

## Phil. 1:1

Phil 1:1 "Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons:"

Paul together with Timothy wrote the letter to the Church at Philippi. It is important that we know who wrote the letter for by knowing the person or persons who wrote the letter we can relate to their background and experience. The name, Paul, was his Roman name and meant "small." His Hebrew name was Saul, which meant great. At first, he was known as Saul and was considered great in the eyes of the Jews religious leaders. However, after God struck him down on the road to Damascus, he become known as Paul and he thus became "small" in his own eyes. Similarly, we should not seek for greatness for ourselves, but be content to be small in order that we might magnify our great God.

Timothy was Paul's son in the faith and ministry:

1. 1 Tim. 1:2 "Unto Timothy, my own son in the faith: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord."

2. 1 Tim. 1:18 "This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare;"

3. 2 Tim. 1:2 "To Timothy, my dearly beloved son: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord."

Timothy's mother and grandmother were Jews and were in the faith before him: 2 Tim. 1:5 "When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also." Timothy's father was a Greek: Acts 16:1 "Then came he to Derbe and Lystra: and, behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timotheus, the son of a certain woman, which was a Jewess, and believed; but his father was a Greek:"

While it is widely believed that Paul is the chief writer of this epistle, he also listed Timothy as one of the authors. Obviously, Paul had no need or desire to have all the credit for what he wrote. Likewise, we should understand that we are laborers together and even when the responsibility for a task may seemingly rest upon our self-alone, there are others whose labor is usually intermixed with our labor.

"The servants of Jesus Christ..." The word, "servant," is derived from the Greek word, "doulos," meaning a slave. A slave is a servant in bondage or a "bond-servant." Paul assigned the position of "doulos" to both himself and Timothy. Truly, every disciple of Jesus Christ is also a bond-servant. First, we have been purchased by the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ:

1. 1 Cor. 6:20 "For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."

2. 1 Cor. 7:23 "Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men."

Second, we have yielded ourselves to serve the Lord:

1. Rom. 6:13 "Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God."

2. Rom. 6:16 "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?"

3. Rom. 6:19 "I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness."

Servants are under the direction of their master. Oftentimes, they are to serve others, but they do so under the direction of their master. Just as Paul and Timothy were the servants of Jesus Christ and were under the direction of Jesus Christ to serve the churches and those to whom the Lord directed them, so we also are under the direction of our master, Jesus Christ to serve the Lord's children under His direction.

"To all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi..." The letter is directed to the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi. The word, "saints," is derived from the Greek word, "hagios." Except when it is translated saints, the Greek word hagios is everywhere else translated "holy" in the New Testament. It literally means holy or set apart. Among many religions, the word saint, is used in an unscriptural way to indicate someone especially pious or superior in moral behavior to the vast majority of people. The scriptures do not use the word saint in this manner.

Paul was writing to the disciples of Jesus Christ at Philippi whom he labeled saints. The disciples of Christ are "set apart" in several different ways:

1. First, they are set apart in covenant election before the foundation of the world: Eph. 1:4 "According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:" Out of all of Adam's race, God chose a people before the world began to be his people. By election he set them apart to be his people.

2. Second, they are set apart from the bondage of their depraved carnal flesh nature by the miracle of the new or spiritual birth. Before one is born of the Spirit of God he is described as having no understanding of spiritual things, no desire to seek after God, no ability to do good, no fear of God before his eyes (Rom. 3:9-18). Also, he is said to only walk according to the course of this world under the direction of the prince of the power of the air and only desiring to fulfill the lust of the flesh and of the mind (Eph. 2:1-3). Finally, he is said to have "eyes full of adultery and not able to cease from sin (2 Pet. 2:14). By the grace of God and at God's appointed time (John 3:8) God's elect children are born of the Spirit of God and given the ability to seek God, to understand the things of the Spirit of God, to fear God, to do good, to follow after the Spirit and to mortify the deeds of the flesh, to worship God in Spirit and in truth. Thus, through the new or spiritual birth we are "set apart" from the bondage we were under prior to being born of the Spirit.

3. Third, we are set apart from the condemnation of sin by Christ's atoning sacrifice on the cross. Prior to his sacrifice we were condemned to an eternal punishment because of our sins. However, Christ came to save his people from their sins. Dying on the cross under the wrathful judgment of God we read in 2 Cor. 5:21: "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." Thus, legally and positionally we have been separated from the condemnation of sin before a just and holy God.

4. Fourth, in the resurrection we will be set apart from the corruption of sin: 1 Cor. 15:42 "So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption:"

5. Fifth, through the preaching of the gospel we are set apart from our ignorance in trying to establish our own righteousness and from the false works systems of the world to a knowledge that God has completed the law for righteousness having made us righteous through his shed blood: Rom. 10:1-4 "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth."

6. Sixth, through belief of the truth, repentance, and water baptism we are set apart to the service of God:

a. Mark 16:15, 16 "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."

b. Matt. 28:18-20 "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen."

7. Seventh, we are to be set apart from the worldly walk by living a life according to the word of God: 1 Pet. 1:15, 16 "But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy."

"With the bishops and deacons..." The word bishop has reference to the gospel minister. It literally means overseer. The elders are to take the spiritual oversight of the church:

1. Acts 20:28 "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood."

2. 1 Pet. 5:1, 2 "The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind;"

The word deacon comes from the Greek word, diakonos, meaning a waiter of tables. This is consistent with what we read when the office was set up in Acts 6:1,2 "And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministrations. Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables." The office of deacon was set up to serve the tables of the needy, the ministry, and the needs of the church.

In conclusion, Paul and Timothy addressed the saints, the bishops, and the deacons in writing to the church at Philippi.

## Phil. 1.2

Phil. 1:2 "Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ."

There are two great themes in the epistles of Paul: grace and peace. In the opening of every epistle, Paul makes a statement similar to the one above. Further, in the closing of every epistle, Paul mentions once again the grace of God. Thus, it can be said that Paul opens and closes every epistle with the mention of God's grace.

Grace means the unmerited favor of God bestowed upon undeserving creatures. It is by the grace of God that God works the following things for us and in us:

1. Salvation from sin (2 Tim. 1:8 "Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God; 9 Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.")

2. The Spiritual birth (Eph. 2:1 "And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins: 2 Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: 3 Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. 4 But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, 5 Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)"

3. Our belief (Acts 18:27 "And when he was disposed to pass into Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him: who, when he was come, helped them much which had believed through grace:")

4. Obedience to the faith (Rom 1:5 "By whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name.")

5. Justification (Rom 3:24 "Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:")

6. Eternal life (Rom 5:21 "That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.")

7. God's election of a people (Rom 11:5 "Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace. 6 And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work.")

8. Spiritual gifts (Rom 12:6 "Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith;")

9. Gospel minister (Rom. 15:15 "Nevertheless, brethren, I have written the more boldly unto you in some sort, as putting you in mind, because of the grace that is given to me of God, 16 That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost.")

10. Spiritual fruits and characteristics (2 Cor. 8:6 "Insomuch that we desired Titus, that as he had begun, so he would also finish in you the same grace also. 7 Therefore, as ye abound in every thing, in faith, and utterance, and knowledge, and in all diligence, and in your love to us, see that ye abound in this grace also.")

