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Joy in the camp

A Bible Study— The Book of Philippians



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**Joy in the Camp**

**A Study of**

**Paul’s Epistle to the Church in Philippi**

**Encouraging the Saints**

**One of the most encouraging letters Paul wrote to his brothers and sisters in Christ was the epistle written to the precious recipients of God’s grace and mercy in Philippi. Although the church at Philippi was not wealthy in terms of finances and other tangible resources, this church was one that knew what it meant to “give with the heart” and “give with no obligations for a return on their investment.” However, their giving was not invested for present day dividends, their giving was propelled by their desire to encourage future recipients of God’s grace. Their return would come only in seeing souls coming to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ, seeing the preaching of the gospel carried to other people/nations, and in seeing others blessed with the grace provided by knowing the Lord Jesus Christ. By giving their monetary gifts and heart-felt support to Paul and those preaching the gospel, these precious lay church members in Philippi knew that they were sharing in the spreading of the gospel all over the world. Only the Holy Spirit can reveal this revelation to man. Man’s heart has to be changed before he can understand the joys of sharing, caring, and bearing the burdens of the lost and dying world. They knew that the only way to multiply is to divide. This was a new concept; dividing the wealth to gain new converts into the kingdom. Their hearts had been changed and their attitudes revealed a loving and grateful spirit of excellence in all they tried to accomplish. What they could not do physically, they would provide the means for others to accomplish it through prayer and financial support. Paul knew their hearts. Paul knew their genuine interest in seeing souls won to Christ for the kingdom’s sake.**

**It was Winston Churchill who said, “We make a living by getting and we make a life by giving.” As we study God’s Word penned by Paul and inspired by the Holy Spirit, we gain knowledge and a perspective of real “heart giving” as we study the Book of Philippians. Prepare your hearts as we learn the benefits of “Giving Living” in a world where this concept was rare and even unbelievable in some of the cultures of the day. Is it any different in the culture of this day? Join us as we read the words of Paul, meditate on them, and heed to the truth of his teachings.**

***“Whoever has ears to hear, let him hear what the Spirit says…” (Revelation 2:7a).***

**Inspiration for the Title:**

**Joy in the Camp**

**The title to this study is based on the Old Testament Scripture, 1 Samuel 4:5-7 (NIV), *“When the ark of the Lord’s covenant came into the camp, all Israel raised such a great shout that the ground shook. 6Hearing the uproar, the Philistines asked, ‘What’s all this shouting in the Hebrew camp?’ When they learned that the ark of the Lord had come into the camp, 7the Philistines were afraid. ‘A god hascome into the camp,’ they said. ‘Oh no! Nothing like this has happened before.’”***

***Although I very seldom use the Living Bible for Scripture reference, it clearly states my purpose for using the specific title for this study. The Living Bible states in 1 Samuel 4:5-7, “When the Israelis saw the Ark coming, their shout of joy was so loud that it almost made the ground shake! “What’s going on?’ the Philistines asked. ‘What’s all the shouting about over in the camp of the Hebrews?’ When they were told it was because the Ark of the Lord had arrived, they panicked. ‘God has come into their camp!’ They cried out. ‘Woe upon us, for we have never had to face anything like this before!’”***

***There are 270 specific Scriptures with the word “camp” in the New International Version of the Bible. Only one time of the 270 Scriptures does it depict the camp of the Lord being one of joy and a time of celebration. I want my camp (my home) to be one of joy and inhabited with shouts of praise in celebrating the glorious truth of God’s Word, His salvation, and His care and concern for His children. With that, I begin the wonderful study in the Book of Philippians. “Rejoice” and “Joy” are used 16 times in the book. I wish I could express how I feel about my salvation experience and the knowledge of understanding my standing with the Lord. Jesus died for me…and you! He now is alive and sits at the right hand of Jehovah God interceding for all who have been washed in the blood of the Lamb…Jesus, the Christ…the Resurrected One! What a reason to shout for joy until the earth shakes and our hearts are overwhelmed with such love.***

***Come join me as we joyously, yet reverently, study the Word of God. If the Scriptures in Philippians don’t make you shout for joy, then your joy stick is not tuned to the right channel. Peter, the Apostle, puts joy in the right perspective when he wrote,******“These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. 8Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, 9for you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls,” 1 Peter 1:7-9***

***Preface:***

As most Christians know, the full story of Paul’s relationship and work with the Philippians started some twenty centuries ago and the benefits from their friendship and fellowship continues today. How could it have started some 2000 years ago? Well, a story has to have a beginning and an end. Jesus Christ, the Messiah, God’s only begotten Son, initiated the story and will be the One to end the story as He takes Paul, the church at Philippi, and the glorious and beautiful bride of Christ (all who know Jesus Christ) beyond the vail of time into an eternity with the Father. The Philippian church is a part of that great vast number of saints who will be on that journey with us into eternal glory. The story continues with Paul and any other Christian who carries the cross of Jesus to others. It is an ongoing story of which Paul carried to many cities of the world of his time.

It was Paul, an itinerant tent maker, who was thrown into prison for allegedly creating a public disturbance in Rome who started this journey with the Philippian residents of that era. While in the prison, Paul took it upon himself to use the time to write many epistles to churches around the Mediterranean. This included some letters going to Asiatic established churches as well.

Taking the time to write, we, as modern day recipients of these precious letters, are blessed beyond measure as were the specific churches in which the letters were addressed. Today we cannot understand how difficult it must have been for Paul and the authors of the New Testament to acquire enough paper to pen some of the greatest words to individuals and churches while in prison and/or while being under horrific persecution.

Obtaining the resources to pen such historic and life-changing words was a miracle in itself. However, the preservation of these words (Words approved and anointed by God) can only be explained as something that only God can and did do. The plan by God to accomplish the penning of God’s revelation to man through man’s experiences and God’s revelation should be enough of a miracle to cause the Atheist, the sceptic, and anyone not understanding God’s wisdom and power, to marvel at this preservation of these wonderful words of life. Although the skeptic might not see the words as “wonderful” or “life-changing”, the simple truth of its penmanship and preservation through the years is a spectacular, marvelous, and historic event.

To help one understand the validity of the Word of God (the HOLY Bible), one must see the truth and absolute miraculous power of God Almighty as to helping to preserve the “Wonderful Words of Life” of which we are blessed. The Bible can be verified by external events such as archeology, geography, customs, politics, culture, known world history and writings in other ancient texts. In all aspects of these external event verification, the Bible has been proved to be accurate in all respects. New discoveries always support it, never vice versa. It has never once been proven faulty on single detail or fact, although many have mightily tried and failed.

These 66 separate books were written by about 40 different writers: Kings, such as David and Solomon; Statesmen, such as Daniel and Nehemiah; and Priests, such as Ezra, men taught in the wisdom of Egypt, such as Moses; men taught in the Jewish Law, such as Paul; herdsmen, such as Amos; tax collectors, such as Matthew; unlearned and ignorant fishermen, such as Peter and John; a physician, such as Luke; and mighty overseers, such as Isaiah, Ezekiel and Zechariah.

Where were these books written? Different parts of the world, such as:

* The desert of the Sinai,
* In Arabia,
* In the hills and towns of Palestine,
* In the courts of the Temple,
* In the schools of the prophets at Bethel and Jericho,
* In the palace of Shushan in Persia,
* On the banks of the Chebar River in Babylonia,
* In the dungeons of Rome, and
* On the lonely island of Patmos in the Aegean Sea.

Yet one of the most amazing and miraculous things about all this, is that after 1600 years and 40 different writers, they all talked about the same thing, with no contradictions and no errors (in the original languages of the Hebrew and Greek). They all spoke about the plan of God for man. Most of these men never even read the writings of the others. Everything recorded between the opening pages of the book of Genesis and the closing pages of Revelation was divinely inspired by the Holy Spirit.

Trying to preserve the old cities and its architectural structures from that era has been a feat in itself. To preserve the writings from that time is even more of a phenomenon. Paper of today lasts a few short years before turning brittle, crisp, and subject to the volatile forces of nature. Even photos start turning yellow and details of the pictures and/or writing on the photos yield to the elements (light and air) over a few decades.

The penning of God’s revelation to the world has always been seen as a miracle by those who have faith and live their lives by faith in the One who created life and the One who said, “You can live it with joy.” Faith in the One who gives us life gives us joy unspeakable and full of glory. Only the Creator of life, liberty, and the idea of pursuing life with joy can do that for the individual.

Few people would recognize who the Emperor of the day was when Paul was writing these words to the church at Philippi. It was Nero. Yes, that Nero who has been characterized as the one who twiddled his thumbs while Rome burned. However, Nero had accomplished many great feats as a ruler. Although a mad-man at a later stage in his emperorship, he was really a generous ruler when he was young in his tenure as an emperor. He was an artist as well as one who sought notoriety as an actor. One thing we do know about him is that he was a prolific author. However, there is nothing whatsoever that remains of his writings. The common, every day folk don’t really know much about Nero, apart from historians, classicists, and those who studied the people of this era. Nero killed those who sought to take him out of office and he was a haughty ruler later in his reign; thinking more of himself as a great man of power who wanted no one to challenge his methods of judging himself and others. The writings of Paul, the apostle, however, are well known by most Christians as well as those studying Christian history and the writings known as the New Testament or New covenant manuscripts. Isn’t it odd that Nero and Paul are looked at today as opposites as we look at their accomplishments and their legacies? One was emperor and one was a prisoner of his time. One’s writings survived many generations while one’s writings are never even mentioned in today’s culture. As T. R. Glover writes and puts it in proper perspective… “people now call their dogs 'Nero' and their sons 'Paul'.”

One of the important cities in the region which Paul was going to on his second missionary journey was the city of Philippi. We might wonder why Paul in particular went to Philippi, but as we analyze particularly the book of Acts we find out that Paul didn't just choose himself to go to Philippi. In fact, if you look at Acts, particularly chapter 16 and the chapters before it, you will find that Paul's intention was to go to a place called Bithynia. But, the Lord didn't want him to go there. In fact we read that the Spirit of Jesus stopped Paul entering Bithynia and led him to go to a place called Troas. When he was in Troas, asleep one night, God the Holy Spirit gave to him a vision. He saw a man standing before him, a Macedonian man, and that man was calling to Saul (Paul), 'Come over and help us, come over and help us'. In obedience, Paul, Silas, Timothy and Luke set sail to Macedonia. From Macedonia they travelled into Philippi. Isn’t the Spirit of God miraculously wonderful in the way he plans our steps? They are ordered of God when we yield to His will.

We read in the book of Acts that their stay in Philippi was quite short but it was very eventful. From reading the Word of God, we find that Paul first went to the synagogue in the town as he entered to make temporary residence. However, in Philippi, there was no synagogue in Philippi. This was probably because there wasn't enough Jewish men in the city to warrant a synagogue.

Just outside the city gate beside a river, however, there was a group of women; Jewish women, some of whom were Gentile proselytes. These were Gentiles who wanted to worship the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. They were gathered together to pray. Isn’t that such a precious truth found even in today’s Christian culture; women coming together to pray? Women have carried the burdens of the day to the Lord pleading the cases for their homes and their Christian leaders to stand firm in the faith day after day. If a census were taken of today’s churches we would find that the War Room (Prayer closet) is made up of the women of the church. I thank God for the women who have tender hearts for the lost, the hurting, and the depressed. What would the church do without these warriors of faith who lead out in combating against the true enemy and his army, Satan and his evil cohorts? Men of the Church – give thanks for these warriors of faith. Love them for their steadfast trust in Jehovah God and His Son, Jesus, the Messiah; our Savior and friend. These women have a sincere, genuine, selfless love for Jesus and are standing in the gap for the preservation of our homes, churches, nation, and the world.

Because the men of the city strongly detested the teachings of Paul and his following, Paul had to leave the city. As he left the city, he left behind him a diverse group of converts. One of those converts was Lydia, a seller of purple, whose heart the Lord opened. In Acts 16, the story is told of Lydia’s salvation and her baptism. Her family followed her faith experience and were also baptized. We know the famous story in the same chapter of Acts the Philippian jailer, probably a Roman guard, who was gloriously saved along with his household. Seeing and believing, convicted by the Holy Spirit, yielding to the pulling down of strongholds, these people, one by one, came to know the Savior, Jesus the Christ. Also, the slave girl mentioned in the same chapter most likely was converted to Christ also. This diverse group of people in Philippi became the first Christian church of Philippi. They possibly met in the home of Lydia since she was a wealthy and prosperous businesswoman who probably had the largest house on the block. This team of young converts to Christ in the city of Philippi were all from varied and different circumstances of life and backgrounds. What glorious ways the Lord puts together to form His Church! Praise God for whom all blessings flow!

It was the first Church in Europe, people converted from different backgrounds, different traditions, even different cultures. You would imagine that in the midst of persecution from outside there would have also been problems inside. As in the churches of today, Paul was calling for them to all work together for the cause of Christ. The task was not easy. In fact, we know from the letter from Paul to the church at Philippi that the task was extremely difficult.

**Christianity today is no different. There are different denominations, changing cultures, different views on Scriptural passages, different backgrounds, and different ideas on how to worship, how to win the lost, and how to live the Christian life with all the problems of today. Hopefully, as we study the Word of God found in the Epistle to the Church at Philippi, we will come to the conclusion that we need the Spirit’s help as much or more today than in our forefather’s time.**

**How do we live the life of the Christian and still enjoy the pleasures God intended for us? How do we hold fast to the faith without compromising with the traditions of man as well as being tempted to yield to the cultures of the day?**

**Philippians is a book calling for joy in the times of stress and stressing true joy in times of trouble. Wow! With that knowledge, let us begin our study in the book of Philippians.**

**NOTES: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Suggestions for Teaching—Topical/verse by verse study of the Book of Philippians:**

**I have placed each bible study in a format in which the teacher can make copies for self and/or student. Usually, each study is designed for a teacher/facilitator to present a 40-45 minute lesson utilizing the materials/outline for each section. This would allow a study for a Sunday morning Equip class or a Home Bible study to be effectively taught. The outlines are to be used as is or to be used as a possible guideline for the teacher to use his/her own materials, thoughts, and stories to enhance the varied types of cultures, interests, and backgrounds of the class members.**

**Please feel free to make copies of the materials and use as necessary for your class.**

**If you prefer to copy and input your own stories, add and remove portions of the lesson, and/or make other changes to the document in any way, you can send the scanned copy to a Word document and then make changes as necessary. Most Equip/Sunday School facilitators prefer to add blanks to each session as the Scriptures are taught. This keeps the class alert as the teacher provides the words to fill in the blanks.**

**Blessings to you as you begin this study of the Book of Philippians.**

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**A Bible Study…the Epistle to the Church at Philippi**

**Session 1: Introduction to the Book of PhilippiansTop of Form**

Bottom of Form



Ruins of Ancient Philippi.  De Agostini / Getty Images

**What is the Theme of the Book?**

The joy of the Christian experience is the dominant theme running through the book of Philippians. The words "joy" and "rejoice" are used 16 times in the epistle.

**Why did the Apostle Paul write the letter?**  To express his gratitude and affection for the Philippian church, his strongest supporters in ministry.

