

Introduction

- Outlined in **Acts 16** we have the story of Paul and his co-laborers while on their second missionary journey ministering in Asia Minor (known then as Asia). It was their desire, after spending some time in Phrygia and the region of Galatia, to go into Bithynia, 'but the Spirit suffered them not' (did not permit them). So, they set their sights on Troas, the region in the NW corner of Asia Minor. While there, sometime in the night, Paul had a vision of a Macedonian man praying for him to 'Come over into Macedonia and help us'. Believing this to be the Lord's directing, they 'immediately endeavored to go into Macedonia', concluding that the Lord had called them to go there to preach the 'good news of being saved by grace'.
- In obedience to the Macedonian call Paul and his evangelistic team made their way to 'Philippi, which was the chief city of that part of Macedonia'. Note: When Philip of Macedon, father of Alexander the Great, seized the city centuries earlier, he enlarged the site and named it after himself - Philippi.
- Inasmuch as there was no synagogue in the city, the Jews, who wanted to gather for worship on the Sabbath, congregated outside the city on the banks of the river - believed to be the Gangites River (a source of fresh water necessary for ritual cleansings). So that's where Paul and his companions went, where they found a group of women who had gathered for a time of prayer. And when given the opportunity to speak, Paul gave witness of Jesus. Note: This was the first time for the gospel to be shared in Europe. And it so happened (by the ordained will of God) that a woman named Lydia was in the group, apparently a prosperous Gentile businesswoman who worshiped the God of the Jews. Yet, she knew nothing of Jesus Christ, the Jewish Messiah. But when Paul spoke of this Jesus, 'her heart was opened unto the Lord' and she responded (along with her household) with faith (accepted Christ as Savior), becoming the first convert to Christianity in all of Europe. Afterwards, her home not only became the gathering place for all the early converts in Philippi but a place for Paul and his team to stay while in the city. Too, it was while in Philippi that Paul and Silas were arrested, stripped of their clothing, beaten, and cast into prison. But at midnight, rather than complaining or feeling sorry for themselves, 'they prayed and sang praises unto God'. The Lord sent an earthquake, the foundations of the prison were shaken, all the prison doors were opened, and, everyone's bands were loosed. Because of all that, the Philippian jailer (along with his entire household) accepted Christ as Savior and were baptized (**Acts 16:22-33**). Note: Paul's labors in Philippi were crowned with success, and a church was established.
- The church membership in Philippi was made up largely of Gentiles, with women occupying prominent positions of leadership. Too, after Paul's departure, the church was grateful and generous to him, sending love gifts on more than one occasion (**Phil.4:15-18**).

Chapter 1

Vs.1,2. It's interesting to note that Paul follows the usual letter-writing customs of the day. He begins by listing the name of the writer (or sender), followed by the name of the recipient, which in turn was followed by a salutation (greeting). Here, he identifies the senders as 'Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ'. Note: Timothy is not the co-author of the epistle, but a co-laborer of the apostle. He was with Paul when the Philippian church was founded (**Acts 16**); and according to **Acts 19:19-22**, he later spent some time there.

- 'Servants of Jesus Christ' - willing bondservants (slaves), who were happily and loyally linked to their master. Paul and Timothy were the property of the Lord; his slaves, and of no one else. Note: 'Paul was born into slavery to sin by his first birth, and into the position of a loving and faithful bondservant of the Lord Jesus Christ by his 'new birth' (Wuest).
- 'to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons'. Note: Paul addressed the letter to three groups: (a) to all the saints in Christ Jesus, (b) the bishops, and (c) the deacons.

Questions are raised: What constitutes a saint? Are all professing believers' saints? **Answer:** A 'saint' is someone 'set apart for God' to be His, exclusively; an absolute separation from evil and dedication to God. This means all Christians are saints, but only 'in Christ'. 'Bishops': Those with spiritual leadership responsibilities (overseers, guardians, etc.). 'Deacons': Those with recognized positions of service.

- 'Grace be unto you, and peace'. Always in that order. Grace is the foundation, and peace is the result. Without grace, there is no peace. Too, these come to us only from God our Father and through his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Vs.3-5. 'I thank my God upon every remembrance of you'. Note: Paul is not saying that he thanks God 'at' every remembrance of the Philippians, but the Philippians were the 'basis for his thanksgiving'.

- 'Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy'. When Paul prayed for the Philippians (asked a petition for or made a request on behalf of) he did so with joy. It was a delight for him to intercede for fellow believers.
- 'For your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now'. The idea is that the Philippians 'partnered' with Paul in spreading the gospel through their friendship and financial support; and they did so 'from the first day until now'. They were fellow laborers with Paul to take the whole Word to the whole world.

V.6. 'Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ'. Three thoughts: (a) Some use this scripture to teach the doctrine of 'Unconditional Eternal Security' (Once saved, always saved); that God never fails to complete the work of salvation he begins in a person's life. But that's true only **if** the person continues on with the Lord. We each have a free will. We can 'go on with the Lord' and be ready when he comes for us, or, we can 'return to sin' and be lost forever, (b) Paul is confident that the 'good work', which had begun with the unselfish giving of the Philippians to take the gospel message to all the world, would be performed (carried out) 'until the day of Jesus Christ' (until Christ returns), (c) Paul is confident that there will be nothing lacking on God's part in performing the work he has started in the Philippians until the final work of grace is performed in them. (I agree with both 'b' and 'c'.) Note: The God who saves us is able to keep us (**Jude 24,25**), **if** we will allow him to do so. The decision is ours. We can 'go back', or we can 'go on'. Note: As for me, it's like the songwriter said, 'I have decided to follow Jesus'.

Vs.7,8. 'It is meet for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart'. Paul was right to feel this way toward the Philippians because they stood beside him in his trials for the gospel; and he loved them as his own soul.

- 'inasmuch as both in my bonds, and in the defence and confirmation of the gospel'. Paul's bonds refer to his imprisonment, which, at that time, was in Rome. Note: 'Defense' is the negative side of establishing the gospel, while 'confirmation' is the positive side. Here, 'defense' means clearing away the hindrances; with 'confirmation' meaning the pushing forward in proclaiming the good news. Too, it's important to note that Paul is speaking of the 'defense and confirmation of the gospel', and not of self-defense. His fate was of little concern; but the fate of the gospel was, and still is, everything. Note: Regardless of 'where' Paul might find himself, or 'what' the circumstances might be, he faithfully shared the good news of the gospel - whether on board a ship in the midst of a storm while on the Mediterranean Sea, marooned on an island, at the agora (marketplace) in Athens, down by the river's edge, in prison, or wherever. Amen! What an example for all of us who name the name of Jesus!
- 'ye all are partakers of my grace'. The Philippians were Paul's co-sharers in the grace of God.
- 'For God is my record, how greatly I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ'. This is nothing less than a miracle of divine grace! He who at one time had been a proud Pharisee 'breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord' (Acts 9:1), now, has a tender heart for these former pagan Greeks with the affection of Christ Jesus himself.

Vs.9-11. 'And this I pray, that your love may abound (exceed a fixed measure; overflow) yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment'. Paul's prayer for the Philippians was for a four-fold blessing: (a) That their love may continue to grow stronger in 'knowledge' (have a better understanding of God's Word and a clearer vision of Christ Jesus, himself) and in all 'judgment' (discernment). Note: 'A person may have an 'understanding knowledge' of the Word, and be able to explain it to others, without having an experiential knowledge of the same'. (Wuest) (b) That ye may approve (sanction after testing) things that are excellent (right according to the Scriptures). (c) That ye may be sincere and without offence (pure and blameless) till the day of Christ (with a view of his glorious appearing). (d) That ye may be filled with the fruits of righteousness (fruits of the 'justification' which comes by faith and the experience of the new birth), which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God. Note: The ultimate end (or goal) of all Paul's prayers was that 'God be glorified'.

Vs.12-14. But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel'. Note: Epaphroditus, the messenger delegated by the church at Philippi to bring their gifts to Paul while he was imprisoned in Rome, had conveyed to Paul that the Philippians were afraid that his being in prison was hindering his missionary work. But Paul assures them the contrary had been the case. He says, 'the things which happened unto me' (my being mobbed in Jerusalem, unjustly imprisoned, shipwrecked, chained to guards, etc.) have turned out just the reverse of what might have been expected. He says, in essence, my sufferings for Christ have been the means of advancing the gospel into regions where it possibly might never have gone. Note: This witness led to the conversion of many, even to some of the palace guards. An important truth: Nothing ever just happens to one of God's saints. Things either come directly from God, or they come to us from some other source by his permissive will.

- 'So that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace, and in all other places'. No doubt, at first Paul seemed like all other prisoners. But, afterwards, it became known that he suffered bonds, not for any crimes he had committed, but because of his relationship with Christ and his preaching the gospel. He could say, in essence, 'God has allowed me to be imprisoned here in Rome that these too

(the imperial guard) might hear the gospel. And not only have they heard the wonderful 'good news' of salvation, but it has reached 'in all other places' (throughout the city), as well.