11. The ability to preach (Eph 3:8 "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ;")

12. Prayer and help in time of need (Heb 4:16 "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.")

Similarly, peace is another great theme in the scriptures and comes to us from God. Some examples of peace that is brought to us from God are as follows:

1. Peace from turmoil even in the elements ((Mark 4:39 "And he arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm.")

2. Peace in a troubled heart (John 14:27 "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.")

3. Peace with God (Rom 5:1 "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:")

4. Peace from conflict in the church (1 Cor 14:33 "For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints.")

5. Peace in worship between Jews and Gentiles (Eph 2:14 "For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; 15 Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace.")

6. Peace with God (Eph. 2:16 "And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby.")

7. Peace in a heart condemned by sin (Eph 2:17 "And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh.")

It is important that we remember the source of this grace and peace. It is from God, our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ. Thus to God be all praise and glory.

### **Phil. 1:3-7**

Phil. 1:3 "I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, 4 Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy, 5 For your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now; 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: 7 Even as it is meet for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart; inasmuch as both in my bonds, and in the defence and confirmation of the gospel, ye all are partakers of my grace."

"I thank my God upon every remembrance of you..." The saints of God that we come in contact with often make an indelible memory on our minds. The fellowship we

share, the love we have for the Lord, our desire to hear the truth, the shared experiences in serving the Lord. The joy we share in serving and worshipping the Lord leave us with blessed and fond memories of those who we have shared them with. Often times we may be separated by great distances and not have many opportunities to visit with one another, yet even the memories of the few visits we have together is better than the interactions we have with worldly minded individuals. As Paul thanked God for every remembrance he had of the saints, so we should thank God for the remembrances we have of the saints. We are blessed to know that we are not alone in this wicked world, but that there are fellow travelers to whom we can share and relate our joys, fellowship, concerns, prayers, and hopes.

"Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy, For your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now..." It has been my experience in having fellowship with distant saints that when I think of them that I often desire to have the opportunity to share in their fellowship once again. As a minister of the gospel, I know that I am to go where and when the Lord directs me. Sometimes I may not have the opportunity that I desire to return to certain places that I have had sweet fellowship in the past. However, in prayer I can request the Lord that I may have fellowship in the gospel with them once again. We always should pray, "The Lord's will be done." Please note that Paul desired fellowship in the gospel. To have fellowship we must be agreed. Amos asked, "Can two walk together except they be agreed?" The answer is implied that they cannot walk together except they be agreed. If I believe in the true gospel and someone else believes in a perverted gospel, then we cannot have fellowship in the gospel. The basis of our fellowship in the gospel is a common belief in the true gospel of Jesus Christ.

"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..." It is God that begins a good work in ourselves. We do not begin the work, but God alone who is capable of beginning the work. When God chose us before the world began, he did so by covenant arrangement: Rom. 8:29, 30 "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified." According to this covenant God calls, justifies and glorifies those he chose before the world began. God begins this good work in us by quickening us into spiritual life when we were before dead in trespasses and sins. This work in us continued on the cross when Christ died to redeem us from our sins and thus justify us before a just and holy God. Paul was and we should be confident that God will continue this good work until the Lord Jesus Christ returns in the morning of the resurrection and changes our vile bodies to be fashioned like unto his glorious body. Paul was also confident that the Philippians' brethren were chosen of God and would be finally resurrected. He had this confidence because he saw the evidence that God had called them into spiritual life. He saw the fruit of the Spirit in their lives.

"Even as it is meet for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart; inasmuch as both in my bonds, and in the defence and confirmation of the gospel, ye all are partakers of my grace." The affection that Paul had for these brethren was apparent as he had them in his heart. He earnestly desired their joy, fellowship, and well-being. He also had them in his bonds. Paul considered them to be fellow servants of the Lord

Jesus Christ. Just as Paul considered himself to be a bondservant of Jesus Christ, so he also by experience believed the Philippians to consider themselves to be bondservants of Jesus Christ. Paul also considered that they shared his interest in the defense and confirmation of the gospel. All true disciples should share a common interest in the defense and confirmation of the gospel. We are to both defend against the attacks that are made against the gospel and to confirm to God's children, who are seeking, the precious truths of the gospel.

Paul said that the Philippians' brethren were partakers of his grace. Certainly, God's grace is extended and manifest unto every one of us. However, it took the grace of God for Paul to preach the gospel. When someone is blessed to preach the gospel, we are partakers of the grace of God given unto him to preach the gospel.

### **Phil. 1:8-11**

Phil. 1:8 "For God is my record, how greatly I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ. 9 And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment; 10 That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ; 11 Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God."

"For God is my record..." The word, record, comes from the Greek word, *martus*, and literally means witness. Words are easy to say. Sometimes people can say things that they do not really mean, but will say them because they think the ones they are talking to want to hear them say that. Sometimes people feign words for gain. There are many evil reasons that people will say things they do not really mean. Paul wanted the church at Philippi to know that the things he had to say to them was not feigned nor said for personal gain. He called God as his witness of the things he was about to tell the church. It is indeed a fearful thing to call God as your witness and then tell a falsehood. Paul wanted the church to have the assurance that the feeling he had for the church was genuine.

"How greatly I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ." Paul had a great "inward affection" (bowels) for the saints at Philippi. This inward affection for them was not just a natural affection that is sometimes born out of fleshly relationships or close interaction. It was an affection greater than natural affection. It was an affection that came from the tender mercies of Jesus Christ. It was a spiritual affection that comes when someone has been born of the Spirit and has come a knowledge of the precious truths of the gospel and has fellowshiped with those who also have been born of the Spirit and known the gospel truths. This love of Christ and love of His people is rooted in the heart of the spiritual inner man.

"And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment..." Paul did not pray that the saints have love, for they already had love in their hearts. Love is a fruit of the Spirit. It is an evidence of having been born of the Spirit. John wrote "for we know that we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren." Rather, Paul prayed that their love may abound yet more and more. Paul desired that the manifestation of their love may increase abundantly. Often times we have love in our hearts, yet do not manifest that love as we should or as we may be

able to do. One of the major goals of a child of God's life should be that he continuously grows in his manifestation of love. In order for our love to properly grow, we need knowledge and judgment. Yet not just any knowledge and any judgment, but knowledge of the teachings of God's word and the judgments contained therein. Paul prayed that the saints at Philippi may abound in love by increasing in knowledge and judgment taught in God's word. Likewise, we should pray for one another that we too may abound more and more in love by increasing in knowledge and judgment taught in the scriptures.

"That ye may approve things that are excellent..." What are the things that are excellent? To answer this question we look at the verses that have the word excellent in them in the New Testament:

1. Luke 1:3 "It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus,"

2. Rom. 2:18 "And knowest his will, and approvest the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law;"

3. 1 Cor. 12:31 "But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet show I unto you a more excellent way."

4. Phil. 1:10 "That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ;"

5. Heb. 1:4 "Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they."

6. Heb. 8:6 "But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises."

7. Heb. 11:4 "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh."

8. 2 Pet. 1:17 "For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

It is apparent in studying the above that spiritual things are more excellent than fleshly natural things. The things that God has established are more excellent than the things that man has established. Heavenly things are more excellent than earthly things. Christ's sacrifice is more excellent than men's sacrifices. Christ's ministry is more excellent than the ministries of men.