*Note: A letter is a one-way conversation we get to read or hear. It is like a telephone call to someone on the other end and there is another person listening to the one way conversation of the one in the room. The one that reads a letter or the one that is listening to the person talking on the phone can only speculate what is being said on the other end and why it is being said. We have this wonderful epistle as well as others written by Paul. We can speculate and have some idea as to why the epistle was written and, maybe even guess as to who all were really being attentive to the letter. Since it is Scripture, however, we must depend on the Holy Spirit to lead and direct us into the truth. Was Paul speaking to Lydia, the seller of purple, her family…or the jailer and his family who were saved while in prison at Philippi; or, was it the slave girl who was probably saved while Paul was ministering in Philippi? What were the women* (*Euodia and Syntyche) in chapter 4 in disagreement about? We can only speculate. However, we can enjoy the epistle’s message and how it especially reveals to us our own fallacies, broken relationships, etc. Then we must depend on the Spirit to reveal what it is teaching and inspiring us to do in our lives. The Holy Spirit is such a wonderful teacher!*

**When did Paul write the letter?**

Traditionally, scholars agree that Paul drafted the epistle during his two years of house arrest in Rome. He himself had established the church in Philippi approximately 10 years prior, during his 2nd missionary journey recorded in Acts 16.

*“From there we traveled to Philippi, a Roman colony and the leading city of that districtof Macedonia. And we stayed there several days.” (Acts 16:1)*

**Notes for those studying this letter:**

* **Paul’s tender love for the believers in Philippi is apparent in this “most personal” of all Paul's writings.**
* **The church had sent gifts to Paul while he was in chains. The gifts were delivered by Epaphroditis, a leader in the Philippian church who ended up assisting Paul with the ministry in Rome.**
* **At some point while serving with Paul, Epaphroditus became severely ill and nearly died.**
* **After his recovery, Paul sent Epaphroditus back to Philippi carrying with him the letter to the Philippian church.**

**As in every letter Paul wrote, Paul had additional information to give to the readers of his treasured epistles. He did the same with the church at Philippi:**

1. **Besides expressing thanks to the believers in Philippi for their gifts and support, Paul took the opportunity to encourage the church concerning practical matters such as humility and unity.**
2. **He warned them about "Judaizers" or Jewish legalists.**

*Note: Judaizers is predominantly a Christian term, derived from the Greek verb "live according to Jewish customs". This term is most widely known from its single use in the Greek New Testament (Galatians 2:14) where Paul publicly challenges Peter for compelling gentile converts to early Christianity to "judaize".*

*One who has been “Judaized", refers to a Christian who has accepted the necessity of adhering to the Mosaic Laws or to specific laws that are believed to be superseded, such as circumcision, Sabbath observance, or observation of the Passover.*

1. **He gave instructions on how to live a joyous Christian life.**
2. **He conveyed a powerful message about the secret of** **contentment.** Although he had faced severe hardships, poverty, beatings, illness, and even his current imprisonment, in every circumstance Paul had learned to be content.
3. **The source of his joyous contentment was rooted in knowing Jesus Christ:**

*“I once thought these things were valuable, but now I consider them worthless because of what Christ has done. Yes, everything else is worthless when compared with the infinite value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have discarded everything else, counting it all as garbage, so that I could gain Christ and become one with him” (Philippians 3:7-9a, NLT).*

***Where Paul chose a place wherein to preach the gospel, he always did so with the eye of a strategist. He would choose one which was not only important in of itself, but was also the key point of a whole area. To this day, many of Paul’s preaching centers are still great road centers, railway junctions, or ports for shipping trade.***

*Today we do the same when we look for the best location for a place of business (exits, entrances, residential clientele); and, if we are looking for a place to establish and build a church, we do the same as Paul; i.e. how many other churches are in the area, how many potential believers (apartments, number of residents in area, relevancy of evangelistic style preaching), and the potential need for Jesus in the cultural climate of the area in which we are looking. Although we lean and glean from the Holy Spirit’s leading to certain areas, we still need to make wise decisions for the Lord’s sake.*

**The City of Philippi—**

* **A Roman colony, Philippi was situated in Macedonia, or current-day Northern Greece.**
* **The city was named after Philip II, the father of Alexander the Great. Founded around 368 B.C.**
* **One of the major trade routes between Europe and Asia.**
* **Early history state that in the neighborhood of Philippi there were gold and silver mines.**
* **A chief commercial center with a mixture of different nationalities, religions and social levels. Where there is silver and gold, multitudes of people can be found. “The possibility of riches has a pull on people.” One of the greatest battles a Christian has as he is facing trials and temptations is, of course, “the love of money, prestige, and power.”**
* **One of the great battles of history was fought in this area due to the location, the wealth, and the trade possibilities. Here…Antony defeated Brutus and Cassius, and thereby decided the future of the Roman Empire.**
* **Retired military generals, heroic soldiers of the Roman Empire came here to settle down with their families. Very proud and arrogant were many of these folk. They never lost their glorious pride…even in defeat.**
* **Founded by Paul in approximately 52 AD, the church in Philippi was made up mostly of Gentiles.**
* **Philippi was an answer to prayer to a preacher who wanted to proclaim the gospel. Philippi was ripe unto harvest.**

**“When someone is introduced to Jesus and they humble themselves to His authority, they are the best of soldiers in God’s army.” From arrogant pride to a rejoicing, anointed pride in the Salvation offered to him or her by Jesus, the Christ, they are totally absorbed in Jesus’ unconditional love.**

Note: A soldier realizes the importance of respect for authority. They have lived it with a “Yes, Sir!...No, Sir!” all of their adult life. Honoring the One who has released him from the shackles of seeing or doing evil makes him a choice candidate for God’s chosen ones.

**Do we realize the significance of being free? Do we realize that freedom means a total “giving in” to the authority of Jesus Christ?**

**Paul was so proud of the church at Philippi. However, even with their support of Paul and giving to the work of Jesus Christ, the church had a problem of unity.**

* **Paul speaks about the Judaizers who were causing the church members to question the authority of Paul and question their freedom in Christ (true path through Jesus, i.e. Jesus is enough). Philippians 3:2**
* **Two women who were not in one accord (Philippians 4:2).**

**All in all, Paul was very happy to encourage and lift up the church at Philippi.**

**Questions to consider before we get into the verse by verse study of Philippians:**

1. **Why didn’t Paul lay hands on Epaphraditus for his healing?**

He probably did (no Scripture letting us know); we must remember…God is the healer, not the person laying hands on the individual for healing. Some are healed, some are not…but all healings are for the glory of God.

1. **Why were good Christian women quarreling and disagreeing among themselves?**

They are human; we are not perfect. The church members will disagree; that is why we have various denominations. We can even learn some spiritual truths through disagreements.

1. **Do we see that Paul is wise in the way he counsels the church at Philippi?**

*He never chastises without seeing the positive points of a group of believers (church). He commends and reprimands. He challenges and provides corrective applications to each and every problem.*

*I have gained great insight from this method of counsel. Whether we are speaking to an individual or a group, we need to point out the positive traits and characteristics before we give a reprimand or a need for corrective action. I have learned that the recipient of a reprimand listens and learns from an individual if he or she feels that the counselor/teacher/supervisor is not against him, but is one that desires to see a positive change in areas where it is needed.*

*Job 29:21, “People listened to me expectantly, waiting in silence for my counsel.”*

*Psalm 16:7, “I will praise the Lord, who counsels me; even at night my heart instructs me.”*

*Psalm 32:8, “I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my loving eye on you.”*

1. **Why was the church at Philippi not one of the seven churches mentioned in the Book of Revelation (chapters 2-3)?**

**Possible answers:**

* **John wanted to use the churches in which he knew were established Christian churches as those representing the world! He did not know that much about the Church at Philippi.**
* **The seven churches mentioned were on a postal route at the time when the Book of Revelation was penned. John knew that by calling out the churches where there were means to distribute to other areas of the world, the message from the One Who makes life possible would be made known to all areas of the globe.**
* **God, the Father, gave Jesus, the Son of God, the revelation to give to His servants via an angel who gave the prophecy and detailed information to John who testified as to everything he saw (Revelation 1:1-4). John just penned the prophecy provided him by the Angel of the Lord. Why the Church at Philippi was not one of the churches; only God Himself knows.**

*Note: I lean toward the latter answer. The Spirit of God reveals to the servants of God as to what to say and what to write.*

*2 Timothy 3:16, “****All Scripture is God-breathed*** *and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness,”*

**NOTES: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Session 2. What do you remember about me? What do I remember about you?**

**The real HEART of the Book of Philippians is *“TO REMEMBER*” and Remember with “Joy.”**

*Philippians 1:1, “Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, to all the saints in Christ Jesus at Philippi, together with the overseers and deacons:”*

 **“Paul’s word for “servants” (douloi) does not refer to hired household help but is the term commonly used in ancient times for “slaves.”**

In the Old Testament the term “slave” sometimes appears as a title of honor to indicate the special relationship of great heroes like Moses, Joshua, and David to God (Josh. 14:7; 24:29; Ps. 89:3).

In the Greco-Roman context of Paul and his Philippian readers, it would have had unmistakable overtones of humility and submission.

Paul’s readers would probably have understood the term as Paul used it here to refer to people conscripted into the service of Christ instead of into service to sin (Rom. 6:16 – 23; Gal. 4:1 – 9; 5:1).

**To all the saints—To all those consecrated to God—To those who are in Christ Jesus**. The Greek word for saints is *hagios*, which literally means “holy.” However, in the right sense of the word used here, it would mean all those who have been changed, who are different, and who are set apart.

What makes the Christian different from other people is that they are people who are consecrated to God because of their special relationship to Jesus Christ—and that is what every Christian should be.

*“But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do;for it is written: “Be holy, because I am holy,” (1 Peter 1:15-16).*

***Philippians 1:2, “Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ”.***

**Grace and peace, two words that every Christian should rejoice in**. It was grace that saved us when we did not deserve it. It is peace that we have when we know that God has accepted us because we have accepted His Son and the actions both took to redeem us. Acknowledging that God is the Father and Jesus Christ as His Son is imperative in understanding where grace and peace comes from.

**Philippians 1:3-11,** *“I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus. It is right for me to feel this way about all of you, since I have you in my heart and, whether I am in chains or defending and confirming the gospel, all of you share in God’s grace with me. God can testify how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus. And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ—to the glory and praise of God.”*

**—Note that *remembrance and gratitude* are bound up together. According to Paul, he only remembered the good attributes from his time with them and that he has happy memories of them as they have been in partnership with him to further the gospel.**

It is not something that has diminished, it is something that Paul saw and felt from the first day of their partnership in Christ until the present.

**Remembrance with joy. Now…this is Christian Joy!**

**Christian JOY is painted throughout the Book of Philippians.**

**Let us look at this picture. There is the:**

1. **Joy of Christian prayer** (1:4*), “In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy”*—the joy of bringing those we love to the mercy seat of God.
2. **Joy that Jesus Christ is preached** (1:18), *“But what does it matter? The important thing is that in every way, whether from false motives or true, Christ is preached. And because of this I rejoice.”*—Adding, even multiplying people into the Kingdom by the preaching of Jesus Christ.
3. **Joy of Faith** (1:25), *“Convinced of this, I know that I will remain, and I will continue with all of you for your progress and joy in the faith, 26so that through my being with you again your boasting in Christ Jesus will abound on account of me.”*—If Christianity does not make a man happy, it will not make him anything at all. Faith is believing you already have what you can’t see and feel.
4. **Joy of seeing Christians in fellowship together** (2:2*), “then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind.”*—There is peace for no one where there are broken human relationships and strife between individuals. There is not s lovelier sight than a family linked in love to each other or a Church whose members are one with each other because they are one in Christ Jesus their Lord.
5. **Joy of suffering for Christ** (2:17), *“But even if I am being poured out like a drink offering on the sacrifice and service coming from your faith, I am glad and rejoice with all of you.”*—In the hour of martyrdom while in the flames Polycarp prayed, “I thank thee, O Father, that thou hast judged me worthy of this hour.” Would we be willing to be baptized with the suffering Jesus went through?

*Jesus said to them, “You don’t know what you are asking! Are you able to drink from the bitter cup of suffering I am about to drink? Are you able to be baptized with the baptism of suffering I must be baptized with?” (Mark 10:38)…This was said when John and James, sons of Zebedee, asked to sit at Jesus right hand and left hand when he (Jesus) came into glory.*

1. **Joy of the news of (or from) the loved one** (2:28), *“Therefore I am all the more eager to send him, so that when you see him again you may be glad and I may have less anxiety.*”—Life is full of separations, and there is always joy when news comes to us of those loved ones from whom we are temporarily separated. Joy can come with a postage stamp, an email, a phone call. It is a choice.
2. **Joy of Christian hospitality** (2:29), *“So then, welcome him in the Lord with great joy, and honor people like him,”*—The open door policy for the Christian who is hurting. Be hospitable, but always be attentive to what the Lord and good common sense tells you.
3. **Joy of the man in Christ** (3:1), “*Further, my brothers and sisters, rejoice in the Lord! It is no trouble for me to write the same things to you again, and it is a safeguard for you.”*—It is human nature to be happy when we are with the person whom we love; and Christ is the lover of our souls from whom nothing in time or eternity can ever separate us.
4. **Joy of the man who has won one soul for Christ** (4:1), *“Therefore, my brothers and sisters, you whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord in this way, dear friends!*”—The Philippians are Paul’s joy and crown, for he was the means of bringing them to Jesus Christ. For the Christian, evangelism is not a duty; it is a joy.
5. **Joy in a gift** (4:10), *“I rejoiced greatly in the Lord that at last you renewed your concern for me. Indeed, you were concerned, but you had no opportunity to show it.”*—The joy does not lie so much in the gift itself, as in being remembered and realizing someone cares.

**The idea of Christian Partnership is strongly stressed in Philip. 1:3-11**

**There are certain things which Christians share:**

1. **Christians are partners in grace.** We owe a common debt to the grace of God.

**2. Christians are partners in the work of the gospel**. We share a task; that being of furthering the gospel by defending it against the attacks of the enemies and by building up the faith and devotion of its friends.

3. **Christians are partners in suffering for the gospel**. Although we may never have to suffer as do Christians in foreign lands, we must stand for truth and pray earnestly for their release from captives and the atrocities they are experiencing.

**4. Christians are partners with Christ.** This is the love that cannot be more exemplified than giving one’s life for the cause of Christ.

**The Christian Progress and the Christian Goal:**

* Paul’s prayer for his people has always been that their love would grow greater every day (1:9-10), “And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, 10so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ,”
* His prayer was that they would grow to the point of being able to distinguish right from wrong. Note: Look at where they were coming from and where they are to go.
* Grow to the point of not causing others to stumble—meaning “not causing others to fall into sin or yield to temptation.”
* **The final aim/goal for the Christian:** *(1:11), filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ—to the glory and praise of God.”*—To live such a life that the glory and the praise are given to God; i.e. no credit for man himself—he is what he is only by the grace of God.