- 'And many (the majority) of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear'. Persecutions in Rome had almost silenced the preaching of the death and resurrection of Christ, but Paul's example as a powerful witness to the gospel, even though a prisoner in chains, brought confidence to these brethren in the Lord. They became more bold to speak out for Christ, and were stirred to more fearless witnessing.

Vs.15-17. 'Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some of good will'. Paul mentions two groups (possibly both within the church). One group preached Christ; but because they were jealous of Paul's apostolic power, authority, and success, they did so with envy and strife (which speaks of contention, rivalry, and wrangling). Note: Some believe they were Judaizers, Jews who taught that the Gentiles had to enter Christianity by adhering to the law (primarily circumcision). But that can't be the case. Such preaching would not be preaching Christ. The first group had the 'right message', but the 'wrong motive'. The other group preached Christ 'of good will', which speaks of satisfaction and contentment, not only in 'what' Paul was doing but 'the manner in which he was doing it'. They had both the right message and the right motive.

- 'The one preach Christ (perhaps rather, announce; bring news of Christ) of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds'. They were self-seeking, interested only in self-advancement, desiring to get ahead at any cost. 'Their motives were impure; they wished to make Paul feel the helplessness of imprisonment, and to increase his affliction by opposing his doctrines' (Pulpit Com.).
- 'But the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defence of the gospel'. Their 'love' was for both Christ and Paul, believing it was God's will for Paul to be in prison at this time so that he might be in a strategic position to proclaim and defend the gospel.
- Interesting note: Two types of preachers are mentioned in these last two verses. 'They differ in their 'hearts': in one, 'contention rules', and in the other, 'love reigns'. They differ in 'spirit': in one, there is 'envy and strife'; in the other, 'good will'. They differ in the 'source of their strength': in one there is merely 'the love of party'; in the other there is 'confidence in the Lord'. They differ in their 'aim': in one the aim is 'to advance a branch of the church'; in the other the aim is 'to advance the cause of Christ'. They differ in 'conviction': one aims 'to add affliction to Paul'; the other 'knows that Paul is set for the defense of the gospel' (K. J. Bible Com.).

V.18. 'What then?' ('What is the result of all this preaching?' 'What does it matter?' 'But what was Paul's reaction?')

- 'notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretence (that which is put forward to hide the true state of things), or in truth (in sincerity), Christ is preached'. The motives of those preaching may not be good, but the result is good. Christ is proclaimed.
- 'And I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice'. Paul endured the unfair accusations without having bitterness toward his accusers. Instead, he rejoiced that they preached Christ, even if in a pretense of godliness. An interesting summary: 'The fact that Paul wrote this letter to the church at Philippi from a Roman jail cell proves that joy is not a product of good circumstances; joy appears when believers are wholly involved in doing the will of God and trusting Him in the midst of their circumstances, good or bad'. (D. Jeremiah)

V.19. 'For I know that this ('this' refers to the preaching of Christ rather than Paul's sufferings as a prisoner in a Roman jail) shall turn to my salvation (deliverance) through your prayer'. Paul

depended on the intercession of God's people and believed their praying would be a means of all things working together for his good and God's glory.

- 'And the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ'. The 'Holy Spirit', who comes to dwell in the heart of the believer at conversion, is called the 'Spirit of Christ'. They are one and the same. When writing to the Romans, Paul said, 'But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you' (**Rom.8:11**).
- **Note:** I like the way Songwriter C. Austin Miles expresses the manner in which the Lord supplies for his people. He says:

I'm living on the mountain, underneath a cloud-less sky,
I'm drinking at the fountain that never shall run dry;
O yes! I'm feasting on the manna from a bountiful supply,
For I am dwelling in Beulah Land. Amen!
- Not only does God 'supply' our every need (**Phil.4:19**), he supplies 'bountifully'. In **Ps.13:6**, King David said, 'I will sing unto the Lord, because he hath dealt bountifully with me'.

V.20. 'According to my earnest expectation (to wait for in suspense; with my attention focused on but one thing and turned away from all else) and my hope, that in nothing shall I be ashamed'. **Note:** Paul's expectation was twofold: that he should 'not be ashamed' (that he would never disgrace himself), and, that 'Christ would be magnified'.

- 'But that with all boldness (boldness of speech was to be his part, the glory to be Christ's), as always, so now (implies that the hour of crisis was near) also Christ shall be magnified (honored) in my body, whether it be by life, or by death'. It was the intense desire of Paul's heart that Christ be magnified in him, whether by a life lived in the fullness of the Spirit or in a martyr's death. **Note:** Paul had confidence in God, that He would always be nearby and would never forsake him; and, that He would uphold him by His grace in every trial and difficulty. Personally, Paul was ready for either life or death, providing Christ would receive the glory and be magnified in the outcome.

V.21. 'For to me to live is Christ'. Christ was the sum total of his existence; his reason for living, his motive, and, his mission.

- 'And to die is gain'. Paul is not saying that 'death', itself, would be a gain, but to be in the presence of the Lord in the glory-world, that would be 'gain'. **Note:** The Greek tense implies that Paul has in mind the 'state after death' rather than the 'act of dying'. He was perfectly resigned to that which would be the 'will of God'. It's been said: 'Death doesn't interrupt the believer's fellowship with Christ, because the moment of absence here is the moment of presence there' (**cf. II Cor.5:8**). In the absence of life's limitations, union with Christ will be completely, fully, and totally realized.

V.22. 'But if I live in the flesh (the fact of his remaining here in the body), this is the fruit of my labour'. Yet, if allowed to live longer in his earthly body, Paul was confident that God intended him to be fruitful (to bear fruit for the kingdom of God).

- 'Yet what I shall choose I wot (know) not'. **Note:** Whether to continue living in the flesh or go to be with the Lord was not a decision Paul was called upon to make. That was something he must leave with the Lord.

V.23. 'For I am in a strait (hard-pressed) betwixt two (hemmed in on both sides), having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ'. He is caught between his desire and what he considered his duty.

There is a desire to depart; a necessity to abide. Yet, to depart meant that he would be with Christ, and, would finally be done with sin and temptation - 'Which is far (very much) better (by far preferable)'.

V.24. 'Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you'. Paul understood that others still needed him; that many had not yet heard the good news of the gospel; that his work was not yet completed. Therefore, he feels the greater obligation is to continue on in this present life. Note: Personal desire gives way to spiritual need.

V.25. 'And having this confidence'. Paul, in his mind, had a settled conviction that the Philippian saints needed him more than he needed to go to heaven at that particular time.

- 'I know that I shall abide and continue with you all'. **Questions are raised:** Had God given Paul a 'supernatural revelation' that he would be released from prison? or, that the spiritual needs of the saints was the determining factor that he stay on earth longer? or, was this Paul's personal conviction?
- 'For your furtherance and joy of faith' (to promote your progress and joy in the faith; the joy of the faith).

V.26. 'That your rejoicing may be more abundant in Jesus Christ for me by my coming to you again'. Paul had a close friendship with the Philippians; and because of that, he knew that they would be rejoicing (thrilled; pleased) to see him again. Note: The word 'rejoicing' does not mean the act of 'glorying'. Because of the manner in which Christ worked in Paul's life and ministry, the joy and confidence of the Philippian believers would surely overflow at his coming to them again. Too, we must remember Christ Jesus is the sphere in which these blessings are enjoyed, the only true realm for glorying (**cf. I Cor.1:31**). He made them possible through the blood of his cross and is the only One who completely satisfies.

V.27. 'Only (whatever else might transpire, make this your chief concern) let your conversation (manner of life; conduct) be as it becometh the gospel of Christ'. Behave as good, patriotic citizens of the kingdom of God. Note: A life worthy of the gospel is a life lived in the power of the Holy Spirit. In reality, it is the 'earthly walk' of a 'heavenly man'.

- 'That whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast (stand firm and hold your ground) in one spirit (given life by one spirit), with one mind (united) striving together (fighting shoulder to shoulder in perfect co-operation) for the faith of the gospel'.

V.28. 'And in nothing terrified (to have an inward fear caused by something from without) by your adversaries'. 'Never be frightened or intimidated by your opponents' (Moffatt).

- The Philippian believers had no need to be terrified by their adversaries: the difficulties they faced were ordained by God.
- 'Which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God'. 'The fearlessness of the Christian believers was a clear omen to the adversaries that their attempts to thwart the gospel were futile and only led to their own destruction' (Wycliffe Bible Com.). 'The courage of God's saints in the midst of dangers is a proof of his presence and favor, a token of final victory' (Pulpit Com.). When a person is not in any way terrified by adversaries, that in itself is proof of perdition (destruction to the adversaries).

V.29. 'For unto you it is given (been graciously conferred) in the behalf of Christ (for his sake), not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake'. The privilege of suffering for Christ is the privilege

of keeping his commandments and doing that which he has called us to do. In truth, it's a favor granted only to those who believe in him. 'Faith in Christ is the gift of God, so is the fellowship of his sufferings' (Pulpit Com.).

- Suffering for Christ is not a burden, but a privilege. When writing to the Romans, Paul said 'In all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us' (**Rom.8:37**). Amen! Note: The privileges of a Christian are to 'believe *on* him' and to 'suffer *for* him' - and always in that particular order.

