**things**”...
 - a. Things that are “true, noble, just pure, lovely, of good report”
 - b. Things that are of any “virtue”, and are “praiseworthy”
4. The **purpose** of such meditation is...
 - a. To nourish man with his understanding of God and His Revealed Will (not to seek for some previously unrevealed truth)
 - b. To give man spiritual joy and strength through such nourishment - cf. **Ps 1:1-3; Isa 40:28-31**

[So there is a very real difference between “Biblical meditation” and that commonly practiced by many religions!

- ◆ Christian meditation dwells on that already revealed in creation or inspired revelation
- ◆ Whereas other forms of meditation are seeking some new truth to be revealed

Understanding the difference, why is Biblical meditation so important?

II. WHY WE SHOULD MEDITATE

A. IT IS A SOURCE OF JOY AND STRENGTH...

1. This we have already seen from such passages like **Psa 1:1-2; Isa 40:28-31**
2. This alone should motivate us to meditate more often

B. IT IS AN IMPORTANT PART OF OUR “TRANSFORMATION”...

1. The goal of the Christian is to become more like Christ - cf. **Ro 8:29**
2. This requires a “**transformation**” - **Ro 12:1-2**
3. But notice that this is possible only by “**renewing the mind**” - **Ro 12:2**
4. This “**renewing**” is possible only when we “**set our minds**” on proper things
 - a. On things above
 - b. Not on things on the earth - **Co 3:1-2**
5. Only then, when our minds are “**set on things above**”, will we be successful in completing the “**transformation**” which includes “**putting off the old man**” and “**putting on the new man**” - cf. **Co 3:1-2** with **Co 3:5-14**

C. MANY FALL BECAUSE THEY MEDITATE ON THE WRONG THINGS...!

1. They “**mind the things of the flesh**”, which leads to “**death**” and “**enmity with God**” - cf. **Ro 8:5-8**
2. Yet even those in the world understand that you cannot be a spiritual person if you “**dwel**” on carnal things
 - a. “Recent studies conducted by a Stanford University research team have revealed that ‘*what we watch*’ does have an effect on our imaginations, our learning patterns, and our behaviors. First we are exposed to new behaviors and characters. Next, we learn or acquire these new behaviors. The last and most crucial step is that we adopt these behaviors as our own. One of the most critical aspects of human development that we

need to understand is the influence of ‘repeated viewing’ and ‘repeated verbalizing’ in shaping our future. The information goes in, ‘harmlessly, almost unnoticed,’ on a daily basis, but we don’t react to it until later, when we aren’t able to realize the basis for our reactions. In other words, our value system is being formed without any conscious awareness on our part of what is happening!” - **Denis Waitley, Seeds Of Greatness, p. 47-48)**

- b. “You are what you watch and think.” (**ibid., p. 45**)
- c. “If a sixty second commercial, by repeated viewing, can sell us a product, then isn’t it possible for a sixty minute soap opera or ‘*smut-com*’, by repeated viewing, to sell us a lifestyle?” (**ibid., p. 47**)

[If Christians are going to succeed, they must set their minds (or meditate) on “the things of the Spirit”, or on “things above, where Christ is”! Only then can they with God’s help “put off the old man” and “put on the new man”. Finally, a few thoughts on...]

III. HOW TO MEDITATE

A. REMEMBER, YOUR MIND IS AFFECTED BY EVEN CASUAL CONTEMPLATION...!

1. Cf. the **Stanford studies**
2. The first step to proper meditation is to be selective in what you watch and read
3. Fill your mind with positive and spiritual thoughts if you really want to:
 - a. “renew the mind”
 - b. “be transformed”
4. It doesn’t have to be restricted to the Bible, as Paul said: **“Whatever things...”**
 - a. There are novels, movies, television shows, etc., that fall into the category of possessing **“virtue”** and being **“praiseworthy”**
 - b. Seek the advice and counsel of other Christians as to what is **“of good report”**
5. So first let your “casual” contemplation be discriminatory!