Paul prayed that the saints of Philippi may approve the things that are more excellent. That is, he prayed that they may be in agreement and harmony in their thinking and in their lives with the things that are more excellent.

"That ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ..." There are a lot of sincere people that are in ignorance and thus are sincerely wrong in what they do. Paul's prayer for the saints at Philippi is that they may be sincere in the true gospel and service of Christ. Further, we know that we are all sinners by nature and unfortunately sinners by practice. The being without offence does not mean that the saints at Philippi never sin. It means that they should be without offence in their worship of God and their service to God. Certainly, we should strive to keep from sinning. However, sin often deceives us and we commit sins through ignorance, or in anger or secretly in our mind, etc.



"Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God." The fruits of the Spirit are the fruits of righteousness. We are to be filled with the fruit of the Spirit. "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law." Just as Paul prayed for the saints of Philippi that they be filled with the fruits of righteousness, we also should pray for one another that we also be filled with the fruits of righteousness. When we are filled with the fruits of righteousness we give praise, honor, and glory to God. Further, those of God's people who witness our actions when we are filled with the fruits of righteousness also give praise, honor, and glory to God.

### **Phil. 1:12-20**

Phil. 1:12 "But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel; 13 So that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace, and in all other places; 14 And many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear. 15 Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some also of good will: 16 The one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds: 17 But the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defence of the gospel. 18 What then? notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretence, or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice. 19 For I know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, 20 According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death."

"But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel; 13 So that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace, and in all other places..." It is generally believed that this epistle to the Philippians was written from Rome, where Paul was a prisoner and would eventually be beheaded by the Roman emperor Nero. Paul had been accused by the Jews at Jerusalem who tried to kill him there, he had been taken into custody by a Roman centurion and carried to Caesarea and as a Roman citizen had appealed to Caesar's judgment seat. The Lord had told him that he would testify at Rome as well as at Jerusalem.

Persecutions against the true gospel of the grace of Christ and against his ministers and his church have generally fueled the growth of the church and the spread of the gospel. This happened at Jerusalem: Acts 8:3 "As for Saul, he made havock of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison. 4 Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word." Paul was the apostle who had labored more abundantly than they all. He is the one who carried the gospel the furthest and who ultimately suffered the most persecutions. No doubt many were worried that at the death of Paul that the gospel would be quenched. However, Paul knew that the example was stronger than the persecution. In prison and ultimately awaiting death, Paul said, "the things which happened to me have fallen out rather to the furtherance of the gospel."

The testimony of one who is willing to die for what he believes is far greater than the testimony of his persecutors. Paul knew that many would see that since he was willing to die for the gospel that the gospel was worth dying for. No doubt Paul's sufferings and death encouraged many to show even greater zeal for the truth and for the cause of Jesus Christ and His church.

Next, Paul's bonds were manifest in all the palace and all other places. Paul was in prison to the Roman government. However, the bonds to which he referred were not the bonds of men, but his bonds to Christ. He was the Lord's prisoner and he manifest that he would be the servant of the Lord even in the most wretched of circumstances. He worshipped and served the Lord in the most miserable of circumstances in a Roman jail. No doubt, many who were around him, took note that he was the love servant of Jesus Christ.

"And many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear." Paul's example had showed to the brethren that the Lord will be with you and not desert you even in prison and in death. This knowledge emboldened the ministering brethren to more boldly speak the word without fear of what man may do to you. The devil and his ministers do not understand this. They think they can through force and fear cause the Lord's servant to cease preaching the true gospel. Just the opposite effect happens when they use force and persecution to try to stop the mouths of the Lord's true servants.

"Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some also of good will: 16 The one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds: 17 But the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defence of the gospel." Some have misunderstood this passage and have thought that those who use the name of Christ and call it a gospel even though what they preach is a perverted gospel that this is acceptable and pleasing to the Lord. This is not acceptable unto the Lord. Paul taught in Galatians that "if any man preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed."

The truth is that Paul was setting forth the situation where some preach the true gospel of Christ, but do it out of impure motives. They do it out of envy and strife. There are men who become envious of other brethren and of their influence and success in preaching the gospel. These men with the impure motives want the recognition or fame and influence and purported success of those who preach out of good will and love. They will even strive and speak against others if they think it will enhance their position among the churches. Their preaching is not sincere but is done for personal gain.

"What then? notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretence, or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice." Paul was not rejoicing over the preaching of a false Christ, but he was rejoicing in the fact that the true Christ was preached. The hearers of the gospel rarely are able to judge the heart of the one who preaches to know if he is preaching out of strife and envy or if he is preaching out of good will and love. The message of the grace of God is the same whether the motive of the preacher who preaches it is good or impure. We rejoice in the gospel message, even though sometimes we may hear it from men who have impure motives.

"For I know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, 20 According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death." When Paul speaks of his "salvation" here he is not

referring to his eternal deliverance from sin. Paul certainly taught that salvation from sin is by the grace of God and not through man's efforts. Paul was speaking of the "salvation" from his current circumstances. Paul said that he knew that through the prayers of the saints and through the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ that he would be delivered from his current circumstances of men's bonds and persecution. He knew that he would be delivered either by life or by death.

Paul desired that whether he lived or died that it was his earnest expectation and hope that he never do anything that would bring shame upon his master Jesus Christ. His earnest desire was that Christ would be magnified in his body, whether it be by life or by death. He wanted to live his life as the bond-servant of Jesus Christ and he wanted to die as the servant of Jesus Christ. This should also be the desire of each one of us. We should desire to live as the bondservants of Jesus Christ and we should desire that in death we would still be serving our Lord and Master Jesus Christ.

### **Phil. 1:21-24**

Phil. 1:21 "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. 22 But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labour: yet what I shall choose I wot not. 23 For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better: 24 Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you."

"For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." Paul is telling the brethren at Philippi that his life in the flesh is to live it to the honor and glory of Jesus Christ. He was striving to live according to the leadership of the Spirit of Christ and to live it according to the words of the Lord Jesus Christ. His desire was to live his life as though Christ was living in him and directing his actions and words and deeds. However, Paul recognized that when his fleshly life ended, it would be gain to him. What awaited Paul and all of God's elect children at cessation of natural life is great gain. When we die, our spirit and soul shall go immediately into the presence of God in heaven. All suffering will have ceased. All struggles with the fleshly lust will have ceased. All pain will have ceased. We will enter into that place of eternal joy and peace and rest, giving all praise, honor, and glory to God. Sin will cease from hindering our joy. Death will never again be an enemy to us.

Furthermore, our body will return back to the dust to await the great rising day, when Christ shall come again to claim those bodies which he has purchased and reunite them with the souls and spirits, change the bodies to be conformed to the very image of Christ and take us home to glory to be with God forever in a totally blissful state, life without end.

"But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labour: yet what I shall choose I wot not." Paul taught in Ephesians 2:10 the great purpose for the lives of each of God's elect children: "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." Whenever a person is born of the Spirit of God, he is created in Christ Jesus unto good works. Good works to the honor and praise of God is the purpose for our being given to us from God. Christ said in John 15:8 "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples." Bearing the fruits of good works glorifies God. Our lives in the flesh should be to bear the fruits of good works to the glory of God. Sometime in the life of the child of God there comes a dilemma. That dilemma is whether to continue to have a desire to bear the fruits of good works in our life or to go home to glory. We really do not know what is best to choose. This is what Paul said when he wrote, "yet what I

shall choose I wot not." The word, wot, means know. Paul said he did not know what to choose. Thankfully, we do not have to make this choice. God knows best and he should make this choice for us: we should not make it for ourselves.