V.30. 'Having the same conflict which ye saw in me (these Philippians had seen Paul and Silas beaten and thrown into prison (**Acts 16**), and now hear to be in me' (they now hear of his Roman imprisonment, and were themselves suffering similar persecutions). Note: 'If the Philippians had Paul's kind of conflict, they could also have Paul's kind of joy and fruit in the midst of it' (D. Guzik).

- In these final four verses, 'Paul mentions four areas that Christians should tend to as they live in this world: (a) their 'conduct' - acting worthy of the kingdom of heaven to which they rightfully belong as citizens of God's household; (b) their 'consistency' - maintaining integrity and their testimony in spite of persecution and trial; (c) their 'cooperation' - remembering to strive together, like athletes against a common foe; (d) their 'courage' - facing persecution and enduring pain for the sake of Christ' (David Jeremiah).

Chapter 2

- In the first chapter, Paul emphasizes the 'joy' and 'victory' that belongs to the Christian who 'suffers for Christ'. In essence, there is 'Joy in suffering'. Here in this chapter he emphasizes the necessity of 'Christian living'. In essence, saying, for the Christian there is 'Joy in serving'.
- Vs.1,2.** To begin, Paul sets forth four conditional clauses as a powerful motive for harmony in the Christian community
- 'If (often translated 'since'; or 'in view of the fact') there be therefore (inasmuch as these things are 'realities', and not just talk) any consolation (encouragement; help; counsel; admonition; exhortation) in Christ' (any ground for appeal because you are in Christ).
 - 'If any comfort (almost the same as the word rendered 'consolation'; tender counsel) of love'. **Note:** The tender persuasion and encouragement (exhorting to unity among the Philippian believers) comes from God's love for them.
 - 'If any fellowship (intimate partnership; joint participation; communion) of (with) the Spirit'. **A question is asked:** If all the saints were indwelt by the Spirit, why was there not unity among them? **Answer:** Unity comes not by virtue of the Spirit's indwelling, but by His control over the believer. The trouble in the Philippian church was that some of the saints were not living lives fully controlled by the Spirit. If they had been, there would have been unity.
 - 'If any bowels (tenderheartedness) and mercies'. 'Bowels' speak of the seat of the feelings of compassion; 'mercies', the feelings themselves.
- A 'summary', or rewording, of the four conditional clauses:
 - (1) If encouragement comes through being united with Christ;
 - (2) If there is persuasive power in love;
 - (3) If there is communion through the power of Holy Spirit;
 - (4) If there is tender affection and compassion;
 - Then, 'Fulfill ye my joy' (make my joy complete; fill my cup of joy). **Note:** The Philippian believers could accomplish this by heeding Paul's admonitions of 'being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind'.
- V.3.** 'Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory' (selfish strife or petty ambition). Such will destroy the unity and harmony of a church.
- 'But in lowliness of mind (humility) let each esteem other better than themselves'. **Note:** Paul admonishes believers, as a discipline of humility, to look at their own faults and at the good points in the character of others. Too, I like the way this thought is expressed by **D. Guzik**. He said, 'If I consider you above me and you consider me above you, then a marvelous thing happens: we have a community where everyone is looked up to, and no one is looked down on'.
- V.4.** 'Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others'. **Note:** Christians are not to make their own interests the all-important object of life, but should regard the interests, feelings, and wishes of others. **Questions:** (1) Is it possible for a Christian to become wrapped up in self and personal ambitions without realizing he has become selfish? (Surely) (2) Which do you suppose is more harmful, or damaging: A Christian who thinks too highly of himself (pride), or the one who has poor self-esteem, convinced that he is of no value to the cause of Christ?
- **Note:** The word 'others' in this verse is the central fact (idea). It was a prominent characteristic in the life of Christ, who 'came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom'.

for many' (Mk.10:45). Too, it's been said, a man of the flesh 'looks out for number one', but a man of the Spirit lives in submission to Christ and in service to his fellowman.

- V.5.** 'Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus'. 'Let Christ Jesus be your example as to what your attitude should be' (Phillips). Note: Paul doesn't endeavor to give all that is the mind of Christ, but selects the Lord's qualities which are most needed by the Philippians at the time: graces such as a 'spirit of humility', of 'self-denial', and, of having an 'interest in the welfare of others'. Think about it: Christ, in his humility, was willing to give up his rights, privileges, and position in order to obey his Father and serve others.
- V.6.** 'Who being in the form of God'. Note: The word 'being' denotes prior existence. It looks back to the time before the 'incarnation' (the union of divinity with humanity in Jesus Christ). Important that we understand: Christ ever was, is, and ever shall be God. He is not merely like God; He is God (**Jn.1:1**). Too, 'being in the form of God' does not refer to the outer appearance of Christ, but to his actual inner identity (the mode in which he expresses his divine essence).
- 'Thought it not robbery to be equal with God'. The phrase 'not robbery' has the idea of something being grasped or held on to. Christ did not regard his position (that of being equal with God) as something he must hold tightly. 'It was not a prize which must not slip from his grasp, a treasure to be clutched and retained at all hazards' (Lightfoot), but as something to be relinquished for the redemption of mankind.
- V.7.** 'But made himself of no reputation' (He emptied himself). Christ's incarnation was essentially a self-emptying. He used his equality with God as an opportunity, not for self-exaltation, but for self-abasement. Note: He did not empty something from himself, but he emptied himself from something, i.e., the form of God. He stripped himself of his 'expression' of deity, but not his 'possession' of deity. When Christ became incarnate, he was one person with two natures, divine and human. Think about it: He emptied himself in order that he might fill us (**cf. II Cor.5:21; 8:9**).
- 'And took upon him the form of a servant'. Though he took the form of a bondservant, Christ did not empty himself of his deity, or of his equality with God.
 - 'And was made in the likeness of men'. 'Likeness', here, refers to external appearance. Christ was not only God but was now fully man (**cf. Heb.4:15**). And 'as the second Adam, he represents, not the individual man, but the entire human race' (Pulpit Com.).
- V.8.** 'And being found in fashion (in appearance; Christ's humanity is described from the viewpoint of those who saw him) as a man (refers to the time of his earthly life). Note: In outward appearance he was as a man; yet, he was more, for he was God.
- 'He humbled himself'. After the humbling of incarnation, Christ further humbled himself by subjecting himself to persecution and suffering at the hands of unbelievers.
 - 'And became obedient unto (up to the point of) death'. He died as no other individual ever died or ever will die. His death was of his own volition (choice; decision). He was obedient to the Father up to the point of dying, having said, 'Lo, I come to do thy will, O God' (**Heb.10:9**).
 - 'Even the death of the cross'. Note: Crucifixion was such a shameful death that it was not permitted for Roman citizens. Too, it's been said, 'crucifixion is the cruelest, most excruciating, most degrading form of death ever devised' (J. MacArthur). 'What must sin have been in the sight of God, when it required such abasement in Jesus Christ to make an atonement for it, and undo its influence and malignity' (A. Clarke).

Vs.9-11. 'Wherefore' (because of Christ's voluntary act of humility, obedience, and death).

- Then notice the '**Sevenfold exaltation of Christ**':
 - (1) 'God hath highly exalted him' (exalted him to the highest rank and power). Refers to the time of the Lord's resurrection and ascension. Too, his exaltation was the reward of humiliation. Note: On one occasion, while speaking to the multitude, along with his disciples, Jesus said, 'And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted' (**Matt.23:12**).
 - (2) 'And given him a name which is above every name'. Note: Rather than 'a name', as used here, the best manuscripts have it, 'the name'. Surely, this doesn't mean the name 'Jesus', which was given him at his circumcision in accordance with the angel's message; but the name 'Lord' or 'Jehovah' or, possibly, 'King of kings and Lord of lords'. (**Rev.19:16**).
 - (3) 'That at (in) the name of Jesus every knee should bow'. Every knee will bow in recognition of all that Christ Jesus is in his exaltation. Note: Some suggest that the words 'in the name of Jesus' may mean that all prayer must be offered to God in Jesus' name, through his mediation; or that all creation must offer prayer to him (Pulpit Com.).
 - (4) 'Of things in heaven'.
 - (5) 'And things in earth'.
 - (6) 'And things under the earth'.
 - (7) 'And that every tongue should confess (acknowledge) that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father'. Note: 'Paul does not imply by this a universal salvation, but is saying that every personal being will ultimately confess Christ's lordship, either with joyful faith or with resentment and despair' (Kent). **A question is asked**: Who, actually, will bow and confess? It's believed by many that all creatures who have been endowed with speech will be included. Others say it another way: 'The entire intelligent universe is called to worship Jesus Christ as Lord. And this includes the angels in heaven (**Rev.4:2-9**), the spirits of the redeemed (Rev.4:10,11), obedient believers on earth (**Rom.10:9**), the disobedient rebels on earth (**II Thess.1:7-9**), demons and lost humanity in hell (**I Pet.3:18-22**).