B. TO REACH THE HEIGHTS OF SPIRITUAL MEDITATION, HEED THE COUNSEL OF THE PSALMS...

1. Make **the Bible your primary focus** for meditation - **Psa 1:2**
2. Read it **contemplatively** every day - **Psa 1:2; 119:15**
3. Read it with a prayer in your heart - cf. **Psa 119:18**
4. As you read, occasionally read it **aloud** to yourself
 - a. The Hebrew word in **Psa 1:2** means **“to mutter”**
 - b. Reading slowly and audibly helps to focus one’s mind on the words
5. As you read, you might **ask yourself** the following questions:
 - a. Is there some truth I should know from this verse?
 - b. How does this passage affect a previously held conviction?
 - c. Is there something I should stop doing in light of this verse?
 - d. Is there a practice I should change?
 - e. Is there a habit I ought to begin?
6. To put it another way: **“Hold the Word of God in your heart until it has affected every phase of your life...this is meditation.”**

CONCLUSION

1. In **Psa 19:14**, we find David praying:

*“Let the words of mouth and the meditation of my heart
Be acceptable in Your sight,
“O Lord, my strength and my redeemer.”*

2. What Paul commands us to do in our text (“**meditate on these things**”) is the means by which we can assure that our meditations will be acceptable in the sight of our Lord!
3. If you are not a Christian, or an erring one, then there are some things in particular upon which you ought to meditate:
- a. What is your standing in God’s sight?
 - b. What would happen if you were to die today?
 - c. What do you need to do to be found in the grace of God?
 - d. Why delay any longer?

Things Seen In Paul

Philippians 4:9

INTRODUCTION

1. A description of our Heavenly Father frequently used by Paul is “**the God of Peace**”...
 - a. “Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen” - **Ro 15:33**
 - b. “And the God of peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly...” - **Ro 16:20**
 - c. “...and the God of love and peace will be with you.” - **2 Co 13:11**
 - d. “Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely...” - **1 Th 5:23**
 - e. “Now may the God of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead...” - **He 13:20**
 - In similar fashion does Paul refer to God in **Ph 4:9** which serves as the text of our lesson
2. In our text, we learn from Paul the key to having the “God of peace” blessing us in our lives
3. It involves doing the “things”...
 - a. Learned from Paul
 - b. Received from Paul
 - c. Heard about Paul
 - d. Seen in Paul
4. What are some of “**The Things Seen In Paul**”, which if we do, will assure that the “God of peace” will be with us?

[The answer can be found both in his epistle to the Philippians and in his other letters. For example, we see...]

I. HIS CONCERN FOR HIS BRETHREN

A. AS EXPRESSED IN PHILIPPIANS...

1. With the case of Eudonia and Syntyche - **Ph 4:1-3**
2. Indeed, with all the brethren there at Philippi - **Ph 1:8-11**

B. ELSEWHERE, PAUL REVEALS HIS CONCERN...

1. For all the churches - **2 Co 11:28-29**
2. For brethren who are weak in faith - cf. **1 Co 8:8-13; Ro 14:14-21; 15:1-3**

[As seen in **Ro 15:3**, this concern for his brethren is simply a reflection of Christ’s concern for us, and therefore certainly worthy of our imitation. Another thing seen in Paul that is worthy of imitation is...]

II. HIS STRIVING FOR PERFECTION

A. TO THE PHILIPPIANS, PAUL WROTE...

1. Of his admission that he was not perfect - **Ph 3:12a**
2. Of his desire to press on, to reach forward, to press toward the goal - **Ph 3:12b-14**

B. TO THE CHURCH AT CORINTH, PAUL REVEALS...

1. That he viewed his Christian life as a **“race”**, a **“boxing match”** - **1 Co 9:24-26**
2. Where there is always room for improvement, lest he become **“disqualified”** - **1 Co 9:27**

[Why this desire for perfection? As revealed in **Ph 3:8-11**, it was part of his “magnificent obsession” to **“gain Christ and be found in Him.”** If we desire the same for us, then we need to have the same desire! Another thing seen in Paul that relates closely to this desire for perfection is...]