**The hardest thing for man to give up is his pride of ownership.** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

 *“A proud man is always looking down on things and people; and, of course, as long as you are looking down, you cannot see something that is above you.”
― C.S. Lewis, Mere Christianity*

*“All men make mistakes, but a good man yields when he knows his course is wrong, and repairs the evil. The only crime is pride.”
― Sophocles, Antigone*

*“Through pride we are ever deceiving ourselves. But deep down below the surface of the average conscience a still, small voice says to us, something is out of tune. ”
― C.G. Jung*

***“****But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says: "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." James 4:6*

**NOTES:**

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Session 3. My Bad Circumstances for God’s Good??**

**You Have to Be Kidding!**

**Have you ever been accused of something terrible you did not do? How did you respond? What is the norm as a response to this accusation?**

**Worse than that, all of us would be furious if we were placed in prison for committing no crime! I would scream to call my Congressman…Write to the appeals board…complain to the highest level about the extreme temperatures in our cell!**

**I pray that I would do that if you were in jail when I knew you did not do anything to deserve it.**

**Philippians 1:12-26, *“****Now I want you to know, brothers and sisters,that what has happened to me has actually served to advance the gospel. 13As a result, it has become clear throughout the whole palace guardand to everyone else that I am in chains for Christ. 14And because of my chains, most of the brothers and sisters have become confident in the Lord and dare all the more to proclaim the gospel without fear.*

*15It is true that some preach Christ out of envy and rivalry, but others out of goodwill. 16The latter do so out of love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel. 17The former preach Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing that they can stir up trouble for me while I am in chains. 18But what does it matter? The important thing is that in every way, whether from false motives or true, Christ is preached. And because of this I rejoice.*

*Yes, and I will continue to rejoice, 19for I know that through your prayers and God’s provision of the Spirit of Jesus Christ what has happened to me will turn out for my deliverance. 20I eagerly expect and hope that I will in no way be ashamed, but will have sufficient courage so that now as always Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death. 21For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. 22If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labor for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know! 23I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far; 24but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body. 25Convinced of this, I know that I will remain, and I will continue with all of you for your progress and joy in the faith, 26so that through my being with you again your boasting in Christ Jesus will abound on account of me.”*

**Facts:**

1. **The book of Acts tells us that Paul was imprisoned by the Romans on three different occasions.** Not sure which time he wrote this letter (probably the last time).
2. **We know that he did write this letter while in custody of the Romans.**
3. **We also know what his thoughts were regarding being jailed.**
Paul didn't let his imprisonment devastate him like many of us would.

Instead, he reminded himself of this truth:
*Rom. 8:28, “And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to {His} purpose.”*

1. **Although Paul's circumstances were beyond difficult, he knew that God was in control, and that He was working these difficulties together for good.**

**Philippians 1:12-14**
**Paul was a prisoner…but, this imprisonment did not end his missionary journey, it actually expanded it.**

**How did it expand it and see the good come from such bad circumstances?**

* **Actually, the bonds destroyed the barriers.**

Paul’s imprisonment did not shut the door to his mission work and gospel thrust, it opened it to new spheres of work and activity, into which he would never otherwise have penetrated.

* **Because he was in prison, the guards that watched over him had heard the gospel many times.** Can you imagine being an unbeliever chained at the wrist to an evangelist like Paul?
* **Paul’s boldness to witness while in jail was contagious among the other Christians that were free. They also began to boldly proclaim their faith.**
No matter how out-of-control things seem, if you are one of God's children, you have not been abandoned. God is working it out, whether you can see that or not. Paul, sitting in prison, knew this to be true, and encouraged the Philippians of the good things already coming out of his difficult circumstances.

**Paul repeatedly refers to himself as a prisoner or as being “in bonds.”**

1. Delivered as a prisoner into the hands of the Romans (Acts 28:17).
2. Speaks of his ‘imprisonment” in Philippians 1:7, 13,14.
3. States that he is “in bonds for the sake of Christ,” and bids the Colossians to “remember his bonds” (Colossians 4:3, 18).
4. Paul calls himself “a prisoner of Jesus Christ,” and speaks of “the bonds of the gospel” (Philemon 9,13).
5. “I am a prisoner for the sake of Jesus Christ (Ephesians 3:1).
6. Paul speaks of himself as “being bound with this chain” (Acts 28:20)…and uses the same word (halusis) in Ephesians 6:20, “I am an ambassador in chains.” (chain: short chain in which a prisoner is bound to the wrist of the soldier who was his guard. No chance of escape.)

These guards would hear every word preached by Paul. The gospel of Jesus Christ was being spread to every part of the chain of command…even to the emperor.

**1:15-18 Two Motivations, One Proclamation**
**People were preaching the gospel as a result of Paul's imprisonment. These people fell into two different categories.**

1. **The first group were sharing Christ with others out of good will and love.**
2. **The second group were doing it out of envy, strife, selfish ambition, and impure motives.** These people were in it for what they could get: things like fame and notoriety, respect and honor, authority and control, money and favors. They envied Paul's popularity, the apostle's ministry.

**The amazing thing to me is that Paul rejoiced at both situations. Why?**

**Because although he knew that God would judge their motives, he knew that the gospel was being proclaimed.**
*Hebrews. 4:12, “the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.”*
**The Word is alive, and when it is quoted, it accomplishes its work - to bring faith to the hearer.***Rom. 10:17, “So faith {comes} from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.”*
There are evangelists who are dead or in jail from sin, those who have walked away from the faith, but when they preached Christ, people believed.

* ***Acts 2:47, “...the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved.”
For this, Paul was rejoicing…because the proclamation that Jesus is alive and well and He gives eternal life to all who believe in His resurrection.***

**1:19-21, To Live Is Christ, To Die Is Gain**
**Paul knew that he was going to be delivered one way or another. Either he would be:**

* **Released from prison, or**
* **Put to death, thus releasing him also.**

***Paul says, “…for me to die would be gain.”***

**Paul had a healthy view of life and death.**

* **Every day that he lived, he would be consumed with Christ - living for God and learning more of Him, preaching the gospel and praying for others. And when death came, he would not be afraid, because he knew that death for the Christian is a promotion.**
*The Bible says,
1Cor. 15:54-55, “But when this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written, “DEATH IS SWALLOWED UP in victory. O DEATH, WHERE IS YOUR VICTORY? O DEATH, WHERE IS YOUR STING?”***The worst thing in the world's eyes is to die. But for the Christian, it is the beginning of the adventure, the step into eternal glory and communion with God.**
* **However, though we should not fear death, we should fear something: shame.**

Paul said, "I will not be put to shame in anything." John the apostle told us that those who do not abide in Christ will have cause for shame. He wrote,
1John 2:28, “And now, little children, abide in Him, so that when He appears, we may have confidence and not shrink away from Him in shame at His coming.”

**1:22-26 Heaven Or Earth…Torn Between the Two?**
**Thinking about Paul's situation, it is certainly understandable to see why he had the desire to die and be with Christ.**

* ***There are times that we as Christians long for death, because we know that heaven will be so much better than this earth. But it's important not to lose perspective. We should not seek death.***
* ***We should have Paul's attitude of living every day exalting Christ and performing ministry.***

***We should understand that every minute of every day is an opportunity to bless someone, to help others progress in their faith.***

**Summary:**

**Your life is important. God has given it to you to make a difference in other people's lives.**

**The world's view is, "What can I get? What fun can I have? How much can I make? How can this satisfy my desires?"**

**But we should be living with a view towards others. "What can I do for you? How can I bless this person? How can I meet her need? What can I do to edify him?"**

**Even though Paul longed for heaven, he knew that his life on earth was necessary to other believers like the Philippians.**

***Questions for the troops (including me and thee); Session 3.***

1. ***Do we feel that we have been given a little more trouble to deal with than others?***
2. ***Do we know for sure that God is always working for good in our lives?***
3. ***Do we realize that our pain might be for someone else’s gain? Does it bother us when we see others prospering due to our giving and praying for their joy?***
4. ***Is it hard for us to see others prosper when we are hurting?***
5. ***Are we ready to understand that all of this is temporary and heaven is for eternity?***

***NOTES:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_***

**Session 4: Conduct Worthy Of the Gospel**

**Philippians 1:27-30,** “*Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, I will know that you stand firm in the one Spirit,striving together as one for the faith of the gospel 28without being frightened in any way by those who oppose you. This is a sign to them that they will be destroyed, but that you will be saved—and that by God. 29For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe in him, but also to suffer for him, 30since you are going through the same struggle you saw I had, and now hear that I still have.”*

**Up to this point in his epistle, Paul has been informing the church at Philippi concerning his situation.**

**Paul’s attitude was one of joy and confidence**

**With verse 27, Paul begins a series of practical exhortations concerning the Christian life**

**The first exhortation is found in verses 27-30.**

 ***It pertains to "Conduct Worthy of the Gospel"***

**GENERAL OBSERVATIONS CONCERNING OUR "CONDUCT"**

1. **LOOKING AT THE WORD "CONDUCT" ITSELF...The KJV translates this word as "conversation"**
* **In the Greek, it literally means "behave as citizens"**
* **To those at Philippi, this word would likely have special meaning...**
* **Remember…the city at Philippi was a Roman colony**
* **Most of its citizens were actually transplanted citizens of Rome,**
* **Retired soldiers who had been encouraged to settle there.**
* **So though they were living in Philippi, they were expected to "behave as citizens" of Rome.**
* **Paul applies this term to the life of a Christian...Whose "citizenship" is actually in heaven –**

***Philippians 3:20,****“But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ…”*

* **So though we may live on earth, we are to "behave as citizens of heaven!”**
1. **OUR "BEHAVIOR AS CITIZENS" IS TO BE "WORTHY" OF THE GOSPEL**
* **This implies that there is behavior that is NOT worthy of the**

 **Gospel!**

* **To act unworthy of the gospel would bring shame upon the**

 **Gospel!**

**Note: An American citizen who misbehaves in a foreign country sheds a bad reflection on his home country.**

* **The Christian who misbehaves “misses the mark” and is a bad reflection on the gospel of Christ and the Church (The Bride of Christ).**
* **The apostle Peter would have us remember the importance of**

 **proper conduct as we "sojourn" here in a country not our own,**

***1Peter 2:11-12, “****Dear friends, I urge you, as foreigners and exiles, to abstain from sinful desires, which wage war against your soul.**Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.”*

1. **OUR "BEHAVIOR AS CITIZENS" IS TO BE WORTHY "WITH OR WITHOUT" THE PRESENCE OF OTHER CHRISTIANS...**
* **Note that Paul said "whether I come and see you or am absent"**
* **Paul evidently did not want their faith to be simply an "environmental faith"**
* **What is an "environmental faith?"**

 **A faith totally dependent upon the environment**

* **For instance, remaining faithful while under the positive influences of one's home, church, or "Christian" college.**
* **Take that person out of such an environment, and his or her faith is lost!**

 **Some signs of an "environmental" faith**

* **Praying in public, but not in private**
* **Studying the Bible when at church, but not in private**
* **A lack of personal closeness and dependence upon God and Jesus Christ**
* **Paul's hope was that the Philippians' "behavior as citizens" was not dependent upon his presence**
* **Likewise, our behavior should not be dependent upon the presence of other Christians, but upon the presence of Christ alone!**

**SPECIFIC OBSERVATIONS CONCERNING OUR "CONDUCT"**

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

* **"Behaving as citizens" involves "standing fast" against those**

 **things which would beset us:**

* **The lure of the world in which we live, with its immorality**

 **and materialism**

* **The sin of unbelief, which can strike at even the most mature**

 **Christians, during crises of doubt**

* **The deceitfulness of false doctrines, showing great promise, but leading us away from Christ**

**All such things we must "stand fast" against!**

* **Note also that we must stand fast "in one spirit"**
	+ **We are not to stand strong by ourselves, in isolation from**

 **one another, but in UNITY!**

* + **Unworthy conduct usually begins when we neglect the blessings of fellowship and togetherness**
1. **IT INVOLVES "WITH ONE MIND STRIVING TOGETHER FOR THE FAITH OF THE GOSPEL" (27)**
* **Behaving as citizens" includes:**
	+ **Aggressively promoting the gospel of Jesus Christ ("striving")**
* **Doing this in unity with other Christians ("together with one mind")**
* **Our conduct is unbecoming the gospel if we are:**
* **NOT striving for the faith of the gospel**
* **NOT doing it in unity with other brethren**

 **NOTE: Do we not see here the need for "identifying with a congregation" and closely working together with them?**

 **Are those who drift around from church to church, never "placing membership", truly behaving in a conduct worthy of the gospel?**

1. **IT INVOLVES "NOT BEING TERRIFIED BY YOUR ADVERSARIES" (28-30)**
* **Christians walking in a manner worthy of the gospel will not be**

**troubled by those who may ridicule or even persecute them!**

* **For even though the world may consider such "fearlessness" as evidence that we are crazy...Such courage is actually evidence of our salvation!**

**Matthew 5:10-12, “***Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. “Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. 12Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”*

* **There may come times when we who have accepted Jesus as the Messiah by faith are also "privileged to suffer for His sake"**
* **Such was the case with Paul, and evidently the Philippians as well**
* **Should it ever be that our "lot" is to suffer for Christ…we must remember that it will be a "privilege"**
* **Our attitude should be like that of the apostles in**

***Acts 5:41-42, “****The apostles left the Sanhedrin, rejoicing because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name. Day after day, in the temple courts and from house to house, they never stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Messiah.”*

**CONCLUSION OF THE STUDY OF PHILIPPIANS 1:27-30**

**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":**

* **Standing fast in one spirit**
* **With one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel…not in any way terrified by our adversaries**
* **No matter what the "environment" might be (moral climate), you stand firm in the faith and make the right decisions!**

**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 or being somewhat persecuted for Jesus"?**

***There is a story of a veteran soldier, an army sergeant, where in the heat of battle he sees a young recruit trembling as he is curled up in his fox hole not knowing what to do or what to expect. The sergeant puts out his hand and says to the recruit, “Come son, and you and I will do something fine and great for our country.”***

***HE, MY FRIEND, IS BUILDING A BRIDGE TO THE NEXT GENERATION!***

***BE A BRIDGE BUILDER…AND BRACE YOURSELVES IN UNITY FOR THE CHALLENGES OF LIFE!***

***“HOLD ON TO EACH OTHER…FOR LIFE TRULY IS A CHALLENGE.”***

**Paul is saying to the church at Philippi (and to us), “For you and for me the battle is on; let us do something fine and great for Christ!”**

**I ask myself as well as you:**

* **Where am I as to my “growth chart” as a Christian and in my dependency on Christ Jesus?”**
* **Will I yield to the cultural temptations or hold fast to the truth and precepts of God’s Word?**
* **Am I strong enough in the faith to stand up to ridicule and persecution for my beliefs?**
* **If I was chastised by others for not being tolerant of those not living by our standards, would I give in to peer pressure and not be vocal as to what I believe and why I believe it?**

**NOTES (SESSION 4):**

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**Session 5: Unifying the Brotherhood,**

***Philippians 2:1-4, “****Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, 2then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. 3Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, 4not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.”*

**The danger for every healthy church is “disunity.”**

**Three (3) great causes of disunity (v. 3-4)**

1. **Selfish Ambition…*people in the church who work not to advance the work but to advance themselves. Great pastors and princes of the early church beginnings were so very careful not to strive to please family, friends, or self…but to work in harmony with others to share the plan of salvation. They kept the “main thing the main thing.”***
* *Far from being filled with ambition, the great men of the Christian faith (servants in lieu of leadership) were filled with a sense of their own inadequacy for high office.*
* *Every young preacher boy should be alert and aware that they are to stay away from the “3 Gs” as they are trying to mature in the ministry for the Lord:*

*Gold, Girls, Glory!*

***1st G—Gold****. The love of money is truly the root of all evil. Be aware, servants of the Lord, make decisions for good, not gold.*

***2nd G—Girls****. Many preachers have fallen into sin by getting involved with the opposite sex; many pretty young girls and/or married women love to break-up wholesome Christian marriages by worshipping sex in lieu of Jehovah God. Be faithful to your spouse and remember the Joseph principle… “How then could I do such a wicked thing and sin against God?” Genesis 39:9b (NIV).* *For those preachers who have yet to be married, stay pure and love the Word more than the world’s attractions.*

***3rd G—Glory.*** *All accolades, praise, and worship should be for the glory of God. A preacher’s ambitions to be seen, heard, and prosper for their own glory will be brought down low. “Haughtiness” the Lord hates.*