Vs.12,13. 'Wherefore (so then), my beloved (my dearly beloved friends), as ye have always obeyed (always careful to follow my instructions), not as in my presence only (not simply as though I were with you), but how much more in my absence (but all the more because I am away), work out your own salvation with fear and trembling'. Notice: These words are not directed to all men but are directed to the people of God (those saved). Therefore, Paul encourages them by acknowledging their past obedience, and then urges them to complete the work that God had begun in their lives - carry it out unto the end. And, remember, it is always a matter of 'trust and obey'.

- Nowhere in the scriptures are we told to 'work for' our salvation. Paul tells us in **Eph.2:8,9**, 'For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast'. Salvation is not a work of man for God, but a work of God for man, a work that was accomplished at the cross. Note: The salvation spoken of here in **v.12** is not 'justification', but 'sanctification'. It's victory over sin and the living of a life pleasing to the Lord Jesus.
- 'For it is God which worketh in you, both to will and to do of his good pleasure'. This is true 'working out your own salvation' until it is completed. Note: The word 'worketh', in the Greek, means 'to energize'. It is God the Holy Spirit who energizes the saint, making him not only willing, but actively desirous to do God's will. Too, the Holy Spirit goes further, He provides all that might be necessary to do God's will.
- 'Of his good pleasure'. This is the motive behind God's work in our lives. He does so because it gives him pleasure to do it.

Vs.14,15. 'Do all things without murmurings (complaining, muttering, grumbling) and disputings'. Note:

There is a dispute among commentators as to whether this arguing and complaining has to do with problems within the Philippian church (among members themselves), or if it refers to their attitude toward God. 'It's possible that they resented God because of the conflict in which they were presently experiencing' (Gucik). 'It is an emotional rejection of God's providence, will, and circumstances for one's life'. (MacArthur) Note: As Christians, we are called to unquestioned submission to God's will. And that 'submission' must be inward as well as outward.

- 'That ye may be (may become) blameless (implies that they were not blameless at that time) and harmless (innocent, describes a life that is pure and unadulterated with sin), the sons of God, without rebuke (the children of God without fault; above reproach)'. Paul wants the Philippians to be genuine; not only in their faith but in their daily living.
- 'In the midst of a crooked and perverse nation'. Evidently Paul is referring back to **Deut.32:5** where Moses spoke of the children of Israel as 'having corrupted themselves; they are not God's children because of their blemish: A perverse and crooked generation'. Here, Paul says Christians should not be like those of rebellious Israel, who constantly murmured, complained, and disputed with God during their stay in the wilderness.
- 'Among whom ye shine (are seen, appear, are recognized as God's children) as lights (luminaries, stars, heavenly lights) in the world'. Note: Christ is the light of the world (**Jn.8:12**), and his followers are luminaries (**Matt.5:14-16**), light-bearers, reflecting his light (**II Cor.4:6**).

V.16. 'Holding forth (holding out to others; offering something for others to take) the word of life (the gospel)'. Note: This should always be the attitude of the saint, offering salvation to a lost and dying world. Apart from the Word of God, there is no hope for humankind.

- 'That I may rejoice (that I may have whereof to glory or boast) in the day of Christ (at the rapture of the church), that I have not run in vain, neither labored in vain'. Note: If the Philippians would continue to allow their 'lights to shine', and, would keep on 'sharing the Word of God with others', Paul would have grounds for glorying when Christ comes for his own, for he would not have run his Christian race in vain. He wanted to be able to look back on his ministry and see that all his efforts were worthwhile (as is the case, no doubt, with all God's ministers).

Vs.17,18. 'Yea, and if I be offered (if I am being poured out as a drink offering) upon the sacrifice and service of your faith'. 'Paul's love and concern for the Philippians was such that he was willing to give his life for them as if it were an offering to God' (F. Life Study Bible). Others believe Paul uses the drink-offering to speak of the violent death he would some day die as a martyr. Yet, since the verb is in the present tense, still others believe Paul is referring to his sacrificial ministry among the Philippians. Whatever he might have had in mind at the time, some four years earlier he had written to the Romans, saying, 'I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service (Rom.12:1). It's been said: God requires 'no more', and He accepts 'no less'.

- 'I joy, and rejoice with you all. For the same cause also do ye joy, and rejoice with me'. There should always be an attitude of 'mutual joy' accompanying sacrificial Christian service. The 'joy' mentioned here is not based on circumstances, but in the 'life' totally committed to the Lord Jesus Christ. Note: The words of a chorus express it well: 'All that I have, All that I am, All I shall ever be; Cannot repay the love-debt I owe, I surrender to Thee'. Think about it. When a person is 'totally committed' to serving Christ, holding back nothing, sacrifice becomes rewarding and victorious.

V.19. 'But I trust in the Lord Jesus (my hope is founded on faith in the Lord) to send Timotheus shortly unto you, that I also may be of good comfort, when I know your state' ('that I also may take courage

and be of good cheer' - Wuest). Not only was Paul desiring Timothy to visit the Philippians to encourage them with his presence and counsel, but that he (Paul) might be cheered by Timothy's tidings of their continuing faith in Christ.

V.20. 'For I have no man (not even one) likeminded (equal in soul), who will naturally (genuinely, faithfully, sincerely) care for your state'. 'This was not a sweeping condemnation of his fellow laborers. But of those available there was no one, who, like Timothy, would be genuinely concerned for their welfare'. (Wycliffe Bible Com.) Note: Timothy could be depended upon. **The question today is:** Can God depend upon you and me? I trust the answer is 'yes'.

V.21. 'For all (the whole of them, one and all, all without exception) seek their own (not willing to spend and to be spent for the salvation of souls, nor, for the good of others), not the things which are Jesus Christ's' (not pursuing Christ's interest and glory, but allowing their own interests to interfere). Paul is not saying that he had no genuine Christian friends in Rome, but that all were unwilling to visit the Philippian believers at that time. Note: It's been said that 'every Christian lives either in **1:21** or **2:21**'.

V.22. 'But ye know the proof of him' (from your former experience you recognize his approved character, an approval that came about through testings). The Philippian saints knew Timothy personally.

- 'That, as a son with the father, he hath served with me in the gospel' (as a child serveth a father, so he served with me in furtherance of the gospel). Note: Paul describes his relationship with Timothy as a son working **with** him, not **for** him. In humility, Paul places their positions on equal level.

V.23. 'Him therefore I hope to send presently, so soon as I shall see how it will go with me'. Paul's timing for sending Timothy was dependent upon his own circumstances. It would be as soon as he could see how his trial was going to turn out.

V.24. 'But I trust (I have come to a settled persuasion) in the Lord (my conviction in the matter is based on the Lord's faithfulness to me) that I also myself shall come shortly'. Paul had hopes that he would soon be released from prison, and, that he would visit the Christians in Philippi. Note: Some believe that God had given him the assurance of such a visit. But I find no such record.

V.25. 'Yet (after weighing the facts in the case) I supposed it necessary (a matter of duty) to send to you Epaphroditus'. Paul wanted to send Timothy (**v.23**), and come himself (**v.24**), but found it necessary to send Epaphroditus, a layman in the church at Philippi. Too, it seems that Epaphroditus had been delegated to bring a monetary love gift to Paul (**4:18**), and, to serve him on behalf of the Philippians. But while with Paul he became sick.

- 'My brother (emphasizes the bond of Christian family love), and companion in labor (fellow worker with a spirit of comradeship), and fellowsoldier (pictures a Christian fighting side by side against the onslaughts of Satan and heathenism), but your messenger (ambassador), and he that ministered to my wants. Note: 'The service of Epaphroditus in ministering to the needs of Paul was looked upon by the apostle as a ministry having as much sacredness about it as one would meet within the ministry of the priests in the Jewish temple services'. (Wuest)

V.26. 'For he longed (is longing) after you all, and was full of heaviness' (depressed, troubled, full of anguish) because that ye had heard that he had been sick'. Note: The word 'heaviness' is used of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane. Too, it is said, this word 'does not refer to homesickness, as

some suggest, but to the discomfort and distress of not being at home'. (King James Bible Comm.) Epaphroditus was concerned because the Philippians learned of his sickness and worried about him.

V.27. 'For indeed he was sick nigh unto death (he and death were next door neighbors): but God had mercy on him; and not on him only, but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow'. 'God had mercy on them both: Epaphroditus had recovered, and bereavement had not been added to Paul's other concerns'. (Wycliffe Bible Com.) This would have been the outcome if to Paul's bonds and trials had been added the death of his friend. **A question is asked:** Since miracles had been wrought at the hands of Paul, why didn't Paul heal him? **Answer.** We must understand that 'the power of working miracles, like that of foreseeing the future, is not continuous: both are exercised only in accordance with the revealed will of God' (Pulpit Com.).

V.28. 'I sent him therefore the more carefully' (all the more eager to send him; sooner than might otherwise have been expected).

- 'That, when ye see him again, ye may rejoice' (that when ye see him, ye may again rejoice; that ye may recover your cheerfulness, which you had enjoyed before learning of Epaphroditus' illness), and that I may be the less sorrowful'. **Note:** Paul implies that sorrows (his being in prison) might still remain, yet, 'spiritual joy' has a way of brightening them. 'Sorrowful, yet always rejoicing' (**II Cor.6:10**).