"For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better: Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you." Paul said that being with Christ is **far** better. He did not say that it was better, but he said it was **far better**. One of the meanings of **far** is "**much in every respect**." In every way that you can compare the abiding in the flesh with going to be with Christ, the being with Christ exceeds in every respect the abiding in the flesh. However, one of the great guiding principles of being a disciple of Christ is that we should live our lives unselfishly. Paul told the church at Philippi that his abiding in the flesh was more needful for them. Yet his going home to glory was far better for him. As long as we have life in these mortal bodies, we should strive to bear fruit to the honor and glory of God, knowing this is more needful for those we serve than our going home to glory. There will come a time when the Lord will call us home to glory. Then we will have that which is far better.

### **Phil. 1:24-30**

Phil. 1:24 "Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you. 25 And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide and continue with you all for your furtherance and joy of faith; 26 That your rejoicing may be more abundant in Jesus Christ for me by my coming to you again. 27 Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel; 28 And in nothing terrified by your adversaries: which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God. 29 For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake; 30 Having the same conflict which ye saw in me, and now hear to be in me."

"Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you." For the church at Philippi it was more needful for them that Paul abide in the flesh than that he die and go home to glory. Paul had previously stated that to die is gain, but to live is Christ. He also stated that going home to the Lord was far better. Sometimes the ministers of the gospel are torn between desiring to go home to the Lord or to abide in the flesh. For their own personal joy, going home to the Lord is far better. However, when we view this in an unselfish manner, to abide and serve the church is more needful for the church. The same could be said for each member of the congregation. A Christian father who dies when the children are young is in a far better place, but the children suffer because the father is not around. The children need their father. The same can be said for the mother and the children. Often the service of individuals is of much benefit to those they serve, however, if they depart then the service may suffer.

"And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide and continue with you all for your furtherance and joy of faith; That your rejoicing may be more abundant in Jesus Christ for me by my coming to you again." Paul is illustrating how that his abiding in the flesh would be more needful to the church at Philippi. For him to abide, their faith would be furthered in knowledge and understanding of God's word and their joy likewise would be furthered. Their rejoicing would increase more and more in Christ Jesus. The service of a faithful gospel minister is of great benefit to the congregation.

"Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel..." The word, conversation, comes from a Greek word that means behavior or lifestyle. Paul is telling the members of the church at Philippi that they should live their lives in such a way that it is becoming of the gospel of Christ. To live dishonestly or to live after the fleshly lust would not bring honor unto Christ or to the gospel of Christ. However, to live honestly and godly with much charity is honoring to Christ and to the gospel of Christ. It is our privilege and duty to honor and glorify Christ and his gospel by the way that we live our lives. Paul was desirous to hear that the members of the church at Philippi were standing fast in one spirit and that they were of one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel. One of the joys of a faithful ministers of the gospel is to see that their labors have not fell on deaf ears and that those on whom they have bestowed labor are earnestly contending for the faith that was once delivered to the saints. Let each of us strive to do so with his life.

"And in nothing terrified by your adversaries: which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God." The fact that we are not terrified by our adversaries, i.e., that we are not afraid of their threatenings and persecutions is to them an evident token of our damnation and ultimate destruction. Their belief system is based on fear. Since we do not fear them nor serve God out of fear, their belief system tells them that we are reprobates. However, to us the fact that we fear God and not man is an evidence of our salvation and that of God.

"For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake; Having the same conflict which ye saw in me, and now hear to be in me." Suffering for the cause of Christ is something we should expect and not shy away from:

1. 2 Tim. 3:12 "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution."
2. Acts 5:41 "And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name."
3. Acts 9:16 "For I will show him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake."
4. Heb. 11:25 "Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season;"
5. 1 Pet. 3:14 "But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled;"
6. 1 Pet. 4:15 "But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters. 16 Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf."
7. 1 Pet. 4:19 "Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator."

## **Phil. 2:1-4**

Phil. 2:1 "If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, 2 Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. 3 Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. 4 Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others."

In this section of the letter to the church at Philippi Paul describes some of the characteristics that a disciple and church should have to be good servants of the Lord Jesus Christ. He sets forth the foundation for these qualities or characteristics on the things that we have experienced as children of God and disciples of Jesus Christ: "If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies..."

As born-again children of God and disciples of Jesus Christ we have experienced the "consolation in Christ." The gospel of Jesus Christ told us that we had been redeemed from our sins by the finished work of Jesus Christ. The gospel also comforted us by teaching us that we do not have to do anything to be born of the Spirit or to be saved from our sins, but God through his grace has already done this for us. Furthermore, we are comforted in our personal lives by the scriptures and the leadership of the Holy Ghost. The gospel also comforts us from trying to get right with God by telling us that God has already made us right with him.

The love of God shed abroad in our heart is a great comfort to us. It comforts us in the midst of trials, troubles, tribulations and persecutions. It comforts us when we lose loved ones. It comforts us when we face the valley of the shadow of death.

The fellowship of the Spirit is a great blessing to each of us. We experience this fellowship of the Spirit in the preaching of the true gospel of Jesus Christ. We experience it also when we are studying the word of God and meditating on the word and the things of God. In addition, we experience this fellowship of the Spirit when we are at a throne of grace. When we have godly conversations with fellow disciples or with sincere seekers of the truth, we have the fellowship of the Spirit.

The word, "bowels," comes from a Greek word meaning "inward affections." The inward affections we have towards God and his people stems from the love, grace, and mercy of God towards us. Further, there are many scriptures that speak of God's tender mercies towards his children. Psalms 69:16 seems to sum up the thought of God's mercies towards his children: "Hear me, O LORD; for thy lovingkindness is good: turn unto me according to the multitude of thy tender mercies."

"Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind." This sentence contains at least three characteristics or qualities that the disciples of Christ should possess under the umbrella of being "likeminded." The three characteristics are:

1. having the same love
2. being of one accord
3. of one mind.

The Greek word for "love" in this verse is "agape" and means the love of God in action. Thus, for us to have the same love, we must have already been born of the Spirit (love is a part of the fruit of the Spirit), and we must be actively engaging that love one to another. The Lord said in John 15:13, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay

down his life for his friends." We manifest this godly characteristic or attribute when all the congregation is actively laying down their lives for one another.

Next, we are to be of one accord. The Greek word for accord is "sumsuchos" meaning co-spirited or similar in sentiment. This assumes that all parties are motivated by the Spirit of God dwelling within them. Sometimes peoples motives are impure. Some people are motivated by gain. Some are motivated by jealousy. Some are motivated by popular opinion. There are a lot of things that motivate people. We should all be on our knees asking God to direct our motives and our minds. It is necessary that we be of one accord if we are to be likeminded.