*Proverbs 16:18, “Pride goes before destruction, a* ***haughty*** *spirit before a fall.”*

***MAKE SURE CHRIST IS IN THE CENTER OF YOUR PLANS!***

1. **Desire for Personal Prestige…*Can be an even greater temptation than wealth.***
* *To be admired and respected, to have a platform seat, to have one’s opinion sought, to be known by name and appearance…or to be flattered, are for many people most desirable things.*
* *The Christian should desire to focus men’s eyes not on himself but on God.*
1. **Concentration on Self…*if a man or woman is concerned first and foremost with his or her own interests, they are bound to collide with others.***

**UNITY AND WORKING TOGETHER FOR THE GLORY OF THE GOD SHOULD BE AT THE FOREFRONT OF THE CHRISTIAN’S WALK WITH THE LORD!**

**THE CURE FOR DISUNITY FOUND IN 2:1-4**

**PAUL’S FIVE (5) CONSIDERATIONS WHICH OUGHT TO PREVENT DISHARMONY:**

1. **The Fact that we are all in Christ should keep us in unity.**
* *No man can walk in disunity with his fellow-men and in unity with Christ.*
1. **The Power of Christian Love should keep us in unity.**
* *Christian love is that unconquered good-will which never knows bitterness and never seeks anything but the good of others.*
1. **The Fact that they share in the Holy Spirit should keep Christians from disunity.**
* *The Holy Spirit binds man to God and man to man.*
1. **The Existence of Human Compassion should keep men from disunity.**
* *Disunity breaks the very structure of life. Marriages, families, churches need to have compassion flowing from their heart…a heart that has been changed.*
1. **There Can Be No Happiness for Paul (Nor should it be for us) if there is disunity in the Church which was dear to him and to us…if we know Christ as the one who hates disunity amongst the brotherhood.**

**CONCLUSION OF PHILIPPIANS 2:1-4: DISUNITY WITHIN THE BRIDE OF CHRIST BREAKS THE HEART OF GOD THE FATHER!**

**Paul’s final word in this session of Scripture is especially relevant: “Do not *merely* look out for your own personal interests, but alsofor the interests of others” (2:4).**

**A prominent and most relevant word is the verb “look” (*skopeo*), which means “to pay careful attention to, look out for, notice.” Just as you might take out a magnifying glass and observe in detail (look) at the old pictures you or someone else took of your family many years ago, you know what it is like to look closely at the details of the loved ones you cared for and still think about, even though many are already with the Father.**

**God wants you to study and observe believers to an even greater extent. I think maybe He then wants you to prioritize their interests before you do your own. This will fulfill the Scripture, “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.”**

**Many Christians, however, assume that we are to pursue the interests of others with all that is within us… and yet, end up neglecting those who are most important to us. Although loving others and helping them in time of need is an admirable Christ-like quality to have, it is important to understand that this can often lead to the neglect of one’s marriage, family, and personal walk with Christ. Sad to say, this is done in the name of ministry!**

**It is far better to care for your own physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual needs so that you can care for others for many years. However, Paul is telling us to not be selfish and unbecoming to fellow travelers in this world by always taking care of self before opening ourselves up to sharing our gifts and time with others.**

**Do you look out for the interests of others? When you talk to others, do you talk about yourself or them? God gave you two ears and one mouth for a reason. He expects you to listen much more than you talk.**

**The goal should be to ask questions such as:**

* **How are you doing spiritually?**
* **How is your marriage and family?**
* **Is work going well?**
* **What has God been teaching you?**
* **How can I be praying for you?**
* **Do you pray more for others than you do yourself?**
* **Do you find satisfaction in seeing your spiritual children surpass you in the work they are called to do?**
* **Do you want other life-giving evangelical churches in your community to succeed as much or more than your church?**
* **Do you study the persecuted church and lift these precious brothers and sisters in Christ up in prayer? If so, you’re applying this verse.**

***Comment: On the hit TV show, Extreme Makeover: Home Edition, whole communities work together to provide a new home for a family in need. It is amazing to watch the cast and crew of the show as they rally the town, the builders, and each other in order to complete the project within seven days. Then, when it’s time to bring the family home, all those people get the chance to celebrate the accomplishment together. Even viewers feel they have a chance to participate in the celebration.***

**Now, imagine the excitement and joy we would experience as a community of believers if we banded together in the name of God to effect change in our homes, communities, states, nation, and world! It would be remarkable to see what would happen if we all worked together for God’s purpose.**

**TRUE JOY WOULD BE EXPERIENCED BY ALL WHO WERE TOUCHED BY THE WILL OF THE PEOPLE TO WORK TOGETHER TO BLESS OTHERS!**

**Life is full of observations…good, bad, and ugly. The question is, “How will we handle what we see, hear, and experience?” Will we just let God handle it…or will we do our part and “partner” with God to bring about what is “that good, acceptable, and perfect will of God?”**

**Paul gave us some specific instructions on how we are to conduct ourselves in this fallen world. He gave them; but, we are to accept and do them!**



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**Session 6: The Glory of that Name!**

***“In your relationships with one another, have the same mind-set as Christ Jesus…” Philippians 2:5***

**Same mind-set…what does that mean?**

**Mindset =** a particular way of thinking: a person's attitude or set of opinions about something; a mental attitude or inclination; a fixed state of mind.

**Same mind-set as Christ Jesus =** Thinking like Jesus; an attitude of giving, sharing, loving, and caring enough to give your life for others; fixing your eyes on the One who gave His life-blood that we might have life.

**Being willing to make decisions based on the idea of “WWJD” (What Would Jesus Do?).**

**JESUS CHRIST—WHAT A NAME! We should glory, praise and exalt that name.**

**Names! We all have them. They are important to our knowing one another and to others knowing us.**

**What difference does it make as to what your name is?**

***If my name was Joe Busybody instead of Gerald Cumby, would it make any difference as to who I really am?***

**Most of our names are unimportant, that is, we could have any other name on earth and still be the same person we already are.**

**In the end, however, your name is going to be very important to you. Your name is going to be in the Lamb’s Book of Life…or, it is not. If it is in the “Book”…you will enjoy eternity with the Lamb Himself. If not, you will be separated and placed in a setting where God is not there and there is going to be eternal punishment for your choices and actions made** …

***Revelation 20:12-15,*** *“And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what they had done. Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death. Anyone whose name was not found written in the book of life was thrown into the lake of fire.”*

**Names are important…but, there is a name that is above every name.**

* It is a name that prompts the citizens of Heaven to shout and the citizens of Hell to shutter.
* A name that brings help to the helpless, peace to the tormented, rest to the restless, hope to the hopeless and comfort to the comfortless.
* This name has cooled the fevered brow; broken the chains of sin; delivered the captive and thrilled the saint.

**The one who bears this name has been called everything from Adam to Wonderful. This name is…Yeshua, Jesus!**

**Let’s explore the glory of that name.**

Search your heart and if you do not know the Person Who wears that Name, you can meet Him today. If you know Him, but aren’t as close to Him as you should be, you can get that fixed up today as well.

**THE REALITY OF THAT NAME’S GLORY (Verse 9) *Philippians 2:5-11, “****In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: 6 Who, being in very natureGod, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; 7rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very natureof a servant, being made in human likeness. 8And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross! 9****Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name,*** *10that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”*

* **A Sovereign Glory** – His glory is given to Him by divine decree.
* The word “***Exalted***” means, “***To be raised to the highest heights.***”
* All over the world, with every tick of the clock, men curse and despise the name of Jesus, but…
* It is this name that brings forgiveness of sin, **Luke 24:47, *“****and repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem…:”* and gives us access into the Father’s presence, **John 16:23-24**, *“In that day you will no longer ask me anything. Very truly I tell you, my Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. 24Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete.”*

Remember…when we rejoice, exalt and praise the Lord Jesus, we are merely doing what God has already done.

* **A Singular Glory** – His name is “***above***” every name. That means that it is “***over, beyond, chief***.”
* Millions may wear the same name all over the world today, but there is only one Jesus.
* Only He can take the vilest of sinners and make them clean.
* Only He can take a Hell bound sinner and reconcile him to God. **Note**: Whether a person acknowledges the glory of that name in this life or not, His is still a name that is chief among all names.

 **THE REASON FOR THAT NAME’S GLORY, Verses 5-9**

(**Note**: “***Wherefore***” in **verse 9** points back to the reason why God has given Jesus this place of exaltation and glory.)

* **His Station**, Verses 6-7 – These verses declare for us the truth that Jesus Christ is absolutely God, the Son…, John 1:1*, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”* He was always God, yet God the Son took upon Himself human flesh when He was born in Bethlehem.
* When He came, He did not come as a king, as a wealthy man or as a ruler.
* When He came, He came as a servant. He came as an ordinary man to serve all men, *Isa. 53:2, “He grew up before him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of dry ground. He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in appearance that we should desire him.”*
* He came as a man so that He might die for all men.

**Note**: God exalted Him because He willingly humbled Himself to be a living demonstration of God’s love for fallen humanity, **Rom. 5:8**, *“But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”*

* **His Submission** – Jesus willingly came from Heaven to earth for the sole purpose of going to Calvary to die for you and me, **John 18:37**. Man did not kill Jesus! He willingly laid down His life, the innocent for the guilty, so that sinners might be saved, **John 10:17-18**. Because He submitted all to His Father and became obedient unto death, His Father has exalted His name above every name in Heaven or on the earth.
* **His Sacrifice** v. 8, 9-– This verse tells us that Jesus willingly entered the jaws of death for you and me. His death was no sanitary, painless affair. He didn’t die in a hospital with drugs to dull His pain. When He died, He died on a cross, the most horrible and cruel form of execution ever devised by man. He did this because He loves us! Because He did this, God has “***highly exalted Him, and given Him a name that is above every name.***” May those who have experienced the power of that cross join their voices with that of the Father and lift high the name of Jesus!

 **THE RESPONSE TO THAT NAME’S GLORY, Verses 10-11**

**Note**: The word “***should***” **v. 10** is a word indicating that there is a response that is expected when that name is encountered.

* **An Acknowledgement of His Position** v. 11– Every being in all of the universe is called upon to recognize His position. They are all called upon to bow in submission and surrender to this man named Jesus. Every creature in Heaven, in Hell, and upon the earth is called upon to acknowledge Him and the glory of that Name, the glory of His power and His glory. This is a call to acknowledge, but whether you do it willingly or not, there is coming a day when every angel, every demon, every saint, ever sinner, even Satan himself, will bow to that name. **Rom. 14:11**, “*It is written: ‘As surely as I live,’ says the Lord, ‘every knee will bow before me; every tongue will acknowledge God.’”*
* **An Acceptance of His Person**, v. 11-– The word “***confess***” means “***to agree, or to say the same thing about.***” That is important because God has declared that there is only one way to come to Him, **John 14:6; Acts 4:12; John 6:47**. Have you ever come to the place where you have humbled yourself and confessed the fact that you cannot save yourself….Therefore, acknowledging your sins to God, **Rom. 3:23**? Have you ever acknowledged the inability to produce salvation for yourself? It is time to acknowledge truth! It is time to accept the gift of salvation through Jesus. *Romans 6:23b, “…the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ, the Lord.”*

**CONCLUSION:**

In Heaven they know that Name! In Heaven they praise that Name! In Hell they know that Name! Those in Hell will one day bow and praise that Name! Satan knows that Name! One day, even Satan himself will bow and praise that Name! The only place where the Name of Jesus is not known in power and glory is in the heart and lives of lost men and women.

**Our name is important…but, having a good name will not get us to heaven.** There are many “important men and women, boys and girls with good names” in heaven…and there are important people in hell.

**In our relationship with fellow Christians, our mindset should be like that of Jesus Christ.**

**As we come to the end of this passage, we actually come back to the beginning.**

* ***There will come a day when men will acknowledge that Jesus is Lord.***  *They can do it in this life or they can do it in eternity’s life span. HOWEVER…the idea of waiting to “that lifespan” will be too late to make a difference in their fate.*
* ***When they call Jesus Lord, they will do so to the glory of the Father.***
* ***The whole aim of Jesus is not for His own glory, but God the Father’s.*** *Not for His own supremacy, but God the Father’s.*

*Note: In the end, Jesus Himself, will be subject to God the Father…who put all things under Him.*

***1 Corinthians 15:28,*** *“When he has done this, then the Son himself will be made subject to him who put everything under him, so that God may be all in all.”*

**Jesus draws men to Himself that He may draw them to God.**

**In the Philippian church there were men whose aim was to:**

* Gratify a selfish ambition
* Focus men’s eyes upon themselves.

**The aim of Jesus was to:**

* Serve others, no matter what depths of self-renunciation that service might involve
* Focus men’s eyes upon God…His Father and our Father.

**The follower of Christ must think always, not of himself but of others, not of his own glory but of the glory of God.**

**Now you know what mindset we should have if we truly want to be a servant of the Most High God.**

**The Holy Spirit does what Jesus tells him to do. He points and aims his focus on winning the hearts of the lost to Jesus.**

***Jesus points and aims to the Father God. In the end, the Godhead will be exalted and we will reign with Him, Them….forever!***

**Assignment: Read John 14; John 15:26; 1 Corinthians 15:28.**

***Session 7, Salvation…Grace to the Uttermost!***

***Paul has been encouraging the Christians in the church at Philippi to be:***

* ***Unified in love,***
* ***Vision and***
* ***Purpose.***

That purpose being “others-centered” instead of self-centered.

To be like Jesus, Who left His place of prominence and power to become a servant of others (the good, the bad, and the ugly).

**Now, Paul continues:**

***Philippians 2:12-13,*** *“Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, 13for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose”*

**Don’t just do it for show, but do it when no one else is looking…**

* **“In my absence”…still be like Jesus.**
Most of the members of the Church at Philippi had always been people who:
* Heard the preaching of the Word of God and immediately responded to it.
* When Paul demonstrated from the Scriptures what was the will of God, they took it to heart and did it.
* When Paul showed them what was out of God's will, they stopped that behavior.

And so he is saying, "Even though I'm not there in person, I'm hoping that you will obey the Word of God just as if I was there. As a matter of fact, I'm hoping you'll be even more faithful to do so."

* **Work Out Your Own Salvation**

**We must remember: Salvation is not experienced until we meet our destiny (end of life on earth to be with Jesus, the saints, and God the Father).**

***Salvation can begin at New Birth***…but will not be culminated, made known for real until we meet on the other side of life.
Paul's exhortation is to work out their salvation. Don't confuse this with working FOR their salvation.

“For it by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.” Ephesians 2:8-10.

**What does it mean to “work it out”?**

The original word Paul used literally means to carry it through to completion…or, "take your salvation all the way."
The ultimate end of being saved is to be like Jesus. His temperament, His personality, His manner of doing things. When you're working out your salvation, you're becoming more and more like Him all the time.
But the discouraging thing is that there really are so many Christians today that aren't working out their salvation at all. They're not growing, they're not becoming more like Jesus.

* **With “Fear and Trembling”**
Maybe you're thinking, "How much do you expect from me? I'm saved, get off my back. I'm not trying to become a pastor, I don't see the need to go overboard and be all holy, righteous, and self-sacrificing. I'm going to church, and people know I'm a Christian."

**What is Paul saying?**
Paul simply and straight-forwardly states…the truth delivered “right between the eyes.”
The simple fact is, you should be working out your salvation, carrying it through, taking it all the way; because it's very possible that not doing it is demonstrating that you don't have salvation at all.
If our faith is not continually growing and working out as a reality in your life, making you more like Jesus, it is very likely that you've been deceiving yourself into believing that you're a Christian.