V.29. 'Receive him therefore in the Lord (accept him as my gift to you) with all gladness (with heartfelt Christian joy); and hold such in reputation' (hold in high honor; deem precious).

V.30. 'Because for the work of Christ (even though his work was mostly that of being a messenger and not anything particularly spiritual, it was still the 'work of Christ') he was nigh unto death, not regarding his life (having risked his own life; his illness was not caused by persecution, but had come about by over-exertion) to supply your lack of service toward me' (to do for me, in person, what distance prevented you from doing). **Note:** Paul did not blame the Philippians. **Questions are raised:** Inasmuch as Epaphroditus' illness was due to his pushing himself beyond the limits, coming to the very door of death, was he wrong for doing such? Was it a sin? Where does a person draw the line in such a matter, especially when there is so much to be done in the work of the Lord, and, seemingly, so few to do it?

- **Note:** 'The noblest servants of Christ are those ready to be faithful unto death in wearing out their lives with arduous service. Such men should be held in honor' (Pulpit Comm.).

Chapter 3

- In these first two chapters the emphasis has been on 'Joy in Suffering' and 'Joy in Serving'. For this lesson, it is 'Joy in Believing'. And Christ is the 'object' of the believer's faith, his desire, and his expectation.
- V.1. 'Finally'.** Paul is not saying that he is about to close his letter, but, 'as for the rest, my brethren'.
Note: W.S. Tindal is quoted as saying that Paul is "the father of all preachers who use 'finally, my brethren' as an indication that they have found their second wind" (Herklotz).
- 'Rejoice in the Lord' (go on constantly rejoicing in the Lord - not in circumstances or situations, but in the Lord, who works all things 'together for good to them that love God'). Note: Their rejoicing was not to be in what they had done but in Christ Jesus and all he has done.
 - 'To write the same things (former warnings against dangerous teachers who would lead them astray) to you (I never get tired of reminding you), to me indeed is not grievous (not troublesome), but for you it is safe' (reassuring; a safe precaution).
- V.2. 'Beware of** (constantly observe with the thought of avoiding) dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision'. Note: Some suggest that the warning is not against three types of people (heathen, self-seeking Christian teachers, and Jews), but against 'one kind of people from three different angles': their character (dogs), conduct (evil workers), and creed (concision). Paul warns that they were to beware of those who demand they return to the legalistic practice of the law, of those who emphasize works as a means of salvation, and, of those who insist on circumcision as a requirement for Christians.
- "The term 'concision' means 'mutilation' and is Paul's term for the rite of Jewish circumcision as taught by the Judaizers who claimed it was necessary for salvation" (F. Life Study Bible). Circumcision has no spiritual value in itself. It's been said: 'They substituted circumcision for the new birth, rested in the rite without the reality, and trusted in the sign without having the substance'. It is by 'grace' that anyone is saved, not by works (**Eph.2:8,9**).
- V.3. 'For** (as for us) we (those saved, whether Jew or Gentile) are the concision' (those whose hearts are cleansed from all worldly and carnal lusts).
- 'Which worship God in the spirit (which worship by the Spirit of God) and rejoice in Christ Jesus' (through whom alone we can obtain salvation).
 - 'And have no confidence in the flesh' (we do not rely upon external privileges, outward ceremonies, or rituals). Our only confidence is in Christ Jesus.
- V.4. 'Though I might also have confidence in the flesh'** (I have, however, some basis for confidence in the flesh). Note: To refute the claims of the Judaizers that certain Jewish rituals and ceremonies were necessary for salvation, Paul mentions the 'flesh' (referring to man's unredeemed humanness, his own abilities and achievements apart from God).
- 'If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more'. If anyone ever had reason to hope that he could merit salvation, or save himself, it would be me. 'If anyone thinks he can rely upon external privileges, far more can I' (Twentieth Century N. T.).
- Vs.5,6.** Paul gives reasons why he might have confidence in the flesh. Yet, he is not boasting of his religious background or achievements, but showing that human achievements, no matter how impressive they might be, cannot earn salvation and eternal life. Then Paul sets forth his credentials.

- 'Circumcised the eighth day' (when eight days old). Paul was not a proselyte, circumcised at his reception into the Jewish faith; nor an Ishmaelite, circumcised like Ishmael at the age of thirteen. He was a pure-blooded Jew.
 - 'Of the stock of Israel'. Neither were his parent's proselytes; therefore, Paul was by descent an Israelite. **Note:** 'Other nations were descended from Abraham and Isaac, but the Israelites, alone, could claim Jacob for their ancestor' (Pulpit Com.).
 - 'Of the tribe of Benjamin' - the 'tribe' which gave Israel its first king, Saul; which never departed from its loyalty to the house of David; which united with Judah and the Levites in rebuilding the house of the Lord after their captivity in Babylon; and, the tribe within whose boundary stood the holy city, Jerusalem.
 - 'An Hebrew of the Hebrews' - a full-blooded Jew. His father and mother were not only Israelites but had retained the Hebrew language and customs at a time when many Jews had embraced Greek culture (Hellenized Jews). **Note:** All descendants of Jacob were Israelites; but only those who held fast to the use of the sacred language were distinctively called Hebrews.
 - 'As touching the law, a Pharisee'. It's been said that Paul was an Israelite by birth, a Hebrew by education, but a Pharisee by choice. **Note:** 'The Pharisees were a sect of self-righteous and zealous Jews who held to the letter of their interpretations of the law and to their own traditions, regardless of whether they nullified the Word of God or not. Too, they were the Lord's bitterest enemies' (Dake).
 - 'Concerning zeal, persecuting the church'. To the Jew, 'zeal' was the highest single virtue of religion. It combined love and hate. Therefore, because Paul loved Judaism, he hated whatever might threaten it. **Note:** In **Rom.10:2**, while praying for Israel, Paul said, 'For I bear them record that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge'. This was true of his own life before his conversion on the Damascus road.
 - 'Touching the righteousness, which is in the law, blameless' (by the law's standard of uprightness, no fault could be found in me). No doubt, Paul achieved the standard of righteousness, which was accepted among those religious of his day, but it fell far short of the holy standard of God.
- V.7.** 'But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ'. Before accepting Christ as Savior, Paul thought all these things (those mentioned in verses 5 & 6) made him a success in his effort to please God. In essence, he was saying, 'It is not my nationality, or family background, or personal achievements that merit salvation. At one time, I thought they were very important assets. But I have now voluntarily written them off for Christ'.
- V.8.** 'Yea doubtless, and I count (I am counting) all things but loss (this goes beyond Paul's religious background and achievements) for the excellency of the knowledge of (because of the priceless privilege of knowing) Christ Jesus my Lord'. After considering everything he had accomplished in life, Paul said it was all 'worthless' compared with his knowing Christ as Lord and Savior.
- 'For whom I have suffered the loss of all things (speaks of what Paul, at conversion, gave up when he accepted Christ in salvation) and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ'. **Note:** 'Not only did Paul forfeit all this when he was saved, but his parents would have nothing to do with a son who had, in their estimation, dishonored them by becoming one of those hated, despised Christians. They had reared him in the lap of luxury, had sent him to the Jewish school of theology in Jerusalem to sit at the feet of the great Gamaliel, and, had given him an excellent training in Greek culture at the University of Tarsus, a Greek school of learning. But they had now cast him off' (Wuest).
 - Some might question why he would do such as this. So he tells us, 'that I may win Christ'. Surely, a person's relationship with Christ is more important than all else in the world.

V.9. 'And be found in him'. Some have suggested that Paul is speaking of being 'found in Christ' at death. (I disagree.) Paul wanted his life to demonstrate that he is in Christ - now, today, tomorrow, in the last days, and always. The basis for Paul's spiritual life was in what Jesus had done for him and not in what he had done, was doing, or, would do for Jesus. Note: To be found 'in him' (in Christ) is to be a member of his body, a living fruit-bearing branch in the true Vine (**cf. Jn.15:5**). Too, when the Lord returns for his own with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God - it will be those 'in Christ' who will be caught out (**I Thes.4:16,17**). Amen!

- 'Not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law' (not having a righteousness of my own derived from a strict observance of the law).
- 'But that which is through the faith of Christ (through faith in Christ), the righteousness which is of God by faith' (the righteousness which comes from God and is founded on faith). Note: Paul gives a distinct difference between living and trusting in his own righteousness and living and trusting in the righteousness of God, which is ours through faith in Christ.

V.10. 'That I may know him' (not just to get better acquainted with him but come to know him in a greater measure through personal experience). "We must be found 'in Christ' in order to know him; and we can know him only by being made like unto him" (Pulpit Com.).