III. HIS EFFORTS TO SAVE THE LOST

A. AS EXPRESSED IN HIS EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS...

1. His efforts continued despite being under **“house arrest”** - **Ph 1:12-14**
2. He would willingly offer himself as a martyr if it would help - **Ph 2:17**

B. THE DEGREE TO WHICH HE WOULD GO IS SEEN IN HIS EPISTLES TO THE CORINTHIANS...

1. He made himself a servant to all - **1 Co 9:19-23**
2. He endured much suffering as a minister of Christ and His gospel - **2 Co 11:23-27**

[Even with so much suffering in his efforts to save others, we see yet another thing in Paul that is worthy of emulation...]

IV. HIS JOY IN SUFFERING

A. THIS “JOY” IS ESPECIALLY SEEN IN THE EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS...

1. Which we have seen time and again is an **“epistle of joy”**
2. For example, his joy in Christ being preached, despite his imprisonment and the efforts of false preachers - **Ph 1:12-18** (note especially verse **18**)
3. Even if it meant martyrdom, he viewed it as a reason to rejoice, and wanted them to rejoice with him! - **Ph 2:17-18**

B. TO THE ROMANS, HE EXPLAINED WHY HE WOULD “REJOICE IN TRIBULATIONS”...

1. Such trials and sufferings would produce **“perseverance”** - **Ro 5:3**
2. Which in turn would produce **“character”** and **“hope”** - **Ro 5:4**

CONCLUSION

1. Such were some of the qualities seen in Paul, that we also learn from him if we take his epistles seriously
2. And we should, if we desire the **“God of peace”** to be with us and He clearly was with Paul throughout his life and service as a disciple of Jesus Christ!
3. Are the things seen in Paul, also seen in us? Are we living in such a way that we could say to others:

“The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you”?

4. In view of such passages as **1 Ti 4:12** and **Ti 2:6-7**, where we are called to be an example to

others, we should!

May the **“God of peace”** help us to live in such a way that we can be an example as Paul was!

Paul's Thank-You Note

Philippians 4:10-23

INTRODUCTION

- 1) In our study of Philippians, we come to point where Paul mentions the occasion which prompted the writing of this epistle
- 2) In our text we find an expression of Paul's gratitude, a "**Thank-You Note**" - **Ph 4:10-23**

[In these concluding verses, there are a number of notable things I would like to emphasize. [The first being...]

I. THE PHILIPPIANS' GENEROSITY

A. AS DESCRIBED BY PAUL...

1. Notice especially **verses 10, 14-18**
2. Clearly they demonstrated an **ongoing support** and concern for the apostle
 - a. When Paul first departed from **Macedonia**, they shared with him
 - b. Before leaving Macedonia, while still in **Thessalonica**, they sent aid time and again
 - c. Now at last, while in **Rome**, they sent a gift by the hands of **Epaphroditus**

B. WHAT A WONDERFUL PICTURE OF FELLOWSHIP BETWEEN A CHURCH AND A PREACHER...!

1. The kind that ought to exist today!
2. Where churches and preachers continue to maintain their fellowship in the gospel of Christ as the need calls for it, long after the preacher has gone on to other works
3. How sad, that in many cases preachers leave a congregation in such a way that there is no desire on the part of the congregation to maintain such fellowship!

[Another notable thing in this passage is...]

II. PAUL'S CONTENTMENT

A. AS EXPRESSED BY PAUL...

1. His expression of thanks was not to hint that he was in great need - **Ph 4:11a**
2. For he was quite content with the "state" or condition he found himself in - **Ph 4:11b**
3. This "contentment" was something he had learned - **Ph 4:11b-12**

B. WHAT WAS THE "KEY" TO PAUL'S CONTENTMENT...?

1. As expressed in **Ph 4:13**, it involved **strength** given by the Lord
 - a. Who enabled him to be content whether full or hungry
 - b. Who enabled him to be content whether abounding or in need
2. Part of this strength from the Lord may have been the **proper perspective** which Paul likely received from the Lord
 - a. The proper perspective about life and death - cf. **Ph 1:21-24**
 - b. The proper perspective about the true necessities in life - cf. **1 Ti 6:6-8**

[Having mentioned the strength given by the Lord, let's look a little closer at...]