**Love and kisses are good, but it won’t get you a meeting with God unless you are willing to bow before the King**…Humbling yourself and opening your heart to him. No façade…no ifs, ands, or buts…just true repentance and a willingness to grow in faith and harmony with God and others.

***Matt. 7:21-23****, “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven; but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven. Many will say to Me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?’ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS.’"*

**Note:**

* **When you hear the teaching of God's Word, it should be effecting a change in your life.**
* **When you read in the Scriptures of something that godly people do, you should be pursuing it. Otherwise, you're practicing a false hope.**
* **How many times in the last month did you hear a message and say, "Ouch…that applies to my life…I know the way I've been behaving is wrong, and I will eliminate that sin from my life starting now"?**

**If you're working out your salvation with fear and trembling, that is happening to you on a regular basis.**

**God's Good Pleasure in Your Will And Work**
If you are a Christian, God is at work in you.

* While religion tries to change you from the outside in, Christianity changes you from the inside out.
* When you were saved, the Holy Spirit came to live inside of you, and He's working on you from the inside.

Working to do what? Causing you to both want to do and to do God's will. If you're submitted to the Lord, you're not just doing God's will, you actually want to do God's will.

**LOOKING BACK AT THE PASSAGE, IT GIVES A PERFECT STATEMENT OF THE WORK OF SALVATION.**

1. **Salvation is of God**
2. **It is God that works in us the desire to be saved.**
* The Holy Spirit convicts and sincerely tries to convince us that the only way to the Father is through His Son, Jesus Christ.
* The desire for the salvation of God is not kindled by any human emotion but by God Himself.
* The beginning of the process is awakened by God.
1. **The continuance of that process (process of salvation) is dependent on God.**
* Without His help there can be no progress in goodness;
* Without His help no sin can be conquered;
* Without His help no virtue achieved.

Remember: There is none good…no not one. There is none righteous…not one.

1. **The end of the process of salvation is with God.**

Its end is friendship with God…in which we are His and He is ours.

The work of salvation is begun, continued and ended with God.

1. **There is another side to this—Salvation is of man. (Don’t throw rocks at the teacher yet! HEAR THE TEACHER OUT!)**
2. **The Word says “Work out you own salvation”…Paul firmly states.**
3. **Without man’s cooperation, even God is helpless.**
4. **Fact is…any gift or benefit has to be received.**
* A man may be ill and the doctor able to prescribe the drugs that will cure him; but the man will not be cured until he takes them.
* The man might stubbornly refuse all persuasion to take them.

**So it is with salvation. The offer of God is there; without it there can be no such thing as salvation.**

**But…no man can ever receive salvation unless he answers God’s appeal and takes what He offers.**

**To summarize this statement in Philippians:**

**There can be no salvation without God; but what God offers, man must take. It is never God who withholds salvation; it is always man who deprives himself of it.**

**SOME REAL PERSONAL QUESTIONS AND CONCERNS FROM THIS LESSON:**

**1. Do you know for sure you have the salvation we have been speaking?**

**2. If you know you have eternal life through Jesus, do you reflect the Jesus you know to others as you work, play, and live with them?**

**3. What areas of your life do you feel you need to work while you stretch toward the journey home (heaven)?**

**4. We all have idiosyncrasies that might turn people off as to how we handle life. With that in mind, are you/me willing to work on our shortcomings to better reflect God’s grace and mercy?**

**SESSION 8. GRUMBLING, MUMBLING, COMPLAINING, DISPUTING—REBUKE IT AND REFUSE IT!**

**Philippians 2:14-16, “***Do everything without grumbling or arguing, 15so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a warped and crooked generation. Then you will shine among them like stars in the sky 16as you hold firmly to the word of life. And then I will be able to boast on the day of Christ that I did not run or labor in vain."*

**Live Without Grumbling or Disputing**

**This is our chance to show ourselves “if we’re working out our salvation with fear and trembling.” Will we do all things without grumbling or disputing?**

*Do you know of conversations that consist of people talking about how much they hate their job, how little money they have, how terrible the roads and traffic are, how they had to do what they didn't want to do, about how bad the weather is, about how their neighbors are inconsiderate, and how the other people in their family make life so difficult.*

**Grumbling, complaining, whining, disputing, and arguing. Paul says that the Christian is not to be like this. We need to “grow up.”**

**The Proof is in the Pudding…**

* Prove that you are a child of God.
* Prove that you are different from the world.
* Shine your light as a witness of Jesus.
* Hear the Word and hold fast to it.
* "Stop complaining. Stop arguing."

**WHY? Where I (Paul) can know that my preaching, my teaching, my praying, my working…is not in vain.**

**If the Philippians were obedient, then Paul would know that he had not wasted his time preaching the gospel in Philippi.**

* There is great pleasure in seeing one grow in Christ
* There is agony in the soul of the teacher when he sees people stagnate and in a backslidden state.

It makes him feel as if he has just been wasting his time, running and toiling in vain.

***Philippians 2:17-18, “****But even if I am being poured out like a drink offering on the sacrifice and service coming from your faith, I am glad and rejoice with all of you. 18So you too should be glad and rejoice with me.”*

**Poured Out As a Drink Offering**

Teaching the Word to Christians, evangelizing the lost, doing the work of the ministry is far more work than most people will ever realize. Paul wanted to know that he had not been doing it all for nothing. He wanted to see the Philippians grow in Christ.
He described his work as him "being poured out as a drink offering." As you may already know, a drink offering was a sacrifice to God which was poured out as a liquid instead of being burnt in fire on the altar.

**Paul poured out in the work of the ministry as a sacrifice to God.**

When the ministry dictated that he make tents all day long in order to preach, he worked and sweated. When the ministry demanded that he travel dangerous roads, at times being robbed and assaulted, he did it so that he could preach the gospel in the next town.

When he found himself poor and alone because of the cause of Christ, he didn't give up - he just considered himself a drink offering, poured out to God.

**Still** **I (Paul) Rejoice…**

**Will you rejoice with Paul?**
**Although PAUL was sitting in a Roman prison, although he was physically scarred and emotionally spent, he said, "Regardless of all that, I will rejoice."**

* Paul's Christian maturity meant that his joy was not found in circumstances.
* His joy came from knowing that he was saved, that his inheritance was in heaven, and
* He had the privilege, yet a responsibility, to share the Good News with others.

**May we today have this same attitude.**

May we say as David said,
*Ps. 51:12, “Restore to me the joy of Thy salvation, and sustain me with a willing spirit.”*

*“JOY” SHOULD BE THE NORM OF EVERY CHRISTIAN?*

***Philippians 2:19-30, “****I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, that I also may be cheered when I receive news about you. 20I have no one else like him, who will show genuine concern for your welfare. 21For everyone looks out for their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ. 22But you know that Timothy has proved himself, because as a son with his father he has served with me in the work of the gospel. 23I hope, therefore, to send him as soon as I see how things go with me. 24And I am confident in the Lord that I myself will come soon.*

*25But I think it is necessary to send back to you Epaphroditus, my brother, co-worker and fellow soldier, who is also your messenger, whom you sent to take care of my needs. 26For he longs for all of you and is distressed because you heard he was ill. 27Indeed he was ill, and almost died. But God had mercy on him, and not on him only but also on me, to spare me sorrow upon sorrow. 28Therefore I am all the more eager to send him, so that when you see him again you may be glad and I may have less anxiety. 29So then, welcome him in the Lord with great joy, and honor people like him, 30because he almost died for the work of Christ. He risked his life to make up for the help you yourselves could not give me.”*

**Friends of Paul and Lovers of God (Timothy and Epaphroditis).**

Paul was just saying how, in spite of his own suffering, he was rejoicing, because he knew that the Philippians would be obedient to his exhortation to get along and show love for one another.
Paul still hoped that he could be there with the Philippian church members. But, as you know, he was in a Roman prison, unable to leave and pay them a visit.

**Not being able to go himself, he was hoping to send someone else that would both minister to them and bring back news to him.**

When you are sending a substitute in to take your place or speak what is on your mind, you need someone with like countenance and like mindedness…someone who could be trusted by yourself and those receiving the message.

**There was a “kindred spirit” between the church at Philippi and Timothy and Epaphroditis!**

**The most obvious choice of who to send was Timothy. He alone was qualified to be sent to minister to the Philippians.**

His qualifications did not come from his physical strength, dashing looks, or powerful personality.

**Timothy’s qualifications for ministry were threefold:**

1. He had a kindred spirit with Paul,
2. He was genuinely concerned about the Philippians' welfare, and
3. He was seeking God's interests, not his own.
Choosing someone to help in your ministry….is very much like choosing a babysitter for your children. You are entrusting this person with people that you love.

**Philippians 2:22-24…Trust in the Lord**
**The Philippians were very familiar with Timothy; knowing how devoted he had been in serving God and serving Paul. There would be no question in anybody's mind about his genuineness when Timothy showed up in Philippi.**
Paul hoped that he himself would also be showing up on their doorstep sometime soon. He said, "I trust in the Lord that I myself also shall be coming shortly."
You know, if we are honest with ourselves, we have to admit that we are people who look too much at our earthly circumstances instead of our Heavenly Father. Paul said and believed that he was to “Trust in the Lord, not in the circumstances.”

***Col. 3:2,*** *“Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth.”*

Helen Lemmel wrote, "Turn your eyes upon Jesus. Look full in His wonderful face. And the things of earth will grow strangely dim. In the light of His glory and grace."

**Paul was trusting that Jesus was still in control. He would send Timothy soon, and trusted in God that he wouldn't be far behind.**

**2:25-28 Epaphroditus**
**In spite of Timothy's soon departure, and hopefully Paul's, Paul also had to send Epaphroditus to Philippi.**

**A little bit about Epaphroditus:**

* **He was from the Philippian church**. He had been sent with a gift from the church to Paul, but had gotten terribly sick. Deathly ill. Word got back to the Philippian church about his condition, and they were very worried.
Epaphroditus knew that they knew he was sick, but didn't know if they knew he had gotten better. He worried about their concerns, and longed to see them all again.
* **Epaphroditus was described by Paul as "my brother, my fellow worker, my fellow soldier, your messenger and minister to my need."**
"My brother" means that they were both Christians. Two children with the same father: God.
* **Not only did Epaphroditus labor physically with Paul, but he also labored spiritually as a "fellow-soldier**." Wearing the full armor of God by living a godly and righteous life.
* **Finally, he is called "your messenger and minister to my need.”**  He had taken the gift from the church to Paul, putting his own life in mortal danger.

**2:29-30 Hold Men Like Epaphroditis in High Regard**

* **We need to begin to recognize those among us who, like Epaphroditus, diligently serve the Lord.**

*Recognize and appreciate the people who serve week after week in the nursery, in the Sunday school, in set-up and tear down…In prayer, in ministry.*

* **The world holds the rich, the famous, and the powerful in high regard; those who set the records, those with the most toys, those with the best skills.**
* **In the kingdom of God, however, we should hold the most godly in the highest regard.**

***Hebrews 13:7,*** *“Remember those who led you, who spoke the word of God to you; and considering the result of their conduct, imitate their faith.”*

* We should look up to them - not as people to worship, but people to imitate.
* People who set the standard for us to pray more, to know the Word better, to serve more diligently, to behave more righteously.
* Let us look around and imitate them as they imitate Christ.

**Live life with a “Spirit of Excellence” as your goal!**

**Questions for this session:**

1. **Do you see yourself as a servant…one who gives and expects nothing in return?**
2. **Do you have friends that you can trust? Do you tell them that they are a trusted friend?**
3. **Write down on paper those people who you know are living for God and you can trust?**
4. **Make an effort to tell them how much you respect and hold them up as dear friends.**

**Session 9—Commending, Correcting, and Challenging Self and Others**

**Philippians 3:1-3,** *“Further, my brothers and sisters, rejoice in the Lord! It is no trouble for me to write the same things to you again, and it is a safeguard for you. 2Watch out for those dogs, those evildoers, those mutilators of the flesh. 3For it is we who are the circumcision, we who serve God by his Spirit, who boast in Christ Jesus, and who put no confidence in the flesh.”*

**Writing to Christians (brothers and sisters) he, again, emphasizes the “rejoicing” aspect of being a Christian.**

**What does this mean in telling them to “rejoice” over and over again?** **Because…it keeps up the spirit of joy in lieu of intimidation and fear.**

**Note: Paul was being persecuted, punished, and aggressively tortured physically, emotionally, and spiritually.**

*Fear was gripping the believers who were still being taunted and thrown out of their homes, having to give up their businesses, and grievously attacked by heathens in their own hometown…as well as being spurned by the Jews who still required circumcision as a means of being one of God’s special group of people.*

***The true people of God and the progress towards the "citizenship of heaven” were those believing Jesus was and is the Messiah (Jews and Gentile believers).***

*NOTE: The following statements/belief is entirely opposite from the “Replacement Theology” taught by many teachers of various denominations. Teachers and Preachers teaching that the Church has replaced the Jews as God’s Chosen People are “false teachers.” This can be a person willingly teaching this heresy (Anti-Semites or one who believes Israel is just another nation like any other), or a person who has been drawn into this type of belief ignorantly misrepresenting the Scriptures, i.e. Read Romans, chapters 9 through 11 to understand what Paul meant as to who are God’s chosen people (The Jews, the branch).
The Gentile believers are grafted into the Root, Jesus the Christ, the Son of God…Which…makes us Gentile believers as joint heirs and adopted children of God. Remember, God’s covenant with Abraham was an unconditional covenant and, although Israel was chastened and received just punishment for their sin, there will always be a remnant who will bring and receive the blessings promised by Jehovah God.*

**In the verses now before us we have false and true Judaism contrasted.**

**I. CONSIDER THE JEWS FALSELY SO CALLED. (Ver. 2.)**

* The custom of the Jews, in their pride, was to regard themselves as children at God's table and all others as only dogs" below it (Matthew 15:26).
* Paul reverses the figure, and has no hesitation in saying that the ritualists of his day, that is, the Jews who were preaching salvation by ceremonies and rituals, were the "dogs" below the table, while believers in Jesus were the children at the feast.
* Moreover, Paul spoke to the Philippian church that the “dogs” were to be avoided by the Philippian converts just as one would avoid dangerous dogs.
* Paul emphatically stated that they had done evil (evildoers) instead of good all through the infant Churches, turning the young converts away from the simplicity that was in Christ.
* Not only so, but the circumcision which they practiced and sought to enforce was only "concision” (mutilation).
* These are not "the people of God," therefore, they are "Jews" only in name, who go about substituting ceremony-keeping in lieu of faith as it is in Christ.