- 'And the power of his resurrection'. Paul wants to experience the same power which raised Christ from the dead (the power of the Holy Spirit) surging through his being.
- 'And the fellowship (joint participation; partnership) of his sufferings'. Note: The sufferings of Christ, spoken of here, are not His substitutionary sufferings on the Cross, but His sufferings for righteousness' sake during his ministry. Paul is speaking of the hardships to be endured by believers for the cause of Christ. It's a willingness to 'take up the cross daily' and follow Jesus.
- 'Being made conformable unto his death'. The reference is not to Paul's impending death at the hands of the Roman authorities, but to his 'daily dying unto self and the world' (**cf. I Cor. 15:31**). Note: As believers, we are to live as those who died with Christ (**Rom.6:6-8**) and who have been raised to a newness of life in Christ (**Rom.6:4**).

V.11. 'If by any means (not an expression of doubt but one of humility) I might attain (arrive at, as at a goal) unto the resurrection (out-resurrection) of the dead'. Note: Wuest believes Paul has in mind the 'spiritual resurrection' of the believing sinner spoken of in (**Eph.2:4-8**), a resurrection out from a state in which he is dead in trespasses and sins to one in which he is alive in Christ (saved by the blood). But others believe the 'resurrection' spoken of here to be the resurrection of believers at the 'Rapture', as mentioned in (**I Cor.15:23 & I Thes. 4:16**). (I agree.)

Vs.12-14. The Pursuit of Eternal Perfection.

V.12. 'Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect'. Paul mentions two things of which he had not yet attained. They were: (1) The out-resurrection (Rapture of the saints), and, (2) Eternal perfection. Note: Paul likens the Christian life as a 'race', having its beginning at 'conversion' (getting saved; being justified by faith), and its completion (finish line, goal) being 'perfect holiness' and 'eternal glory' (being like Christ) - **I Jn.3:2**).

- Some have stumbled over the word 'perfect'. Note: Paul mentions 'two different perfections' in these verses (here, and in **v.15**). The 'perfection' here speaks of that which is 'eternal'; that which is promised all those 'in Christ' when they receive their 'glorified bodies' (**cf. I Thes.4:16,17**). Amen! We shall be like him (Christ), having 'glorified perfection', which is 'eternal'.

- 'But I follow after' (I pursue, I press on). In essence, Paul says, I don't consider myself as having reached the final goal, nor have I become 'eternally perfected', but I'm staying in the race. He had put his hand to the plow and refused to look back.
- 'if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus'. 'I press on to lay hold of the prize, because Christ first laid hold of me' (Pulpit Com.).

V.13. 'Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended (to have grasped completely, laid hold on) but this one thing I do' (my one aspiration). **Note:** The words 'this I do' are in italics, showing that they are not in the original Greek, but are supplied by the translators. Too, they are not needed. The literal Greek, 'But one thing', is sufficient. For Paul, it was pursuing Christlikeness. His life was summed up in his words, 'For me to live is Christ' (**1:21**).

- 'Forgetting those things which are behind'. Some suggest that Paul is saying the believer should forget everything in his past; not only his sins and failures, but the past progress and accomplishments in his Christian life, as well. (I disagree.) Too, some believe Paul's words, 'those things which are behind', refer to the things he mentioned in (**3:5,6**). No doubt, 'forgetting the things behind' speaks of the believer in the Christian race refusing to rely on past victories, or, to allow past failures to hinder now.
- 'And reaching forth unto those things which are before'. Likens the runner throwing himself forward, straining every nerve and muscle, as he nears the finish line (tape, goal).

V.14. 'I press toward the mark (goal, finish line) for the prize (of being like Christ and with Christ) of the high calling (the upward calling, Rapture, a calling which is from heaven and to heaven - I **Thes.4:16,17**) of God in Christ Jesus' (by the voice of the Lord Jesus, who is the Word of God).

V.15. 'Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded'. As mentioned earlier, Paul speaks of 'two different perfections'. The first (**v.12**) speaks of the finished process ('eternal perfection'), when those in Christ will receive their glorified bodies. **Question now raised:** What is the meaning of the phrase 'as many as be perfect'? Or, what did Jesus actually mean when He said, 'Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect' (**Matt.5:48**)? Many have had difficulty understanding how one can 'be perfect' while living in a wicked and sinful world, and, while still in this mortal fleshly body.

- **Note:** I trust the following comments will help bring clarity. (1) Some believe the 'be perfect', here speaks of 'Christian maturity', or 'full development'. (2) Others: This perfection cannot be achieved in this life, but all believers should strive toward it. (3) Still others teach that those who are 'sanctified' have arrived at the state of 'sinless perfection', and, therefore, cannot sin. But, in reality, the Bible doesn't teach any of these. Instead, when a believer is 'wholly sanctified', as mentioned in I **Thes.4:3** and in **5:23**, the 'inbred sin nature' (that with which we were born) is crucified (destroyed). The warfare that has raged within the heart no longer exists, and, the believer is now 'perfect' in the eyes of God. He loves the Lord with all the heart, soul, mind, and strength. Yet, we must understand, there is still room for Christian growth and spiritual development.
- Jesus said, 'be perfect' (present tense). That's now! It's God's will for every born-again believer! And the Lord has made it possible for all by pouring out His life's blood on Calvary's Cross, and suffering the shame and reproach of being crucified without the gate (**Heb.13:12**). **But remember:** A person who has been saved, sanctified, and filled with the Holy Ghost can falter, can return to sin, and, can lose out with God entirely.
- John Wesley, a preacher of Bible holiness of yesteryear, said, "There is 'Christian Perfection' on the way to 'Eternal Perfection'. (I wholeheartedly agree.)

- One final thought concerning this perfection: Sanctification is more than an 'experience', more than a purging of the 'sin nature', more than a 'second work of grace'; it is a 'life of victory and joy and peace and fellowship in the Holy Ghost'. The 'old man' (inbred propensity to sin) is no longer within the heart of the believer causing trouble, but has been reckoned dead, crucified, destroyed, gone. Amen! The songwriter penned it perfectly, there is 'Victory in Jesus'!
- 'And if in any thing ye be otherwise minded (otherwise than is right, any thing amiss), God shall reveal even this unto you'. Note: Paul was confident that God would make known the truth to them of the necessity of being totally committed to Christ (of living a wholly sanctified life).

V.16. 'Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained'. 'Only let us hold true to what we have already received' (Amplified New Testament). 'Let us not deviate from those principles that have brought us safely to our present stage of Christian maturity' (Wycliffe Bible Com.).

- 'Let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing'. Paul appeals to these Philippian believers for 'unity' in their walk with the Lord. In essence, he is saying, 'Stay in line spiritually, and be determined never to deviate from the principles that have brought you safely to your present stage of Christian perfection'.

V.17. 'Brethren, be followers (imitators) together of me' (unite in following my example). Remember: As yet, there was no tradition of the Christian life in that region of the world. And because of that, Paul uses himself (not in an egotistical way) but as an example for these believers to follow. Note: When writing to the Corinthian believers, Paul admonished them, saying, 'Be ye followers of me, even as also I am or Christ' (**I Cor.11:1**). Paul not only 'preached' Christ, he 'lived' Christ.

- 'And mark (note) them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample'. The Philippian believers were to focus on other godly examples, such as Timothy and Epaphroditis. 'Keep your eyes on those who practice living by the pattern we have set for you' (Williams' N.T. Translation in the Language of the People).

Vs.18,19. 'For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ.' Note: Those mentioned here were neither 'Judaizers' nor 'heathen', but 'professed Christian Greeks' (likely Epicureans, who taught that the satisfaction of the physical appetites was the highest aim of man). Their 'walk' (manner of living) gave evidence as to 'what they were' much more so than their 'profession' (that which they claimed to be). They confessed Christ with their lips but denied Him with their lives. Jesus said (**Matt.7:20**), 'By their fruits ye shall know them'.

- 'Whose end is destruction' (perdition, ultimate damnation). Note: Spurgeon says that Paul wept for three reasons. (1) On account of the 'guilt' of these enemies of the cross of Christ. (2) On account of the 'ill effects' of their conduct. (3) On account of their 'doom'.
- Whose God is their belly (they minded nothing but their sensual appetites, which were their God), and whose glory is in their shame (they are proud of that which they should be ashamed), who mind earthly things' (live for this world only).
- **A question is raised**: Is it possible for a 'professing Christian' of our day, in a time of such an abundance of religious enlightenment, to be an 'enemy of the cross' without actually realizing it? **Answer**: Surely. That was the case with some Philippians in Paul's day, and, has been the case with multitudes of those who profess Christ as Savior during all the decades since. That's why Jesus said: 'If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily' and 'follow me' (**Lu.9:23**); why Jesus said: 'Be ye therefore 'perfect', even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect' (**Matt.5:48**); why Jesus said: 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind . . . and thy neighbor as thyself' (**Matt.22:37,39**); why the writer to

the Hebrews said: 'Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord' (**Heb.12:14**); why Paul wrote: 'For this is the will of God, even your sanctification' (**I Thes.4:3**); and, why the Holy Ghost anointed the writer of Scriptures to include the words, 'Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate. Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach' (**Heb.13:12,13**). In summary: A primary reason for many not willing 'to suffer the reproach of the cross' is that they refuse to 'go on to a life of holiness, to Christlikeness'. And, remember: There are no short-cuts to victory.