Finally, we must be of one mind. If I am of one mind and you are of another mind, then we obviously are not of one mind. Amos asked the question in Amos 3:3 "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" Agreement is necessary to walk together. However, if you believe in something that is wrong and I agree in something that is wrong, we may walk together, but we are both wrong. To be of one mind in the above scripture is teaching us that we are agreed together in the truth. To be agreed together in the truth, then we must know and believe the truth. When we both know and believe the truth, then we are of one mind in the truth. To be likeminded, we all must know and believe the truth and desire to manifest the truth in our lives.

"Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory..." Strife and vainglory or negative characteristics that we are to avoid as the disciples of Jesus Christ. Paul said "let nothing be done..." The key word is "nothing." It excludes everything. Thus, we are not to do anything through strife or vainglory. There are no exceptions because of the use of the word, "nothing." Whatever we do either as a church body or as a disciple of Christ is to be done without strife or vainglory. The Greek word for strife used here is "eritheia" and means "factioning by being contentious." We are to speak the truth in love (Eph. 4:15). Also, 2 Tim. 2:24-26 tells us "And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will."

The Greek word for vainglory is "kenodoxia" and means "empty glory or self-conceit." If what I do is done to puff myself up or to promote myself or to further my own ambition, then I am doing it for vainglory. What we do in the church is to be done out of humility and not of selfishness.

"But in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves." "Lowliness of mean" indicates that we are to be humble-minded. That is we are not to be exalted in our own opinion of ourselves. The following verses of scripture reinforce this principle:

1. Acts 20:19 "Serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears, and temptations, which befell me by the lying in wait of the Jews:"

2. Rom. 12:3 "For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith."

3. Col. 3:12 "Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering;"

4. 1 Pet. 5:5 "Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble."

In humility of mind we are to "esteem" or value others more highly than we value ourselves. Paul illustrated that to us in his personal valuation of himself:

1. 1 Tim. 1:15 "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief."

2. 1 Cor. 15:9 "For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God."

3. Eph. 3:8 "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ;"

"Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others." When it comes to the service of God, each of us has our own service to perform before God in serving our brothers and sisters. One thing helped me discover the meaning of this verse of scripture. This thing was the word, "also." This verse is not telling not to give attention to and effort to our service, but it is telling us that each member of the congregation has a service to perform. By looking also on the service that others have to perform, praying that the Lord will bless their service as well as ours, and assisting them in their service as we have opportunity, we are unselfishly working for the benefit of the service of the entire congregation.

### **Phil. 2:5-11**

Phil. 2:5 "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: 6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: 7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: 8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. 9 Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: 10 That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; 11 And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

In the previous passage of scripture, Paul had taught us about the need of humbleness of mind in the service of God. Now Paul directs our attention to the greatest example of humility that has ever been and he tells us that this is our perfect example and that we should strive to follow that perfect example.

"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus..." Obviously none of us can possibly understand or comprehend the breath and depth of the thoughts of God. The "mind" in "Christ Jesus" under consideration is limited in the context to the mind of humility showing us that Christ Jesus is the example of humility that we should follow in our lives. True humility begins in the mind. If we think we are great or think that we want to be great, then we have not humility. If, however, we think we are a servant and want to be a servant, then we have the mind of humility, which enables us to be humble.

"Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God..." Christ showed us that we could be humble regardless of what our position in life may be.



There is none greater than God is. God has all knowledge, all power, all wisdom, and to him belongs all glory. Christ was in the form of God for he was God:

1. John 1:1 "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 The same was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made."

2. 1 John 5:7 "For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one."

3. Col. 2:8, 9 "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily."

4. John 8:58 "Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am."

5. John 17:5 "And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was."

6. John 5:18 "Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God."

7. 1 Tim. 3:16 "And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory."

Christ was verily God. He was co-equal with the Father and the Holy Spirit. He had all the attributes and qualities of God. It was in no way robbery for him to declare himself to be God or to think that he is God. Obviously, there is none greater than God and thus none greater than Jesus Christ.

"But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men..." A reputation is something that is gained over time. It is gained by perceived or actual actions or deeds that are done over time. A just conceived baby in the womb has no reputation. That just conceived baby is unknown even to the mother. As the God of glory, Christ had a reputation that was unparalleled among men. Yet Christ laid aside his reputation as the God of glory and came down to be conceived in the womb of the virgin by the overshadowing of the Holy Ghost. What an incredible condescension that the very God of glory condescended to be conceived in the womb of the virgin.

Christ also took upon him the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of men. Even as Christ was in the form of God, meaning he was verily God, he took upon him the form of a servant. As God, he is the creator of the universe. As God, he is the ultimate Master. He made himself the "man, Christ Jesus:" 1 Tim 2:5 "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." While Christ Jesus is verily God, he also is verily man. It was indeed great condescension for Christ to take upon him the form of a servant and be made in the likeness of men. Luke 22:27 "For whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? is not he that sitteth at meat? but I am among you as he that serveth."

"And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." Christ not only humbled himself by making himself of no reputation and by taking upon him the form of a servant, but he also humbled himself by becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Christ

said in John 6:37 "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. 38 For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. 39 And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day." Christ was the perfect obedient servant. He laid aside his own will in order to perform the will of him that sent him. This humility in service was manifest even to the death of the cross.

We are to emulate the mind of Christ. Christ made himself of no reputation. Whatever position we have in life due to either being the descendant of famous or rich parents or position we have labored to attain in business or otherwise, we should lay aside any reputation in order to become the humble servant of the Lord Jesus Christ. There is simply no room to pull rank on others in the church Kingdom of God. We should consider others better than consider ourselves. We should not desire position, but desire to serve above all else.

Second, as Christ took upon himself the form of a servant, we should likewise, consider ourselves to be the blood-bought servants of Christ and not the masters of men.

Third, Christ became obedient unto death. This obedience was a perfect obedience, keeping the law to a jot and a tittle, and keeping the covenant of God even to the death of his body on the cross. Likewise, we should, as the servants of Christ, "press toward the mark for the prize of the high-calling of God in Christ Jesus." We do this by seeking to obey the Lord in all things. Further, we should not count our lives dear unto ourselves, but be willing to lay down our lives for Christ Jesus as a living sacrifice and also be willing to suffer and die for the cause of Christ.

After Christ had humbled himself in the above ways, we are told that God exalted him: "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." True exaltation is not to come from men, but comes from God. Now at the name of Jesus every knee should bow and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, the glory of God the Father. Because of the humility of Christ, we will one day be exalted by God to be glorified in body, soul, and spirit to the praise of our Lord Jesus Christ and to the glory of God the Father.

### **Phil. 2:12, 13**

Phil. 2:12 "Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. 13 For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure."

There are two types of salvation taught in the scriptures. There is eternal salvation which is by the grace of God alone. Included in eternal salvation is salvation from the condemnation of sin by the shed blood of Jesus Christ. Then there is salvation from the bondage of sin by the work of the Holy Spirit in causing someone to be born of the Spirit. Additionally, there is salvation from corruption which will be brought to fruition in the resurrection of the dead at the second coming of Christ.

In addition to eternal salvation, the scriptures teach timely salvations often dependant on the works or actions of the born-again child of God. Included in these timely salvations is salvation from a condemning heart that is brought about by believing the true gospel of Jesus Christ, repentance, and water baptism. Moreover, there is salvation from ignorance of the truth of eternal salvation by the grace of God. This salvation is brought about by hearing the truth and believing the truth. Additionally, there is salvation from a false works system of eternal salvation. This salvation is brought about by hearing and believing the truth and turning from the false works systems.