**II. CONSIDER WHO ARE THE TRUE REPRESENTATIVES OF GOD (Ver. 3.) Paul states very succinctly the characteristics of the true believer of God. They are those who are truly circumcised who have been so circumcised in heart as to worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh**

1. **The true believer of God have given up confidence in the flesh.** *They have seen that no incision in the flesh can render them acceptable to the Supreme; that no physical breeding can secure a prize in the great Day of Judgment; that nothing that they are or can be or do can win acceptance before God. Self has ceased to be the ground of confidence. It is giving in lieu of getting; it is humility in lieu of pride; it is faith instead of works or things we do for our salvation.*
2. **The true believer of God rejoice in Christ Jesus - rejoice in Him as their Lord. (V. 1, 3.)** *Self having ceased to be a ground of confidence or source of joy, Jesus has become the true Source. Pardon and acceptance are seen to be secured in Him, and in His fellowship there is an unfailing fountain of delight. Out of the invisible comes a joy unspeakable and full of glory. We rejoice in him as all our Salvation and all our Desire.*
3. **The true believer of God worship the Father in Spirit.**

***This differentiates them from the formalists, whose delight and hope are in ceremonies.***

* *Unless the Spirit moves reverentially within, all the formality and “hoop lah” is in vain.*
* *The Spirit realizes that it cannot be accepted by the Supreme on account of any supposed personal merit, but solely on account of the merit of the Lord Jesus.*
* *The worship which pleases the Father is the joyful worship which has its source in his Son. The outcome of felt obligation unto Jesus, it becomes fragrant in the nostrils of the Most High.*
* *Thus the real believers (those who have given their hearts to Jesus) are made manifest (real Jew). They gather spiritually minded around the feet of the great Father and adore him…just as the Gentile believer.*

**Please understand the difference between Jewish traditionalists and Messianic Jews.**

**Messianic Jews come to the realization that Jesus, indeed, is the Son of God. Their faith is built on nothing less than Jesus blood and righteousness.**

**The Jewish people are still the “apple of God’s eye.” They are the Chosen people of God (Genesis 12:3), CHILDREN OF THE PROMISE (COVENANT). Again, read Romans, Chapters 9-11. In the New Covenant, however, they must come to the saving knowledge required by Jews and Gentiles alike…to accept the fact that Jesus is “the only way to the Father.” The only way to stand before God as His “blood bought” children is to make a personal decision and acknowledge it before God and man.**

***Philippians 3:4-7, “…****though I myself have reasons for such confidence. If someone else thinks they have reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more: 5circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee; 6as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for righteousness based on the law, faultless. 7But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ.”*

***Paul has just attacked the Jewish teachers, Rabbis, and all who were “staunchly” Jewish via birthright and tradition.***

*They might be saying, “Yeah, you are a Christian and you don’t understand about being Jewish to the core.”*

***Paul gives his credentials. I was:***

* ***Circumcised on the 8th day; commandment of God to Abraham…*** *“He that is eight days old shall be circumcised.” Genesis 17:12. He stressed the fact that he had been born into the Jewish faith and had known its privileges and observed its ceremonies since his birth.*
* ***Of the race of Israel.*** *Jews knew that only the calling/special called people were called Israelites. He was a Pharisee…the separated ones.*
* ***From the Tribe of Benjamin…****Not only was he an Israelite, he was one of the elitist of the Israelites. It was from Benjamin the first King of Israel had come (1 Samuel 9:1-2). The Tribe of Benjamin had the honor of being the first in the battle line.*
* ***A persecutor of the church (the Way)…****Paul had been such a staunch and real Jew that he was willing to help wipe out the opponents of Judaism.*
* ***Blameless…meaning that he was of the highest order of the Hebrew faith****. Strict, disciplined to carry out the Law of God. In speech and in actions, he had a burning zeal for God’s laws. “I did not waver in making sure God’s name was reverenced.”*

***Paul did not hold back in his stance against his critics. He had been the villain…and now he is the one revealing that he was wrong in his actions against the “Christ followers.”******All of his credentials did not mean a thing in the life goals he now pursued.***

***Note: We as Christians should acknowledge that our education, our experiences as an unbeliever, and even our birth into a civilized or even an uncivilized state…will help us to appreciate the privilege of witnessing for Christ. If we have been privileged with a healthy (maybe wealthy upbringing), we should acknowledge that “all of our privileged living and experiences mean nothing if we don’t use them for God’s glory.***

***Who are we as Christians?***

***Do we acknowledge that we are “Sinners Saved by Grace?”***

***Will we stand up to the ones wanting our heads?***

****** **

***AND ONE TO GROW ON…DON’T EVER FORGET…In the Book of Genesis, Chapter 12, Verse 1-3, we see what God says about His response to how people treat Israel:***

***"And I will bless those that bless you and curse the one who curses you. And in you shall all families of the earth be blessed."***

***In the Book of Numbers, where the Bible is telling us about the Nation of Israel that God delivers out of bondage in Egypt, it tells us:***

***"He crouched. He lay down as a lion, and as a great lion. Who shall stir him up? Blessed is he who blesses you, and cursed is he who curses you."***

***Although many will point out that this Scripture had its fulfillment in the Old Testament days, it doesn't seem to have any time-related limitation on it. It doesn't say, "I will bless those who bless you only until the Messiah comes. . .", or have any other conditions that would limit the result of actions toward Israel.***

***1 Kings 10:9, “****Blessed be the Lord thy God, which delighted in thee, to set thee on the throne of* ***Israel****: because the Lord loved* ***Israel*** *forever, therefore made he thee king, to do judgment and justice.”*

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**Question:**

**Do you love Israel? Do you love the Israeli people? Do you pray for them? Do you stand with them when they are being persecuted? Do you desire that they be with you as a citizen of heaven when we stand before God?**

* **If not, I challenge you to find in Scripture where God reneged on His promises and covenant with this chosen people of God. I want to be on God’s side. I want to see every Jew saved. That is my prayer. That is my desire for the apple of His eye.**
* **If you do, God will bless you. That is a promise!**

**Session 10, Paul’s Exuberance in Life’s Blessings:**

**DEVELOPING A NORMAL CHRISTIAN LIFE**

**Philippians 3:7-11,** *“But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith. I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead.”*

When we hear about people giving into sin, not going to church because “those people don’t think like I do”…or, saying to others, “I’m saved, but I don’t think God wants us to not enjoy life and the pleasures of the world.” Some may say, **"Well, that's just normal Christianity!"**

**We think, for some reason, that the Christian life is supposed to be:**

* One in which we lose more than we win;
* We fail more than we succeed;
* We cry more than we shout;
* We just barely get by and let others go all the way for God.

**We think the Christian life is one in which we fail and seek to justify our failures by pointing to others who are as bad off as we ourselves are.**

**That kind of thinking is “negative Christianity”…and just wrong!**

**What those above are thinking as "normal Christianity" is really…"abnormal Christianity"!**

**The normal Christian:**

* Walks in victory in this life!
* Is in love with Jesus and lives it!
* Is not the victim, but he is the victor!

***However, the normal Christian is an elusive person! Why? Because he is so rare!***

**The church is filled with the run of the mill, abnormal variety of Christians, when it should be filled with the other kind…On fire, all out, unselfish people who are proud and happy to be alive in the world of today.**

**If you want to see a normal Christian, then look no farther than the Apostle Paul. He lived the normal Christian life!**

You would never have heard Paul say, "**Well, I'm just doing the best I can! Everything is against me and I have the hardest time being a Christian.**"

You would never have heard Paul say, "**I just can't stop this sin! I am so weak! It has such a hold on me and I know that I will never be free from it."**

You would have never heard Paul say, "**I just feel like giving up! I can't live this way anymore and besides, no one understands how I feel. Nobody cares!**"

**That wasn't Paul! No, he said,** "**Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in anything ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you.**" **Philippians 3:13-15**!

**In Philippians 3:7-11, Paul gives up some insight into what the normal Christian life is all about.**

**How to Develop a Normal Christian Life**.

**YOU MUST CALCULATE YOUR LOSSES, v. 7-8**

* **This Involves A Personal Assessment** - If anyone had a reason to hope they could make it based on their birth and their religious background, it was Paul! All of this Paul accounted to be a loss. The word "**loss**" means "**damage or injury**" In Paul's life, what he thought were assets were really liabilities! All those things worked against him to prevent him from trusting a source outside his religion or outside himself... Being raised in the church and being a good person all your life will not save your soul! You still must be born again - **John 3:3**!
* **This Involves A Present Accounting** - Paul used present tense verbs to describe what he does with those things that he used to consider assets. He counts them as loss and he views them as refuse! He is telling us that he lays all he is and has alongside Jesus and sees it all as garbage compared to Him! In other words, nothing in Paul's life was nearly as important as being a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ
* **This Involves A Precious Acceptance** - Notice why Paul did this, "**for Christ**", **v. 7**; "**for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord**", **v. 8**; "**for whom**", **v. 8**; "**that I may win Christ**", **v. 8**. Paul was willing to turn his back on everything that was important to him so that he might be saved! He saw Jesus as worth more than everything else! Notice that he uses the language of **"personal relationship"** in these verses

**YOU MUST CONSECRATE YOUR LIFE, V. 8-9**

* **There Is Persistence In A Consecrated Life** - When Paul came to Jesus, he counted all his assets as losses and this he continues to do day by day! This is talking about a mindset that says "**Jesus Christ is first in my life and I will allow nothing to come between me and Him**!" The faithful, growing Christian is the one who is always looking for ways to deepen his relationship with Jesus and is constantly on the lookout for things that would hinder that relationship, **Heb. 12:1-2**
* **There Is Pleasure In A Consecrated Life** - Paul speaks of the "**excellency of the knowledge..**.” The word "**excellency**" means "**superior, above and beyond the ordinary**." Paul says that his just being able to "**know**" Jesus is a privilege beyond compare. Here, he is referring to the knowledge that comes by experience. It is one thing to hear someone else speak of Jesus, Who He is and what He can do. It is quite another to experience Him for yourself! Paul says that knowing Jesus is worth more than anything he may have given up to come to God.
* **There Is A Payoff For A Consecrated Life** - There may have been those who questioned Paul's mental state when he turned his back on family, fame, fortune and future to follow this man named Jesus. Surely he gave up a lot from human perspective. But, for Paul, what he gained far outweighed what he may have left behind! Paul knew that all his credentials and all his family associations and religious achievements would amount to nothing when he stood before the Lord

**YOU MUST CONCENTRATE YOUR LONGINGS, v. 10-11**

* **The Consecrated Life Longs For A Personal Experience** - Paul says that he wants to know Jesus. He has already talked about his experience of Jesus in salvation. Now, he relates that he wants to grow in his experience of the Lord Jesus day by day. The normal Christian life is one that continually learns about Jesus and grows in grace day by day, **2 Pet. 3:18**.
* **The Consecrated Life Longs For A Powerful Experience** - **"The power of His resurrection"**, refers to the power of the life of Christ living through him. Paul has learned what so many people never figure out: you cannot live the Christian life! It cannot be done! If a life is to be changed and lived in the newness of His power, then it must be lived through the Christian by the Lord Himself. This is just what Paul himself said that he desired in **Gal. 2:20**. The genuine, consecrated life is one that longs for the power of Christ to be in control of every aspect of life!
* **The Consecrated Life Longs For A Pain Bearing Experience** - **"The fellowship of His sufferings**" This phrase calls to mind a readiness to go all the way with Jesus, even to the point of death! The consecrated life is one that sees “suffering” or “going through hardships” as a means of growing closer to the Lord. It is not that we desire it, but we are ready for it if it comes along…and, chances are it will!
* **The Consecrated Life Longs For A Practical Experience** - **"being made conformable unto His death"** This phrase speaks about coming to the place where we reckon ourselves dead with Christ. This is the challenge to every believer! To die to sin and to self is to be more alive in the Spirit than ever before, **Rom. 6:6; 11**
* **The Consecrated Life Longs For A Pleasant Experience** - **Verse 11** is about Paul's desire to leave this world in the rapture. He longs to be with the Lord and to return with Him to glory! This is the heartbeat of every consecrated life! It longs for the return of the Lord Jesus. It throbs with anticipation over His return. Therefore, it lives a holy, dedicated, consecrated and expectant life, looking and longing for the return of the Lord from glory, **1 John 3:1-3**.

**In light of these verses, would you have to say that your Christian life is normal or abnormal?**

***The church and the world have seen enough abnormal Christians to last for many life times.***

**Don't you think it's time that people like you and I showed this world what Christianity is all about?**

***That it isn't about church buildings and denominations; that it isn't about offerings, rules and regulations; but that it is about a life changing encounter with Jesus Christ. We need to get real before the world and show them the difference Jesus makes!***

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**Session 11: Be an Ambassador for Christ!**

**“A Representative of Christ Jesus”**

**Philippians 3:12-14…Press On Towards the Goal**

*“Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. 13Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, 14I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.”*

**We haven’t arrived yet!**
*1John 1:8-10, “If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.”*

**Paul knew he wasn't there yet. He knew he was far from perfect. But he kept pressing on, kept persevering in the Christian walk.**

**He uses the descriptive language of someone striving forward, pressing on, and reaching out.**

Picture a hiker trying to make it to the peak of a mountain; a runner trying to make it to the end of a marathon; a swimmer trying to cross the English Channel or, an Olympic cyclist trying to win the race.

**Remember…There is no greater defeat than to dwell on what you've already passed…how many miles you've already gone, how many steps you've already taken.**

Paul says that he was forgetting what lay behind and kept reaching forward.

**This is how to avoid a trap in our Christianity. The past doesn't matter - it's already passed.**

Are you growing in Christ now? Are you ministering now? Are you praying now? What matters is where you're at in the Lord today.

**Don't rest on the growth you experienced in the '90's.**

**Ask yourself, "How much am I growing now?"**

**Remember, Philippians 1:6** ... *“He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.”***God wants you to keep growing, to keep serving Him.**

**Philippians 3:15-16, *“****All of us, then, who are mature should take such a view of things. And if on some point you think differently, that too God will make clear to you. Only let us live up to what we have already attained.”*

**Having the Right Attitude**
**The people who are in the place where they know they are growing but haven’t arrived should have the attitude of pressing on to the next step; to keep growing in God.**

**The Lord will not let us stagnate in our spiritual life without prompting.**

* When Adam fell into sin, the Lord entered the garden and asked him, Gen. 3:9 ...“Where are you?”
* When Elijah ran away in fear and was hiding out in a cave, the Lord came to him and said,
1Kgs. 19:9 ...“What are you doing here, Elijah?”
* Jesus asked His disciples,
Luke 6:46 “...why do you call Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ and do not do what I say?"

**Does the Lord see our attitudes of being content where we are and not growing in our spiritual maturity…and prompt us?**

**That's not okay with Him, and He will challenge us** - "Where are you? What are you doing here? Why do you call Me ‘Lord’ if you won't do what I say?"

**If the Holy Spirit is living in us, wouldn’t we want to satisfy the desires of his heart…not ours?**

***“Be careful of the things you say; Keep them soft and sweet. For you never know from day to day which ones you will have to eat.”***

*Also…watch what you think and what you do. Make sure they line up with what is approved by the Holy Spirit…for He lives in you if you are one of God’s children.*

**Are our actions lining up with our credentials and resume?**

**Is our appetite longing for the desires of this world…or do we hunger and thirst after righteousness?**

**ARE WE STRETCHING TOWARD THE MARK OF THE HIGH CALLING OF GOD?**

**The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly Examples of a Christ-Follower**

***Philippians 3:17-19,*** *“Join together in following my example, brothers and sisters, and just as you have us as a model, keep your eyes on those who live as we do. 18For, as I have often told you before and now tell you again even with tears, many live as enemies of the cross of Christ. 19Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is set on earthly things.”*

**It is important that we imitate the faith of people who are like Jesus.**

***Hebrews 13:7****, “Remember those who led you, who spoke the word of God to you; and considering the result of their conduct, imitate their faith.”*

* **Good apples and Bad Apples…There are those who claim to be walking with Jesus, but in reality are sold out to their fleshly desires.**
* **Today, we see these people in the form of those who are selling "cheap grace." Those who say, "Since I'm saved by grace, I can do what I want. All things are lawful for me."
But the true Christian does not abuse God's forgiveness and grace in this way.**

**How can you know if you're deceiving yourself? How can you make sure that you're not an enemy of the cross of Christ?**

**We need to ask ourselves some questions! It is what we are to do when we are getting ready to take communion.**

**You are “to examine yourselves” and take heed as to cleansing your body, soul, and spirit before you partake.**

***1 Corinthians 11:27-32,*** *“So then, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. 28Everyone ought to examine themselves before they eat of the bread and drink from the cup. 29For those who eat and drink without discerning the body of Christ eat and drink judgment on themselves. 30That is why many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep. 31But if we were more discerning with regard to ourselves, we would not come under such judgment. 32Nevertheless, when we are judged in this way by the Lord, we are being disciplined so that we will not be finally condemned with the world”*

**Do you live your life to serve your appetites for money, power, or sex?**

**Do you follow after whatever you desire, no matter whether it's right or wrong?**

**What do you glory in and what do you brag about regarding the Christian life*?*** *Is it that even though you're a sinner, Christ loves you and forgave you?*
**Where is your focus? Are you consumed with the things of this world…the cares and desires of this life?**

*God doesn't want you to waste your precious life obsessing about the matters and pleasures of this life - it's so temporary. Is money your focus? Is it sports? Is it success? If your mind is set on this earth and its treasures, you're in a bad place as a Christian…because this isn't supposed to be your permanent residence.*
This world is not our home. We are aliens, strangers, pilgrims, and sojourners in it. We are people passing through. People who are traveling don't pack heavy. They don't get weighed down. They only bring what they need, and they accomplish their purpose.