III. CHRIST'S POWER

A. THERE IS WONDERFUL POWER AVAILABLE FOR THE CHRISTIAN...!

1. As Paul indicates, this power enables one to do all things necessary in serving the Lord - **Ph 4:13**
2. We learn more about this wonderful power in Paul's epistle to the Ephesians...
 - a. It is power about which Paul wanted them to know - **Ep 1:18-19**
 - b. It is power that is in accordance with the power used to raise Jesus from the dead, and to seat Him at the right hand of God! - **Ep 1:19-21**
 - c. Paul attributes such power to the Holy Spirit, dwelling in the Christian - cf. **Ro 8:11-14**
 - d. He prayed that God would strengthen the Ephesians with such power, which is described as being able to accomplish great things - **Ep 3:16, 20-21**
3. In other words, with the Spirit as the instrumental agent, God and Christ enables the Christian to do all that he or she is required to do!

B. THE RAMIFICATION OF THIS POWER...

1. We are not alone in our efforts to "work out our own salvation" - cf. **Ph 2:12-13**
2. There is no excuse for not doing what God desires!
3. When we fall, it is usually a problem of the will, not the ability! (unlike those outside of Christ, where it is a problem of ability - cf. **Ro 7:18,22-25**)
4. For Christians who sin knowingly, it is not that they **can't** do the will of God, but **won't!**
 - a. and therefore are always in need of the cleansing blood of Jesus
 - b. But when we know the will of God, there are no excuses for not doing it!

[What a wonderful blessing for those who are in Christ, to have that power! But there is even a hint of more blessings in our text, as we notice what is said about...]

IV. GOD'S RICHES

A. AS DEFINED BY PAUL...

1. These are "**riches in glory**" which God supplies by Jesus Christ - **Ph 4:19**
 - a. I.e., one must be "**in Christ**" to enjoy these "riches"
 - b. Indeed, "in Christ" is the realm in which God provides every spiritual blessing - cf. **Ep 1:3-13** (note the use of the phrase "in Christ", or "in Him")
2. But God provides not only spiritual needs, but "**all your needs**"
 - a. Which includes the necessities of life, like food and clothing
 - b. As Jesus Himself taught in **Mt 6:30-33**

B. WITH "RICHES" LIKE THESE...

1. How can we not be content?
2. We have an abundance of "**spiritual**" blessings, and an assurance "**physical**" needs, how could we ever be less than satisfied?

[May God forgive us when we take these "riches" lightly and begin to feel discontent with what we have! Finally, we note...]

V. THE SAINT'S GREETINGS

A. AS READ HERE IN PHILIPPIANS...

1. Paul first sends his greetings - **Ph 4:21a**
2. The brethren with him (Luke? Timothy?) send their greetings - **Ph 4:21b**
3. Then “all the saints...especially those who are of Caesar’s household” send their greetings - **Ph 4:22**

B. THE SIMPLE ACT OF GREETING CAN SERVE AN IMPORTANT FUNCTION...

1. Clearly, Paul thought so - cf. **Ro 16:3-16, 21-23**
2. Some possible benefits of greeting one another:
 - a. Greeting one another expresses our love and appreciation for one another
 - b. Greeting one another frequently (in letter or in person) nourishes the relationship we have as brethren in Christ
3. Note that Paul desired to greet “**every**” saint in Christ Jesus; no room for favoritism here! - **Ph 4:21**
4. How we greet (or fail to greet) each other in our assemblies reveals a lot about ourselves
 - a. Either that we are caring and loving without partiality
 - b. Or cold and insensitive, except to those in our “clique”!

CONCLUSION

1. Such are some the things we can glean from a simple “**thank-you note**”...
 - a. The Philippians’ generosity
 - b. Paul’s contentment
 - c. Christ’s power
 - d. God’s riches
 - e. The saints’ greetings
2. What this reveals is the high quality of life experienced by those in Christ!
 - a. Who despite the sort of circumstances faced by Paul...
 - b. Could still feel and write such a letter as the epistle to the Philippians!
3. As we close this study on this wonderful epistle, I leave with you two words: **glory** and **grace**...
 - a. “Now to our God and Father be **glory** forever and ever. Amen.” - **Ph 4:20**
 - b. “The **grace** of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.” - **Ph 4:23**

Have you received the wonderful **grace** of our Lord in your life, by obeying His gospel? Are you living so as to offer **glory** to God, both in word and deed?

May such portions of God’s Word like the Epistle to the Philippians inspire you to do both!