Another timely salvation is salvation from death of fellowship. This salvation is brought about by repentance. Also, God providentially saves people from circumstances they often find themselves in. Often, this providential salvation follows the effectual fervent prayer of the righteous, but not always. Moreover, the scriptures teach that we can save ourselves from an untoward generation. This salvation involves how we live our lives.

Those to whom Paul was writing in the verses above were told to work out their own salvation with fear and trembling. The question before us is which salvation is under consideration. Was it an eternal salvation or a timely salvation? If it was a timely salvation, then which timely salvation is under consideration?

We will begin by showing that it is not an eternal salvation, rather those to whom Paul was writing were by many evidences already born-again children of God. The evidences that they were already born-again children of God are as follows:

1. First, Paul addressed this epistle to the "saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons..." It is apparent that Paul was addressing this epistle to the church at Philippi. A church is composed of born-again baptized believers in Christ.

2. Second, Paul refers to those addressed as "beloved." The word, beloved, comes from a Greek word, agapetos. This means dearly loved. This is not an appellation that Paul would use for those who have not been born of the Spirit of God.

3. Third, Paul says that those whom he addressed are obedient to the faith. They were obedient both when Paul was present with them and also were obedient when Paul was absent from them. The only ones who can be obedient to the faith are born-again children of God. According to 1 Cor. 2:14, "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." Thus, the natural man cannot know or obey the faith that was once delivered to the saints.

4. The ones to whom Paul addressed this passage were capable of fear. Thus, they were born of the spirit of God for the natural man "has no fear of God before his eyes."

5. God had already worked a work within the hearts of those that Paul addressed for we read, "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." The desire (will) and the ability (to do) God had already worked in the hearts of those Paul was writing to.

Because of the above reasons, we can conclude that the salvation under consideration in the above passage is not eternal salvation. Thus, the type of salvation

under consideration must be a timely salvation that is dependant on the actions of God's obedient children.

The ones to whom Paul wrote were already members of the church at Philippi. This helps us to narrow down which timely deliverance is under consideration. These already believed in eternal salvation by the grace of God alone. Therefore, they did not need to be saved from ignorance or from going about trying to establish their own righteousness. Second, since they were all obedient to the faith, they did not need to be delivered from death to fellowship. Since, they had already believed on Christ and been baptized, they did not need to be delivered from a condemning heart. Further, the text precludes consideration of a providential salvation.

The timely deliverance under consideration is salvation from an untoward generation. We read in Acts 2:40 Peter taught on the day of Pentecost: "And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation."

An untoward generation allures, entices, teaches, pressures, and sets traps to entangle God's people into living a life contrary to the life of a disciple of Jesus Christ. There are many, many traps for God's people such as drugs, alcohol, fornication, adultery, pornography, theft, lies, filthy language, unforgiveness, false worship, blasphemy, and numerous other works of the flesh. When Paul wrote to the church at Philippi encouraging them to work out their own salvation with fear and trembling, he was testifying to them that they were to work at living as the disciples of Jesus Christ and thus saving themselves from the snares and pitfalls of this untoward generation.

God had already worked within them to "will and to do of his good pleasure." The work that was done in the new or spiritual birth gave the people both the desire to worship and serve the Lord and the ability to carry forth in their lives the true worship and service of God. God puts the desire and ability in the heart, but God's spirit born children must work it out in their lives. God does not work it out for us. Verses 1 through 16 of this chapter gives us rich instructions on how we can work out this salvation from an untoward generation.

## **Phil. 2:14-18**

Phil. 2:14 "Do all things without murmurings and disputings: 15 That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; 16 Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain. 17 Yea, and if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy, and rejoice with you all. 18 For the same cause also do ye joy, and rejoice with me."

"Do all things without murmurings and disputings..." The word, murmur, means to grumble. It carries with it the thought of dissatisfaction and grudgingly going along with the rest, but stating our dissatisfaction. Often it manifests itself in dissatisfaction with the pastors or deacons, or with the decisions of the church. When the church makes decisions that are not unscriptural, then we should go along with that decision and not grumble about it. Likewise, we should not murmur against the pastor and deacons simply because they do things different than the way we may want them to.

Additionally, we should not have disputings in the church. The word, disputings, carries with it the thought of debate. While it is true that we may disagree on non-essentials, yet we are not to enter into a confrontational debate over our disagreement. We should settle any essentials such as doctrine or practice in the church with a thus saith the word of the Lord. Confrontational debate is not good for the welfare of the church.

"That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world..." We are living in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation and world. The ways of the world are quite different from the way of discipleship. The world generally tends to evil and sinfulness. We are not to live after the world, but to live after the teaching of God's word. When we follow the simple teachings set forth by the apostle Paul under the leadership of the Holy Spirit we will be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke. For this we should be seeking for that we may honor and glorify Him who has saved us and called us into his kingdom and fellowship.

When we truly walk the road of discipleship, we shine as lights in the world. Now the unregenerate are not seeing us or desiring to follow us, but those of God's children out in the world with the spiritual eyes of the new or spiritual birth can see our lives and that they are different from the lives of others and be led to desire to know more about the kingdom of God.

"Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain." The minister of the gospel desires to see that those he has labored with gospelly are holding forth the word of life in their lives. He rejoices when he sees those to whom he has labored walking in the highway of holiness. When he sees the disciples walking in the way of righteousness he has the assurance that his labor has been worthwhile and not been in vain. In this he gives praise and glory to God who has enabled both him and them.

"Yea, and if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy, and rejoice with you all. For the same cause also do ye joy, and rejoice with me." If the preacher's service is measured by the sacrifice and service of the faith of those to whom he labors and their service has been faithful, then both the preacher and the congregation joy and rejoice together.

### **Phil. 2:19-24**

Phil. 2:19 "But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timotheus shortly unto you, that I also may be of good comfort, when I know your state. 20 For I have no man likeminded, who will naturally care for your state. 21 For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's. 22 But ye know the proof of him, that, as a son with the father, he hath served with me in the gospel. 23 Him therefore I hope to send presently, so soon as I shall see how it will go with me. 24 But I trust in the Lord that I also myself shall come shortly."

There are several practical lessons taught in the above passage of scripture:

1. The sending or going forth of the ministry is to be done at the direction of the Lord. Paul certainly desired that Timothy would go to visit the church at Philippi. However, he was dependent or trusting in the Lord to send Timothy. Paul did not have

the authority to send Timothy, but certainly the Lord does. Likewise, Paul desired to go visit the church at Philippi, however, he only felt liberty to go if the Lord directed him to go.

2. We, as ministers of the gospel, have a desire to know how those to whom we have labored in the past are faring. Acts 15:36 "And some days after Paul said unto Barnabas, Let us go again and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, and see how they do." Likewise, Paul desired to know the state of the brethren and sisters at Philippi and desired that Timothy go and report back to him of their state.

3. Not everyone is a fit for every congregation. Paul believed that Timothy would naturally care for the state of the church at Philippi. Paul knew that Timothy cared for the church at Philippi and for the things of Jesus Christ. Paul also knew that many that had been with him were selfish, only seeking their own things.