***Peter said****, “Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts, which wage war against the soul. Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles, so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may on account of your good deeds, as they observe {them,} glorify God in the day of visitation,” 1Pet. 2:11-12.*

We are too weighed down and too over-burdened. Many of us have forgotten our purpose for being here. It is to grow in Christ and lead people to Him. It is not to find fame and fortune.

**It is the enemies of the cross who have their minds set on earthly things.**

The writer of Hebrews lists great people that had great faith in God, and then says that they “...confessed that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. For those who say such things make it clear that they are seeking a country of their own” Hebrews 11:13-14.

**We must remember that we are not of this earth. This world is not our home. We are aliens, strangers, pilgrims, and sojourners in it. We are people passing through to get to our permanent residence…heaven with the King!**

***Philippians******3:20-21, “****But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, 21who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.”*

**Heavenly Citizenship**
**Our citizenship is in heaven, not here.**
*Col. 1:13, “For He delivered us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son.”***Jesus Christ is coming back to this earth to take us to heaven.** At the airport when you are awaiting flight to get you home, you don’t set up a tent for the long-term…the airport is simply a stop-over, a place you are temporarily in, but you're headed home.

**Most of us need this new perspective in relation to this earth.**
**Jesus Christ is coming soon, to bring us home.**

**Are you watching and waiting?**

**Session 12—The Last Chapter of the Letter to the Philippian Church! Wow!!**

**An uplifting, informative and heartfelt letter to those you love is a rewarding act for both the writer and the recipient.**

**What is in a letter?**

A **letter** is a written message from one party to another containing information. Letters guarantee the preservation of communication between both parties. They bring friends or relatives closer together, enrich professional relationships and provide a satisfying mean of self-expression. Letters contribute to the protection and conservation of literacy, which is the ability to write and read. Letters have been sent since antiquity and are mentioned in Biblical times often.

According to the testimony of ancient historian Hellanicus the first recorded hand written letter (epistle) was by Persian Queen Atossa daughter of Syrus, mother of Xerxes around 500 BC.

**Despite email, letters are still popular, particularly in business and for official communications. Letters have the following advantages over email:**

* No special device is needed to receive a letter, just a postal address, and the letter can be read immediately on receipt.
* A letter in the sender's own handwriting is more personal than an email.
* Letter writing leads to the mastery of the technique of good writing.
* Letter writing leads to the mastery of punctuation and paragraphing.
* Letter writing engages in reading and self-improvement, getting better at creativeness and originality.
* Commitment to reading and thinking.
* Letter writing can provide an extension of the face-to-face therapeutic encounter.
* Letter writing can acknowledge special, unusual or challenging situations.
* Letter writing can help students in reading and writing procedure.

**There is something about writing and receiving a letter that is therapeutic and self-satisfying.**

***Philippians 4:1-5,*** *“Therefore, my brothers and sisters, you whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord in this way, dear friends! I plead with Euodia and I plead with Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord. Yes, and I ask you, my true companion, help these women since they have contended at my side in the cause of the gospel, along with Clement and the rest of my co-workers, whose names are in the book of life. Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! 5Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near.”*

Previously on “24”…Previously on A.D…Previously on THE GREEN HORNET! I’m just kidding!

You missed it…so here is where we are!

Paul has written to the Philippians to encourage them in joy and provoke them to growth.

**We saw in last week's study that there are:**

* Bad examples in the church,
* Abusers of grace, who are caught up in the things of this world.

**But he reminded the Philippians:**

* Not to fall into that trap
* That their citizenship is in heaven, and
* That Jesus Christ was coming soon to take them there.

**Philippians 4:1, Paul stated to the Philippian church members… “My Joy and Crown”**
It is clear that Paul loves these people. He calls them "my beloved brethren," and tells them that they are his joy.

**But one description he uses here is strange: he calls them "my crown."**
The word crown here is the Greek word "STEF-an-os." That is the wreath that would be placed on the heads of those who were victorious in the Olympic Games. It describes a reward or prize given for winning. Paul saying, "You guys are my Olympic Gold Medal. You're my reward.”

**The Bible tells us that, in heaven, there are actually four different rewards available to the believer, each described as crowns. These crowns are awarded for different behaviors on this earth.**

**They are:**

1. **The Crown of Life; given to all who love God**.

***James 1:12,*** *“Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life, which {the Lord} has promised to those who love Him.”*

1. **The Crown of Glory (1Pe 5:4); given to those who are examples to the church and who lead by serving***.*

***1Pet. 5:1-4****, “Therefore, I exhort the elders among you, as {your} fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed, shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to {the will of} God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness; nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.”*

1. **The Crown of Righteousness (2Ti 4:8), given to those believers that do not get caught up in the cares and desires of the world. Those who live righteously, because they know the Lord is coming back any minute**.

***2Tim. 4:8****, “…in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing.”*

1. **The Crown of Exultation (1Th 2:19), the reward for leading people to Jesus Christ and discipling them.**

***1Thessalonians 2:19-20,*** *“For who is our hope or joy or crown of exultation? Is it not even you, in the presence of our Lord Jesus at His coming? For you are our glory and joy.*”

This is the crown Paul was referring to here.
There is a tremendous reward in heaven waiting for those who lead people to salvation and discipleship. The angel Gabriel said to Daniel, *Dan. 12:3 “...Those who have insight will shine brightly like the brightness of the expanse of heaven, and those who lead the many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever."***Our reward in heaven will be greatly increased by those that we shared the gospel with, those we led to Christ, and those we taught and encouraged in the ways of God.**

***Paul would say here, "You guys are my crown. It is your new life in Christ that will increase my reward from Christ."***

**Philippians 4:2-3, Live In Harmony with Each Other**

Two women (*Euodia and Syntyche*) were at odds with one another. We don't know what the division or disagreement was about. We do know that they were not living in harmony with one another.
**Paul indicates that each of them had a different understanding about something.**

**It wasn’t a matter of one of them sinning against the other - they were just on opposite sides of the fence over an issue.**

**Paul's command to them publicly is that they need to be united in the Lord.**
Notice that he does not say, "Let's get them into long-term counseling. Let's have a public forum for them to air out their differences. Let's get down to the heart of the matter and see which one of them is really right."

**No, he simply tells them to live in harmony in the Lord.**
We can live in harmony without seeing eye-to-eye.

We can live in love if we're living in the Lord.

**The way to bring peace is not to go back to the argument, but to go back to the cross. Not to look at the source of the fight, but to unlock the secrets of forgiveness.**
**The key to bringing disagreeing Christians together is to remind them that they are supposed to be like Jesus.**

If we weren't so busy sticking up for our rights and trying to convince people that our perspective is the right one, we could be busy forgiving people and loving them.
And it is our place as Christians to not only practice this, but to encourage others to do it as well.

**Paul makes an individual reference to his "true comrade/companion," asking this person to help these women.**

**But who is it?**

Some have suggested that it is everyone in the church, individually. Remember that this letter was written, Philippians 1:1 “...to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, including the overseers and deacons.”
Each person in the church could have, and should have, felt that it was their obligation to help these two women live in harmony in the Lord.

**Who was this Clement Paul mentions? We don’t know.**

**If you had to have your whole life summed up in one sentence, would you like it to be summed up like Clement or like Euodia and Syntyche?**

**Philippians 4:4-5…Rejoice In The Lord Always…Be Gentle in Forgiving!**
**Once again in this letter, Paul emphasizes the need for joy.**

**It is not based on life's circumstances.**

As a matter of fact, notice how much of a necessity the Lord is in every aspect of life. Just in these four verses, Paul has said,
Philippians 4:1...stand firm in the Lord.
Philippians 4:2...live in harmony in the Lord.
Philippians 4:4…Rejoice in the Lord.
**Apart from the Lord, we cannot stand firm. Apart from the Lord, we cannot live in harmony with others. And apart from the Lord, we cannot have permanent joy.**

**What about this “gentle (forbearing) spirit?**
Paul tells them to let their forbearing spirit be obvious.

This is a word that describes someone who is gentle when they are wronged. Someone who is patient when they didn't get what they deserved**.**

**Why should I be like that? Paul tells us: "The Lord is near."**
***This world is passing away. It is only a matter of time before it is consumed in fire. Note:***

* ***Every dollar that we deserved to be paid will be destroyed.***
* ***Every argument that we should have won will be forgotten.***
* ***Everything that was stolen from us will cease to exist.***

***None of it will matter.***

**Do these things still matter to you?**

***Be reminded that the Lord is near, He's coming soon. Learn to be patient and gentle when you get the raw deal, when you get shorted.***\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Session 13, The Perfect Peace of God**

**What Do Christians Desire More Than Anything Else as We Try to Live in This Fallen World?**

**Financial Success? A Good and Productive Family? No Serious Problems? Good Health?**

***Philippians 4:6-9,*** *“Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus (peace that passes our understanding, KJV). Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.”*

**I contend that what Paul spoke of in Philippians 4:6-7 is what every Christian longs for more than anything else and what I believe is the most effective and useful tool for the Christian given in the entire Bible.**

**That is, The Perfect Peace of God.**

**It is:**

* The cure for anxiety,
* A test for the existence of God (of course, He doesn’t have to prove Himself), and
* The key to what everyone in the world is searching for.

**The first two verses (4:6-7) contain a conditional promise of God**.

The difference between conditional and unconditional promises are whether you have to do something to get what is promised or not (a promise without our intervention or,..a promise that requires action on our part…an obligation).

**In this case, if you do three things, God will give you something.**
**Your three obligations are:**

1. **Prayer,**
2. **Supplication, and**
3. **Thanksgiving.**

**Although all three would seem to fall generically under what we call prayer, they are three distinct actions.**

1. **Prayer**—The word "prayer" here means a devotional and worshipful communication with God.

Talk to God about what He means to you. Worship and adore Him in prayer.

1. **Supplication**—“supplication” means to make request.

Let God know what you're concerned about. Talk to Him about your needs.

1. **Thanksgiving**—Thanksgiving is more than the holiday we will celebrate one of the last Thursday’s of November.

**It means what it says: the giving of thanks.**

* Thanking God in the midst of your circumstances.
* Thanking Him for using it to draw you to Him.
* Thanking Him for everything you can think of that has resulted or will result from the situation.

**Now, God's end of this bargain is the peace that passes understanding**.

If you will do these three things, God will give you this peace.

This peace guards your heart from distress, and your mind from racing.

Although the situation you've been praying about hasn't changed, you suddenly have peace in the midst of it.
**God will always be faithful to keep this promise if you are faithful to do the three actions in prayer: worship, request, and thanks.**
**As the Scripture says,**
***Isa. 26:3 (KJV), “Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.”***

**“You, *Lord*, give perfect peace to those who keep their purpose firmand put their trust in you.” (GNT).**

**Actually, verse 6 tells us the meaning of a living prayer life.**

***Verse 6,*** *“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God;”*

* **Be anxious for nothing**: This is a command, not an option. Undue care is an intrusion into an arena that belongs to God alone.
* **But in everything by prayer and supplication**: Paul wrote that **everything** is the proper subject of prayer. There are not “some areas” of our lives that are of no concern to God.

**Prayer and supplication**: These two aspects of prayer are similar, but distinct.

**Prayer** is a broader word that can mean all of our communication with God, but **supplication** directly asks God to do something.

**Many of our prayers go unanswered because we do not *ask* God for anything. Here God invites us simply to let your requests be made known.**

**Get this…He wants to know!**

* **Be made known**: God already knows our requests before we pray them; yet He will often *wait* for our participation through prayer before granting that which we request.
* **With thanksgiving**: This guards against a whining, complaining spirit before God when we let our requests be made known. We really can be anxious for nothing, pray about everything, and be thankful for anything.

**Verse 7, The Promise of Peace (A more detailed idea of the Peace of God).**

*“And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”*

**The Bible describes three great aspects of peace that relate to God.**

* ***Peace from God****:* Paul continually used this as an introduction to his letters; it reminds us that our peace comes to us as a gift from God.
* ***Peace with God***: This describes a relationship that we enter into with God through the finished work of Jesus Christ.
* ***Peace of God***: It is beyond "all mind"; that is, beyond our power of thinking.

 **What is God's peace?** “The unruffled serenity of the infinitely-happy God, the eternal composure of the absolutely well-contented God." (Charles Spurgeon)

* **Which surpasses all understanding**:
* **It isn't that it is senseless and therefore impossible to understand, but that it is beyond our ability to understand and to explain - therefore it must be *experienced*.**
* **This peace doesn't just surpass the understanding of the worldly man; it surpasses all understanding.**

***Even the godly man cannot comprehend this peace without the Holy Spirit giving it to him/her.***

* **Guard your hearts and minds**:
* **The word guard speaks of a military action.**
* This is something that the peace of God does for us;
* It is a peace that is on guard over our heart and mind.

**When people seem to "lose" their heart or mind, it often is connected to an absence of the peace of God in their life. The peace of God then does not act as a guard for their hearts and minds.**

**The Right Place to Put our Minds…The Right Attitude…The Right Actions to Assure Peace of Mind and Heart!**

***Philippians 4:8-****, “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.”*

**Whatever things are true: Paul's list of things on which we should meditate translates well from the Greek to the English; there is no great need for elaboration upon each item:**

**NOBLE…JUST…PURE…LOVELY…GOOD REPORT…VIRTUE…PRAISEWORTHY:**

**These, Paul would say, are the fruit and the food of the mind that is guarded by the peace of God. When we put these good things into our mind, they *stay* (imbedded like a rock) in our mind…and then (praise God): they come forth from us.**

**Meditate on these things**: **Much of the Christian life comes down to the *mind*.**

* Romans 12:2 speaks of the essential place of being *transformed by the renewing of your mind* and
* 2 Corinthians 10:5 speaks of the importance of *casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ*.

**What we choose to meditate on matters.**

**What Paul describes here is a practical way to bring *every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ*.**

**Philippians 4:9, A Return to the Idea of Following Paul's Example.**

***Philippians 4:9****, “The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you.”*

* **The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do**:
	+ Paul had the integrity to present himself as an example of all these things to the Philippians.
	+ He really could say, "Follow me as I follow Jesus."