V.20. 'For our conversation is in heaven'. The word 'conversation', in Greek, has three meanings: a form of government; political acts, politics; and a commonwealth (Pulpit Com.). Here, it refers to the 'commonwealth' of which the Philippian saints were citizens. But the commonwealth to which we, as Christians, belong, is in heaven. Note: 'We have been born from above (**Jn.3:3**), our names are written on heaven's register (**4:3**), our lives are guided by heavenly standards, and our rights and inheritance are reserved in heaven' (Full Life Study Bible).

- 'From whence also we look for (eagerly wait for) the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ' (looking for Him to come to take His Bride to heaven). Note: The title 'Lord' was also applied to the Roman Caesar. It wasn't long after the time of Paul that Christians were martyred for refusing to call Caesar 'Lord', claiming that Jesus was the only Lord' (Gucik).
- When writing to Titus, Paul said, 'Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ' (**Titus 2:13**). Amen! Perhaps today!

V.21. 'Who shall change (transform, fashion anew) our vile body (lowly body, body of humble origin), that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body' (the body in which Christ is clothed in his glorified state). 'This is the glory reserved for the bodies of the saints, which they will be instated in at the resurrection' (Matthew Henry Com.). Note: When writing to the Corinthians, Paul said, 'Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality' (**I Cor.15:51-53**). Years later the Apostle John writes, 'Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is' (**I Jn.3:2**). After the Rapture, the believer's 'new body' will be like that of Christ.

- 'According to the working whereby he is able even to subdue (subject) all things (the whole universe) unto himself'. This is possible only because the God we serve is omnipotent.

Chapter 4

- In concluding his letter to the Philippians, here in this final chapter, Paul reminds them that 'peace' and 'joy' have been promised to believers in all circumstances of life.
- V.1.** 'Therefore (seeing our conversation is in heaven, and we look for the Savior to come), my brethren dearly beloved and longed for'. Paul looked upon them as 'brethren', even though he was a great apostle. He loved them. Note: On the last night before being crucified, Jesus said to the disciples, 'This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you' (**Jn.15:12**). Too, not only did Paul love these Philippians, he loved them 'dearly', he longed to see them, to hear from them, and, to know of their welfare.
- 'My joy and crown' (his 'joy' was that he had been instrumental in winning them to Christ) and 'crown' (speaks of a crown, or laurel wreath, given to an athlete who had won the race, or to a person honored by his peers at a banquet as a symbol of success of a fruitful life). Note: It was a crown of achievement; not the crown that was given to a king.
 - 'So stand fast (hold your ground; learn the truth, and stand on it; have a solid experience in Christ, and refuse to waver or compromise) in the Lord, my dearly beloved'. To 'stand fast' in His strength and by His grace; not trusting in ourselves. Note: Paul admonished believers at Corinth, Galatia, and Thessalonica, in a similar fashion, saying, 'Get grounded in the Word', 'Stand fast', and, 'Be ye steadfast'. Too, it's important that we understand that we can 'stand fast' only when we are in the Lord. Any other place is like 'sinking sand'.
- V.2.** 'I beseech (I exhort, I beg, please) Euodias, and beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord'. Evidently, these two prominent women of the church were at variance, either one with the other, or, with the church itself. Note: Euodia means 'sweet fragrance', and Syntyche means 'affable' (pleasant). Neither, at this time, was living up to her name. Their relationship with each other had been broken, and it was causing hurt in the church. How sad! The church that had been started by women was now being torn apart by women. Remember: There is no good reason why Christian believers should continue to be at odds. So, Paul pleads with them to have a reconciliation.
- V.3.** 'And I intreat thee also (this assumes the request Paul had made had been granted), true yokefellow'. We are not told 'who' this yokefellow (true helper, true companion, a particular associate in the labor of the gospel) might be, but some have speculated that it could have been Lydia, or Silas, or Epaphroditus, or possibly even a supposed wife of Paul. Note: Since we are not told 'who' it might be, I'll simply leave it as Paul has written - 'true yokefellow'.
- 'Help those women (assist Euodias and Syntyche towards a mutual conciliation) which labored with me (inasmuch as they labored with me) in the gospel'. Note: These ladies seem to have held a high position in the church.
 - With Clement also!. **A question is raised**: Is Clement associated with the 'true yokefellow' in the work of reconciliation, or with the women who labored with the Apostle Paul? To me, it seems more likely that Paul was requesting that Clement be included in helping to bring about a reconciliation.
 - 'And with other my fellowlabourers (the rest of my fellow-workers), whose names are in the book of life'. Note: Evidently, the 'Book of Life' refers to the 'roster of the righteous', from which the faithful in Christ are not to be blotted out (**Rev.3:5**). It is the same as the 'Lamb's Book of Life' (**Rev.21:27**).
- V.4.** 'Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice'. Note: It seems strange that someone facing death in prison would be admonishing a church, that was at that very moment having discord amongst some of its members, to be joyful. But there's an important lesson here. 'Real joy' doesn't

come through pleasant circumstances, but from Christ dwelling within. Matthew Henry says, 'It is our duty and privilege to rejoice in God, and to rejoice in Him always; at all times, in all conditions; even when we suffer for Him or are afflicted by Him'. 'Joy' is a fruit of the Spirit, and is the result of having peace with God (**Rom.5:1,2**). So Paul says, 'keep on rejoicing'. Notice too, when writing to those of Thessalonica, Paul said, 'Rejoice evermore' (**I Thes.5:16**).

- V.5.** 'Let your moderation (gentleness, forbearance, graciousness, a good disposition toward others) be known unto all men'. Let the world see the 'fruit of the Spirit' manifested in your daily living. Note: A good example of this quality is found in **Jn.8:3-11**, when the woman, who was taken in adultery and brought to Jesus by the scribes and Pharisees; how He handled the situation with gentleness.
- 'The Lord is at hand'. Two differing thoughts: (1) The return of Jesus for his saints (Rapture) is imminent; could happen at any moment. The phrase is equivalent to 'maranatha' of **I Cor.16:22**, which means 'the Lord cometh'. (2) Others interpret the words, not of the future Rapture of the church, but of the Lord's present nearness as noted in **Ps.145:18**, 'The Lord is nigh unto them that call upon him, to all the call upon him in truth'. Note: I agree, completely, with that of number one.
- V.6.** 'Be careful (anxious, worried) for nothing' (not even one thing). Paul is not advocating that his converts be 'careless', but that they stop worrying; that they might be free from anxiety. To fret and worry is to have 'a divided mind' and show a lack of trust in God's sovereignty, his power, and his wisdom. Too, James said, 'A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways' (**Ja.1:8**). **A question**: Is it possible to live without worry in today's world? in a time of such chaos, strife, and turmoil? **Answer**: Surely. 'For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind' (**II Tim.1:7**).
- 'But in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God'. The one essential cure is 'prayer'. **If we believe**: 'The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord' (**Ps.37:23**); 'That all things work together for good to them that love God' (**Rom.8:28**); 'There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it' (**I Cor.10:13**); That nothing can come to us, as believers, without God allowing it; That God is sovereign; and, That He is still in control, regardless of the circumstance or situation; then, there is actually nothing to worry about! Amen! We're serving an awesome God!
 - Paul's advice is: Turn your worries into prayers. Another way of saying it: If you want to worry less, pray more. We have the promise of God, with Elijah as an example: 'The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much' (**Ja.5:16**).
 - 'Let your requests be made known unto God'. Many prayers of God's people go unanswered because they fail to ask for anything. We're told in the Scriptures, 'Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not. Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts' (**Ja.4:2,3**). 'Tell God every detail of your needs in earnest and thankful prayer' (J. B. Philips).
- V.7.** 'And the peace of God' ('that inward tranquility of soul grounded in God's presence, God's promise, and God's power' - King James Bible Com.). God's peace is not found in 'positive thinking'; it doesn't mean the 'absence of conflict'; and, is not just 'good feelings'. It comes from knowing we are saved by God's grace, and walking in the light of His Word. Notice the three aspects of 'peace' that relate to God: (a) The 'Peace of God', (b) 'Peace from God', which lets us know that our peace comes as a gift from Him, and, (c) 'Peace with God', which speaks of our relationship with Him through the finished work of Jesus Christ, when he gave his life at Calvary for the sins of the world.

- Which passeth all understanding' - beyond our ability to understand and explain. Too, it far surpasses all our careful planning and clever ideas as to how we can resolve our own anxieties (Wycliffe Bible Com.). Because that is true, this 'Peace of God' must be experienced.
- 'Shall keep (guard, keep watch over) your hearts and minds (thoughts) through Christ Jesus'.

V.8. 'Finally (in conclusion) brethren'. Note: Paul had used the word 'finally' in **3:1**. No doubt, he had prepared to close his epistle at that time, but some additional thoughts had come to mind. And now, he says, as I close this letter, I exhort you to fix your thoughts on the following Christian virtues: Things which are 'true', 'honest', 'just', 'pure', 'lovely', 'of good report', 'virtuous', and 'praiseworthy'.