4. The relationship of a father with the son in the ministry is clearly stated in the above passage of scripture. Paul had served as Timothy's father in the ministry. Paul had taught Timothy many things and answered many of his questions. This is commonly the practice of true God-called ministers today. Often, a young minister comes up under the tutelage of a more experienced minister, learning much that they need to know from the experience and knowledge of the older minister.

Though Paul was Timothy's father in the ministry, he served side by side with Timothy in the ministry as well. There is no place for one minister lording it over another minister even if the other minister is your father in the ministry.

### **Phil. 2:25-30**

Phil. 2:25 "Yet I supposed it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother, and companion in labour, and fellowsoldier, but your messenger, and he that ministered to my wants. 26 For he longed after you all, and was full of heaviness, because that ye had heard that he had been sick. 27 For indeed he was sick nigh unto death: but God had mercy on him; and not on him only, but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow. 28 I sent him therefore the more carefully, that, when ye see him again, ye may rejoice, and that I may be the less sorrowful. 29 Receive him therefore in the Lord with all gladness; and hold such in reputation: 30 Because for the work of Christ he was nigh unto death, not regarding his life, to supply your lack of service toward me."

Several things were said of Epaphroditus besides him being sick. First, Paul called him a brother. We, as part of the household of faith, should consider ourselves to be brothers and sisters. Our care and concern for one another should be as the care and concern that a brother would have for a brother. Further, Paul called him "my brother." This shows a personalizing of the relationship. We should have personal relationships with each of the members of the church of our membership.

Next, Paul referred to Epaphroditus as a companion in labour. A companion is someone who works side by side with you. Paul was laboring in the gospel of Jesus Christ and Ephaphroditus was laboring side by side with Paul in the gospel of Jesus Christ. Now, we are not told specifically that Ephaphroditus was a gospel minister, yet it is implied that he is. The lesson is for all of us, whether we preach the gospel or not, and

that is that we are all to be fellowlaborers in the gospel kingdom. We all have our labor given to us of the Lord and we should be laboring together for the welfare and the furtherance of the gospel kingdom. We should be companions in labor.

Moreover, Paul referred to Epaphroditus as a fellowsoldier. Thus, they both were soldiers of the same order. One was not above the other, but they were of the same rank, thus fellowsoldiers of Jesus Christ. Soldiers have a battle to fight and are dependant on the support and actions of their fellowsoldiers on the battlefield. We should consider ourselves as soldiers of Jesus Christ and fight the good fight of faith. We are depending upon the same captain (Jesus Christ) and also depending upon the actions and support of one another in our fight on the battlefield.

Next, Paul referred to Epaphroditus as a messenger. A messenger bears a message. He is carrying the message from the one who sent him to the people to whom he is being sent. The message is the most important thing. A messenger is to faithfully deliver the message. Likewise, we are all messengers of Jesus Christ, whether we publicly preach the gospel or not. We are to "sanctify the Lord God in our hearts, and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh us the reason of the hope that is within us with meekness and fear." Similarly, we may be sent of the Lord to give words of comfort to a fellow traveler. There are many ways that God's disciples are messengers of the Lord besides the gospel ministers.

Moreover, Epaphroditus was a minister to the needs of Paul. We are not told what those needs were, but, apparently, Paul had needs and Epaphroditus ministered to those needs. We are told not to shut up our bowels of compassion to the needs of our brethren: 1 John 3:17 "But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?" Also, James 2:15 "If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, 16 And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit?" Additionally, James 1:27 "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world." The conclusion is that we are all to be ministers to the needs of others as we have ability to supply those needs.

Epaphroditus had a loving longing for the fellowship of the brethren and sisters of the church at Philippi. The scripture says, "he longed after you all." This should also be true of each of us that we have a longing for the fellowship of God's children in the church. Often, I can hardly wait until Sunday comes so that I can once again see the dear saints of God and worship with them in spirit and in truth. I long for their fellowship and for their company. I would rather be where the saints gather together than at a family reunion.

Epaphroditus had a great concern for the concerns of the brethren: "and was full of heaviness, because that ye had heard that he had been sick." His chief concern was not for his own sickness, but it made him heavy that the brethren were concerned for him in his sickness. He was heavy hearted that they would worry too much about him. He did not want them worrying too much about him. This is a great show of love on the part of Epaphroditus.

Now, we look at the sickness of Epaphroditus. He was sick nigh unto death. In other words, he almost died from his sickness. While we are not told just what the

sickness was, we know the reason for his sickness: "Because for the work of Christ he was nigh unto death, not regarding his life, to supply your lack of service toward me." This tells us that Epaphroditus was willing to die to serve the Lord and almost died to perform that service. Surely, Epaphroditus is an example for all of us to follow. We should all be willing to die to perform the service of the Lord.

Additionally, it was an act of mercy from the Lord that God delivered him from his sickness. This mercy was not just toward Epaphroditus, but also toward Paul and toward the church at Philippi: "but God had mercy on him; and not on him only, but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow." As a side note, this shows that the apostolic sign gift was no longer present as Paul no longer had the ability to lay his hands upon the brother and deliver him from his sickness. This is a proof text that the apostolic sign gifts were only for a relatively short period of time.

Finally, we should hold in reputation those who are faithful to serve the Lord as Brother Epaphroditus was: "Receive him therefore in the Lord with all gladness; and hold such in reputation:"

### **Phil. 3:1-9**

Phil. 3:1 "Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you, to me indeed is not grievous, but for you it is safe. 2 Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision. 3 For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh. 4 Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: 5 Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; 6 Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.

7 But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. 8 Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, 9 And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:"

Certainly, whatever rejoicing we do we should rejoice in the Lord. There are many things in life that we can find temporary happiness in. We can be happy about the outcome of a sporting event or of a political race. We can be happy about something that we have accomplished or something that someone we are close to has accomplished. These are fleeting moments of happiness. They do not last very long. The things that the Lord has accomplished for us are eternal. His love to us is eternal. His watch care over us is always. Our rejoicing over the truth and Christ having delivered us from our sins does not have a time limit on it.

"Beware of dogs." Sometimes we see signs in someones yard that reads "Beware of dog." The person is warning us of a dog that could do us harm. Dogs have a nature about them that can bring us harm. Dogs bark and sometimes bite. They sometimes devour and nearly all dogs will eat their own vomit. Obviously, the warning in the above



scripture is not to ward us of natural dogs. It is a warning that some people have a nature about them that resembles the nature of a dog. Some people will bark at the truth. They loudly proclaim that the truth is a lie. They call great negative attention to those who believe and proclaim the truth and warn people about these believers in truth and seekers of truth.

Other people are like dogs in that they will bite (persecute) the believers of truth. They will go out of their way to try to bring harm to those who believe and teach the truth.

Still other people are like dogs in that they have lived ungodly lives in the past and then seemingly turn to walk uprightly, then turn again to live ungodly lives and thus eat their own vomit.

"Beware of evil workers." There are evil workers that are readily known as evil workers: they steal, they kill, they promote drunkenness, they sell illegal drugs, they rob banks, they promote pornography, they engage in all sorts of licentiousness and obviously wicked works. These are easily recognized and we should beware of them and avoid them as they can do us natural harm. Others, however are not so easily recognized, but are evil workers nonetheless. Please note the following scriptures:

1. 1 John 3:12 "Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous." The work of Cain that was referred to as evil was when Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord. Cain sought the praise of God in his work, rather than to praise God. God teaches us that that is an evil work.