 **And the God of peace will be with you**:

If the Philippians did as Paul had instructed, not only would they have had the peace *of* God, but the **God of peace** would have also been with them.

**We need to pray for others before we pray for ourselves!**

**To receive the true peace of God, we must ask and receive according to His Word.**

**Session 14: A Thankful Heart…A Giving Heart…a Tender Heart!**

**Philippians 4:*10-14****, “But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now at last your care for me has flourished again; though you surely did care, but you lacked opportunity. Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content: I know how to be abased (reduced/humbled), and I know how to abound (to have plenty). Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound (be filled) and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ who* strengthens me. Nevertheless you have done well that you shared in my distress.”

“**Your care for me has flourished again”**: This refers to the financial support brought by Epaphroditus (Philippians 2:25). Paul didn't want to imply that the Philippians didn't care before, only that previously they **lacked the opportunity**. Opportunity meaning that they did not have the means to get and give the support (monetarily) to Paul…and now, their **means of support** for Paul not only **flourished again, but that now they have people who can and are willing to give the support (money and prayerful support) for him and to him**.

**One of the promises in the Word of God…is the promise of “the giver will be blessed.”**

*Acts 20:35, “In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said:*

***‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’ ”***

**The three (3) “Gs” that define true giving.**

**We must GIVE:**

1. **Generously**—Deuteronomy 15:7, *“If there is a poor man among your brothers in any of the towns of the land that the Lord your God is giving you, do not be hardhearted or tight fisted toward your poor brother.”……*Proverbs 31:20…. *“She opens her hands to the poor and extends her hands to the needy.”*

Proverbs 22:9, *“A generous man will himself be blessed.”*

Romans 12:6-8, *“We have different gifts, according to the grace given us….if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously….”*

1. **Graciously**—**With the grace that was given to you.**

You are to be gracious as God was gracious to you…. Romans 5:17, *“…we have received God’s abundant provision of grace.”*

Paul stated in Philippians 1:7, *“All of you share in God’s grace with me.”*

If God can give grace graciously…If Jesus gave his life willingly…and graciously…why should we who long to be like Jesus, not want to be gracious in our giving?

*“It is by grace you have been saved….”* (Ephesians 2:5)

1. **Gladly*—****“Serve the Lord with gladness…”* (Psalm 100:2)

*“God loves a cheerful giver.”* 2 Cor. 9:7 (One that gives gladly and joyfully).

If you want to open the floodgates of heaven into your life….yes, your life…all you have to do is to learn to give as an act of love and obedience to the King of Glory.

* “**Not that I speak in regard to need”**: Paul reminded the Philippians that his thankfulness for the Philippians' giving (monetarily) wasn't *because* he was needy (though he was in fact in need), but because it was good for *them* to be givers.

**What is the opposite of being a giver?...A Taker!**

* **“I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content”**: This was *how* Paul could say that his thankfulness was not based upon his own need. Even though Paul was in need, he was content where he was at - even in his Roman imprisonment. Have you heard Paul, in any of his circumstances after being born-again, gripe and complain about the circumstances (predicaments) he finds himself in?

**Why**? Because he longs to be at home with Christ, but knows that his life on earth is for a purpose…that of yielding to what the Lord desires him to do.

**“I have learned”**: Paul had to *learn* contentment; it isn't natural to mankind. Learning can be different than being taught. Learning requires experience, action, and being able to make choices during crisis; being taught is listening to a teacher, watching a teacher, or performing after a lesson has been taught (maybe with the mentor observing and testing).

* **“I know how to be abased (reduced…even to be humbled to the point of having nothing), and I know how to abound (be filled and have plenty)”**:

*Paul reminds us that his contentment was not only theoretical. He actually lived this. Paul had been financially well-off; he had been financially needy. Remember, he came from a scholarly background (well-educated; \*Gamaliel being his teacher) and politician (A Sanhedrin) to one being accused of murder on one side and a traitor on the other. He was in the cross-hairs of the right and left. God permitted his chief apostle to be reduced! The grace of Christ supported him under every ordeal and every circumstance! This was not in Paul’s demeanor…to be patient. Jesus can change your whole attitude, disposition, and temper.*

*\*In the Christian tradition, Gamaliel is celebrated as a Pharisee doctor of Jewish Law. The Acts of the Apostles chapter 5 speaks of Gamaliel as a man of great respect who spoke in favor of the arrested apostles of Jesus in Acts 5:34,]and the Jewish law teacher of Paul the Apostle in Acts 22:3 .*

**Paul also knew how to abound.** “When some ministers are in the lime light and getting accolades, their heads grow dizzy, and they are ready to fall." (Spurgeon)

One professor at SAGU put it this way (mentoring young ministers). This has already been discussed previously, but it it is worth repeating.

“There are the 3 G’s you have to watch out for when you start to minister.

1. Gold (money, wages, gifts),
2. Girls (flirting, tempting of the opposite sex),
3. Glory (accolades, name in the headlines, position).
* **“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me”**: This refers to Paul's ability to be content in all things. To achieve this contentment, he needed the strength of Jesus Christ.

Unfortunately, many people take this verse out of context and use it to reinforce a "triumphalist" or "super-Christian" mentality, instead of seeing that the strength of Jesus in Paul's life was evident in his ability **to be content** when he did **suffer need**.

We must always also put this precious statement of faith in connection with the last part of John 15:5, “*….for without Me (Jesus) you can do nothing*.”

**With Jesus we can do all things, without Him we can't do anything.**

* **“Nevertheless you have done well that you shared in my distress”**: In speaking about his ability to be content, Paul did not want to give the impression that the Philippians had somehow done something wrong in supporting Paul.

**But there was a real sense in which the giving by the Philippians was better *for them* than it was for Paul (you have done well).**

**Godly giving actually does more good for the giver than for the one who receives.**

***Luke 6:38****, “Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.”*

**Questions to ask yourself before the next session:**

* **Why give when the world is not willing to understand the giving principle in lieu or the “get all you can while you can” principle?**
* **Do we give for something in return, i.e. monetary gifts to charity organizations for tax purposes, giving in order to be recognized in a program as a contributor, giving to our church because our friends are going to be asking if we are tithers and support our place of worship?**
* **How can we have the peace of God without allowing the peace of God to be evident in our lives (how we live, attitudes, confident in bad or troubling circumstances)?**

**Session 15, The Importance of Sending a “THANK YOU NOTE” to those who support or give to our well-being!**

**What is meant by our “well-being”?**

**Webster’s Definition:** the state of being happy, healthy, prosperous, or successful**.**

**World’s Definition: Having all the things a person could wish or hope for no matter who it hurts or what consequences it achieves toward the final goal of self-gratification.**

**God’s Definition: Blessed, satisfied, and successful with life’s challenges under any condition; physical, mental, emotional, or spiritual.** *Note: Much of what* we think *will improve our wellbeing is either misguided or just plain wrong. Contrary to what many people believe, wellbeing isn't just about being happy. Nor is it only about being wealthy or successful. And it's certainly not limited to physical health and wellness. In fact, focusing on any of these elements in isolation may drive us to frustration and even a sense of failure. Without God’s touch on our lives, our spiritual bareness will drive all other elements of wellbeing to the “back forty” of our mind and heart.*

***Therefore, those that support our well-being are those who contribute to our “whole person” (body, soul, and spirit) for the good of those who are or potential believers in Christ Jesus. We should recognize those who support that “well-being” part of our exterior and inner self. Providing others with a blessing of support in money, prayer, and the honest and sincere caring for the “welfare” of others shows a genuine heart for others “wellbeing.”***

**“Giving” can be in the form of monetary support, prayer support, or faithful and friendly fellowship.**

**Paul sent a letter to the Philippian church thanking them for their past and present gift(s).**

***Philippians 4:15-18,*** *“Now you Philippians know also that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church shared with me concerning giving and receiving but you only. For even in Thessalonica you sent aid once and again for my necessities. Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that abounds to your account. Indeed I have all and abound. I am full, having received from Epaphroditus the things sent from you, a sweet-smelling aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well pleasing to God.”*

**What does Paul mean at “The beginning of the gospel?**

This refers to Paul's pioneering missionary efforts in Europe, recorded in Acts 16 and following.

* **No church shared with me concerning giving and receiving but you (the church at Philippi) only**:
* The Philippians were the only ones to support Paul during this particular period. Paul especially remembered how they supported him when he was in Thessalonica. "Probably the gift does not come to very much, if estimated in Roman coin; but he makes a great deal of it, and sits down to write a letter of thanks abounding in rich expressions like these." (Spurgeon)
* "While laboring to plant the church there (Thessalonica), he was supported partly by working with his hands, 1 Thessalonians 2:9; 2 Thessalonians 3:7-9; and partly by the contributions sent him from Philippi. Even the Thessalonians had contributed little to his maintenance: this is not spoken to their credit." (Clarke)
* **Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that abounds to your account**:
* Paul wasn't so much interested in the **gift** on his own behalf, but in the **fruit that abounds to their account**. Their giving increased the fruit in their **account** before God.
* "It is not the actual gift put into Paul's hands which has brought him joy, but the giving and the meaning of that giving. It is the truest index to the abiding reality of his work." (Expositors)

**This reflects one of the most important principles regarding giving in the Scriptures: that we are never the poorer for having given. God will never be our debtor, and we can never out-give God.**

**The gift is like a sweet-smelling aroma; certainly an acceptable sacrifice, well pleasing to God:**

* **Paul described the gift of the Philippians in terms that remind us of sacrifices in the Old Testament (Genesis 8:21, Exodus 29:18, 29:25, and 29:41).**
* Our giving to God's work is similar to Old Testament sacrifices, which also cost the person bringing the sacrifice a lot. Bulls and rams did not come cheaply in that day.
* Ephesians 5:2 uses the same terminology in reference to Jesus' sacrifice for us; our sacrifices are likewise pleasing to God as **a sweet-smelling aroma***.*
* In 2 Corinthians 8:1-5, Paul boasted about the Philippians as an example of the right kind of giving. He describes how they gave *willingly*, out of their own *need*, and they gave after *first having given themselves* to the Lord.

**Paul declares a Promise to the Philippians regarding their own financial needs, v. 19** *“And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.”*

* **The Promise: My God shall supply all your need**: This promise *meant* something to them!
	+ We shouldn't think that the Philippians were wealthy benefactors of Paul who could easily spare the money. As Paul described them in 2 Corinthians 8, it is plain that their giving was sacrificial.
	+ "He says to them, “You have helped me; but my God shall supply you.”
	+ The promise is to supply ***all* your need**; but it is **all your *need*** (not a promise to go beyond needs). In this, the promise is both broad and yet restricted.
* **According to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus**:
* This is an extraordinary, miraculous *measure* of giving. Therefore, we should anticipate that there would be no lack in God's supply.
* "The rewarding will not be merely from His wealth, but also in a manner that befits His wealth - on a scale worthy of His wealth." (Martin)
* This promise simply expresses what Jesus said in

Luke 6:38: “*Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you.”*

**Conclusion to the letter…A brief doxology.**

***Philippians 4:20,*** *“Now to our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen.”*

 “**Be glory forever and ever…”**This was not a casual or reactive comment made by Paul in the way that we throw off comments like "glory to God" or "praise the Lord" in our Christian culture.

Paul genuinely wanted God to be glorified and was willing to be used in whatever way God saw fit to glorify Himself (Philippians 1:20).

“**Amen”**: This was a word borrowed from Hebrew meaning, "So be it." It is an expression of confident and joyful affirmation.

**Mutual greetings expressed.**

***Philippians 4:21-22, “****Greet every saint in Christ Jesus. The brethren who are with me greet you. All the saints greet you, but especially those who are of Caesar's household.”*

* **Greet every saint**: This is an example of the fact that the title **saint** applies to all Christians, not just to an elite few.
* He does not address specific individuals here.
* He did not know how much work and self-sacrifice was given by individuals. It goes along with the Scripture, “….don’t let your right hand know what your left hand is doing.”
* **All the saints greet you, but especially those who are of Caesar's household**:
* This special greeting is evidence that Paul was still used by God during his Roman imprisonment, when the gospel extended even into the household of Caesar.

"By this he designates the functionaries and servants and slaves of the Emperor's household, with whom Paul, as a prisoner for several years, undoubtedly came in contact on several occasions." (Muller)

**Note: Nero was at this time emperor of Rome: He was a cruel, diabolic wretch of a man; a disgrace to the human race.**

**Yet in Nero’s family or close quarter servants/counselors there were Christians.** Whether this relates to the members of the imperial family, or to guards, or courtiers, or to servants, we cannot tell.

**Final words. *“****The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen,” Philippians 4:23.*

* **The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all**: Paul did not say this to simply fill up space at the end of his letter.
* To Paul, the Christian life begins and ends with the **grace of our Lord Jesus Christ**. It was only God’s grace and mercy that saved Paul.
* Therefore, it was appropriate that his letters began and ended with **grace** also.
* **Amen**: This was a fitting word of affirmation. Paul knew that what he wrote to the Philippians was worthy to be agreed with, so he added the final word of agreement – “SO BE IT! LET THIS BE COUNTED AS TRUTH.”

**“Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me....
I once was lost but now am found, was blind, but now, I see.**

**T'was Grace that taught...my heart to fear. And Grace, my fears relieved.
How precious did that Grace appear...the hour I first believed.**

**Through many dangers, toils and snares...we have already come.
T'was Grace that brought us safe thus far...and Grace will lead us home.**

**The Lord has promised good to me...His word my hope secures.
He will my shield and portion be...as long as life endures.**

**When we've been here ten thousand years...bright shining as the sun.
We've no less days to sing God's praise...than when we've first begun.”**

**GRACE = G**od’s **R**edemption **A**t **C**hrist’s **E**xpense

**Final Words for This Study:**

I want every person to understand that the most important time in our history is TODAY. TODAY will never be repeated. TODAY will never be postponed until tomorrow. What we have planned for TODAY will not be the same plan for tomorrow. Even Webster agrees with me! He says, the definition of TODAY is “on or in the course of this present day” (adverb), i.e. "her birthday is TODAY"; “this present day” (noun). Tell me, will her birthday be TODAY tomorrow? No, only this present day will she be celebrating her thirtieth birthday.

Yes, I know that this sounds to the reader that I am making a mountain out of a mole hill. However, this is what some people TODAY enjoy trying to prove their point with Scripture. They focus on what they want to believe and search for Scriptures to prove their point; even to the point of trying to find a translation of the Bible verse that helps one to try to prove what they are saying is true.

With that, I leave you with the truth of knowing that only the Holy Spirit can help us to understand the meaning of Scripture. I want to be completely open to all that the Holy Spirit desires to teach me. If I have misrepresented the truth of the Scriptures in any way as I have presented these lessons in the Book of Philippians, I pray that you will rebuke the unauthorized use of the Holy Spirit’s teaching. I promise this one thing, I did not willingly know that I misrepresented God’s Word in any way. I know that God’s Wisdom comes from studying the Scriptures and we can only have true wisdom when we ask the God of Truth for it (Statement made according to Scripture, James 1:5).

With that, I want you to ask God for truth. Is the author of this teaching depending on the Holy Spirit for understanding the Scriptures? If he is, then stand firm on what has been said. Don’t just read the Scriptures or what is said in this teaching…think about it and…do it!

Just as Paul had some final words to say to the Philippians in his epistle, I want to conclude this study to say, “To God be the Glory.”

And as He is receiving the glory, I will close this study. If you could see me now, you would see the true joy in my heart in that I feel I am the most blessed man in the world. I have many of my family members, friends, and a wonderful God who is waiting for me on the other side.

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