- 'True'. Belonging to the nature of reality.
- 'Honest'. Worthy of reverence.
- 'Just'. Righteous. Having righteous relations between man and man, and man with God.
- 'Pure'. Chaste. Free from stain or defilement.
- 'Lovely'. Amiable, gracious, pleasing.
- 'Of good report'. That which has a high ring. It refers to what is generally considered reputable in the world, such as kindness, courtesy, and respect for others.
- 'If there be any virtue, and if there be any praise'. 'Whatever value may reside in your old heathen conception of virtue' (Wycliffe Bible Com.). 'Whatever is lofty and praiseworthy' (Berkley Version of the New Testament).
- 'Think on these things' (meditate, ponder, consider, reflect, give proper weight to). Note: That which we choose to 'meditate upon', matters. Right thinking will always be the victor over worry.

V.9. 'Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do'. Note: What they 'saw' in Paul was the same as that which they had 'heard' from him. 'Model your conduct on what you have learned from me, on what I have told you and shown you' (J. B. Phillips). Actually, Paul was saying 'Follow me as I follow the Lord'.

- Dake mentions 'Four things to practice and enjoy':
 - (1) Things learned - Christian practices (how to live).
 - (2) Things received - Christian blessings.
 - (3) Things heard - Christian doctrines.
 - (4) Things seen - Christian miracles.
- 'And the God of peace shall be with you'. If the Philippians would follow through as Paul instructed, not only would they have the 'peace of God', but the 'God of peace', as well. The Lord is with us while we are with him. Note: A radio preacher of years past concluded each broadcast by saying, 'Go with God, and he will go with you'. Amen! It's true!

Vs.10-12. In these verses we have the grateful acknowledgement which the apostle makes of the kindness of the Philippians in sending him a gift by Epaphroditus for his support, now that he was incarcerated in a Roman prison. Matthew Henry says, 'If they had each of them contributed half their estates to him, they had not given him too much, since they owed to him even their own souls; and yet, when they send a small present to him, how kindly does he take it, how thankfully does he mention it, even in this epistle which was to be left upon record, and read in the churches, through all ages; so that wherever this epistle shall be read there shall this which they do to Paul be told for a memorial of them'.

V.10. 'But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly (for their kind expressions of love and the generous gift they sent him), that now at the last your care of me hath flourished (sprouted, blossomed) again'. 'You let your care for me blossom into activity again' (Expositor's Bible). Paul rejoiced in the Lord, not their gift. **Note:** About ten years had passed since the Philippians first gave a gift to Paul to help meet his needs after he had arrived in Thessalonica.

- In the first three chapters, it was: 'Joy in Suffering', 'Joy in Serving', and 'Joy in Believing'. Here, we have 'Joy in Giving'.
- 'Wherein ye were also careful, but ye lacked opportunity'. 'For you have always been interested, but you have had no opportunity to show it' (E. J. Goodspeed).

V.11. 'Not that I speak in respect of want'. Paul was not hinting for another gift. In reality, he didn't need gifts in order to rejoice. His 'joy' was not dependent on pleasant circumstances, but on Christ, Who dwelt within.

- 'For I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content'. **Note:** Contentment is not natural to mankind. Paul didn't always know this truth, but he had learned it through long hard experience. Too, '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 - even in his Roman imprisonment' (Gucik). Later, when writing to young Timothy, Paul said, 'But godliness with contentment is great gain' (I Tim.6:6). 'The 'key' to contentment is realizing that God has given you in your present circumstances everything you need to remain victorious in Christ' (Full Life Study Bible).

V.12. 'I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound' (I have learned how to face humble circumstances, how to live when things are difficult, and, how to get along with meager necessities (food, drink, clothing, shelter, etc.). 'How few of those who are called into Christian ministry have learned this important lesson! When want or affliction comes, their complaints are loud and frequent; and they are soon at the end of their patience' (Adam Clarke Com.).

- Too, 'I know how to abound' (how to live in prosperity; have more than enough, how to enjoy plenty). **Note:** Many of our day know something of being abased but know nothing at all of how to abound. Spurgeon said, 'When they are put down into the pit with Joseph, they look up and see the starry promise, and they hope for escape. But when they are put on the top of a pinnacle, their heads grow dizzy, and they are ready to fall'.
- 'Every where and in all things I am instructed to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need'. Whatever the occasion or circumstance, I have learned the secret of contentment, whether I get a full meal or if I go hungry, or, whether I have more than enough or go lacking.

V.13. 'I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me'. This refers to Paul's ability to be content in all things. And to achieve this contentment, he realized he needed the strength of Jesus Christ. **Note:** We must remember that Jesus said (**Jn.15:5**), 'Without me you can do nothing'. **Question:** What is included in the phrase 'all things'? **Answer:** Anything and everything that God might ask of you, as long as you have the help of Christ who gives strength and power. A living Christ dwelling within the heart of man is more than sufficient to endure the circumstances without. Notice some things included in the phrase, 'I can do all things: I can enjoy the 'peace of God; I can live without worry or anxiety; I can be content, regardless of circumstances; and, I can live an overcoming victorious life in Christ. Amen!

V.14. 'Notwithstanding (nevertheless) ye have well done (you did a beautiful thing), that ye did communicate with my affliction' (when you made yourselves fellow partakers with my tribulation).

Paul commends the Philippians for their loving care in helping with a financial gift during his time of need.

V.15. 'Now ye Philippians know also, that in the beginning of the gospel (when Paul first preached the gospel in Philippi), when I departed from Macedonia (which was some ten years earlier - **Acts 16:40**), no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only'. The Philippians were the only ones to support the pioneer missionary efforts of Paul during this particular time period.

Vs.16,17. 'For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity'. Not only did the Philippians send Paul a 'love-gift' upon his departure from Macedonia; but, before that time, while he was still in Thessalonica (the city he visited next after leaving Philippi, which had a much wealthier church), they sent more than once to supply his needs.

- 'Not because I desire a gift'. Paul's words are not to be understood as a 'hint' for further gifts.
- 'But I desire fruit (profit) that may abound to your account'. Paul is saying, 'I welcome your kindness, not because it adds to my joy, but because it adds to your account' (Mathew Henry). In essence, the Philippians were storing up for themselves treasure in heaven (**cf. Matt.6:20**). Note: This speaks of one of the most important principles in all of Scripture having to do with giving: we are never the poorer for having given.

V.18. 'But I have all, and abound (I have all that I need, and more): I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you' (I have been filled full, and at present am well supplied). Note: 'A good man will soon have enough of this world; not only of living in it, but of receiving from it' (Matthew Henry).

- 'An odor of a sweet smell (a sweet-smelling aroma), a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God'. Note: A 'gift' to an apostle or spiritual leader in the early Church seems to have been regarded as an offering to God. Yet, the first and chiefest offering we can make is that of ourselves (**cf. Rom.12:1,2**). Something to think about: A person can give without loving, but he cannot love without giving. Too, the 'love-gift' mentioned here in these verses: pleased God, relieved Paul, and enriched the Philippians.

V.19. 'But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus' (You supplied my needs, according to your poverty; and he shall supply yours, according to his riches). **Question:** Is this a 'blanket promise' to all Christians, or was it directed solely to the saints at Philippi? **Answer:** Paul is speaking specifically to the Philippian believers, saying, 'Because of your kindness in receiving a 'sacrificial offering' to help me in my time of need, God will see to it that your needs are supplied from his glorious resources in Christ Jesus'. Note: I believe there is a requirement on our part, as Christians, for this promise to be a reality in our daily living. Jesus said (**Lu.9:23**), 'If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me'. 'Only in union with Christ and in his fellowship can we experience the provisions of God' (Full Life Study Bible). My prayer: May God help all those who profess Christ as Savior to be faithful in doing God's will, even as did the Philippians.

- 'According to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus' (in accordance with the greatness of his wealth in glory by Christ Jesus, by what the Lord purchased for us at the 'cross'). Note: Since there is no 'lack' in God's riches in glory, we should anticipate that there would be no lack in His supply' (Gucik).

V.20. 'Now unto God and our Father (Now to God even our Father; unto our God and Father) be glory for ever and ever (unto the ages of the ages: an endless succession of indefinite periods). Amen'.

V. 21. 'Salute every saint in Christ Jesus' (Give my greeting to every one of the saints in Christ Jesus).

Note: Those whom Paul instructs to do the greeting are probably the elders of the church, who would read the letter aloud to the congregation.

- 'The brethren which are with me greet you'. The brethren (my associates) wish to be remembered to you.

V.22. 'All the saints salute you'. It's likely that this includes all the Christians at Rome rather than just Paul's personal friends and companions.

- 'Chiefly they that are of Caesar's household' (especially those who belong to the emperor's household).
- Note: At this time, Nero was Emperor of Rome. He was cruel. Yet, within his own household there were those who had accepted Christ as Savior (true Christians). Amazing! Paul, a prisoner, was used of God to pioneer a church (a body of believers) right in the midst of an evil anti-Christian city (Rome), which, at that time, was considered the capital of the world.

V.23. 'The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all (with your spirit). Amen'. Notice: Paul began his letter with 'grace' (**1:2**) and ends with 'grace'. Surely, the gracious love of the Lord Jesus was the 'joy' of his heart.