2. 2 John 1:10 "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: 11 For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds." If a man comes teaching a false doctrine or hinders the teaching of the doctrines of grace, then he is committing evil deeds. He is an evil worker.

3. Matt. 7:22 "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? 23 And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity." These are proclaiming to have done things that the Lord had not appointed them to do. Thus, they are evil workers.

4. Matt. 7:15 "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. 16 Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? 17 Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. 18 A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. 19 Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. 20 Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them." These are religious evil workers that appear to be righteous.

5. 2 Cor. 11:13 "For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. 14 And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. 15 Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works."

Religious evil workers are much more hard to spot than natural evil workers. The way that we recognize religious evil workers is by the fruit of their lives and by the false doctrines that they proclaim.

"Beware of the concision." The word, "concision," comes from a Greek word that means to "mutilate." There are religious professors that mutilate the truth and try to destroy those who believe and preach the truth. Paul's particular reference seems to suggest that he had under consideration those Jewish professors of Judaism or a works system of salvation through the keeping of certain aspects of the law.

"For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh." True circumcision is not the natural circumcision of the flesh, but is as set forth in the following verses:

1. Rom. 2:29 "But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God."

2. Col. 2:11 "In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ:" True circumcision is the spiritual circumcision of the heart that is made without hands but by the Lord Jesus Christ. This circumcision takes place when we are born of the Spirit of God.

Paul said that the true circumcision are those that:

1. Worship God in the Spirit.
2. Rejoice in Christ Jesus.
3. Have no confidence in the flesh.

Only those that have been born of the Spirit can worship God in the Spirit. Christ said that those who worship Him must worship him in Spirit and in truth. We must, therefore, have the spirit before we can worship him in Spirit and in truth. We rejoice in Christ Jesus, because it is by the grace of God through the atoning blood of Christ that we are saved from our sins and given eternal life. We have no confidence in the flesh because our flesh cannot assist or aid in any way the work of eternal salvation. Paul said, "I know that in me, that is, in my flesh dwelleth no good thing."

"If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless." Paul lists the things that he had that some men think we can have confidence in the flesh. Of all men, especially Jews, that were alive during his day, none had more pedigree than Paul had in which a man may claim confidence in the flesh. Yet Paul had this to say about that pedigree: "But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith..."

Paul equated those things in his pedigree that a man might think he could have confidence in as simply the dung of the earth. Paul had ceased to seek his own righteousness through the works of the law. Rather he sought to "win" Christ. That is, he sought to gain a proper belief in what Christ had done for him and for his covenant

people. Paul sought to make his own calling and election sure to himself. He knew that the imputed righteousness of God came through the faith of Christ and not by any works or belief system of the individual. It did not come through the faith IN Christ, but through the faith OF Christ. In other words, the imputed righteousness of God to the elect is through the faithfulness of Jesus Christ to perform the covenant of redemption. This is consistent with what we read in 2 Cor. 5:21 "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."

### **Phil. 3:10-16**

Phil. 3:10 "That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; 11 If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. 12 Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. 13 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, 14 I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. 15 Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you. 16 Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing."

"That I may know him..." Paul is not saying that he did not already know who Christ is. Paul had the Damascus road experience in which the Lord revealed himself to Paul. He knew him from that experience. He also knew him from the experience of the new or spiritual birth: Heb. 8:10 "For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: 11 And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest." Paul also knew Christ from the leadership of the Holy Spirit; from his personal experiences of discipleship; from divine revelation; from the operation of the spiritual gifts within him; etc. Now, Paul desired to know Christ in perfection by walking in his footsteps and by having his life conformed to the life of Christ.

"And the power of his resurrection..." All of the elect will experience the power of the resurrection in the morning of the resurrection of these vile bodies from the grave. However, this is not what Paul is alluding to when he expresses the desire to know the power of Christ's resurrection. Christ was indeed risen from the grave by the mighty power of God. Paul was desirous to obtain to that state of perfection while he walked here in this life. He desired to be perfect in his life walk and to live a life of perfect obedience to the praise, honor, and glory of God.

"And the fellowship of his sufferings..." The sufferings of Christ on the cross suffering the eternal punishment of God for the sins of the elect cannot be duplicated by the elect. However, Christ also suffered many other things as he fulfilled the law to a jot and a tittle. He suffered numerous persecutions. He suffered beatings by the Jews and the Roman soldiers. He was despised and rejected of man. He was a man of sorrows and

acquainted with our griefs. Paul had already at the time of the writing of the book of Philippians suffered many things at the hands of men: 2 Cor. 11:23 "Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. 24 Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. 25 Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; 26 In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; 27 In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. 28 Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches. 29 Who is weak, and I am not weak? who is offended, and I burn not? 30 If I must needs glory, I will glory of the things which concern mine infirmities." One thing that Paul had not yet suffered was dying for the cause of Christ. This he would later do at the hands of the wicked Roman emperor Nero: "being made conformable to his death." Paul died for righteousness sake.

"If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead..." As one of the elect, the body of Paul will be raised in the resurrection of the dead at the last day. Further, Paul was assured of being one of those whom Christ had died for and who would be raised in that great day. Further, Paul knew that nothing he could do in this life would affect his being one of the elect and attaining to that resurrection in the last day. This, however, is not what Paul was speaking about. Paul was speaking of trying to live the same life of perfection in this life that he will live after the resurrection of the body unto perfection.

"Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus." In other words, Paul is stating that he had not yet attained to a state of perfect obedience of discipleship in this life that he will have after the resurrection. However, he states his desire to follow after in an effort to attain to that state of perfection in his daily walk as a disciple of Jesus Christ. The word, apprehend, comes from a Greek word meaning to eagerly attain, seize, or possess. Jesus Christ has eagerly attained, seized, and possessed us as the elect of God. He paid the redemption price. He quickened us by the Spirit. He will raise us up at the last day. Likewise, we, along with Paul, should be eager to attain a perfect walk of righteousness in our daily living. We should follow after the word of God with zeal to attain a perfect walk with Christ.

"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 all acknowledge that we have not yet apprehended to a state of perfection in our daily walk with Christ, but at the same time forgetting those things which are behind, let us reach forth to those things that are before and press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

Let us daily walk a little closer with God. Let us daily put away troubling sin in our lives. Let us strive to walk as near perfection in our daily lives as we can attain unto. There are many things behind in our past that we cannot do anything about. We cannot relive our past life. However, we can strive to live the rest of our days so as to honor and glorify the one who has loved us with an everlasting love and who died on the cross to

redeem us from our sins. Let us have a mark or standard of perfection to which we are striving and then let us press daily toward that mark. We attain this prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus when we attain to the resurrection of the dead in our daily walk of discipleship as we will be when we are resurrected at the last day.

"Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you." There is a sense in which we are already perfect. We are perfect in the sense that we have no charge against us before a just and holy God: Rom. 8:33 "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. 34 Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." Christ has made us perfect in righteousness before God. As we are perfect in righteousness in judgement before God, now let us strive to become perfect in our daily walk as the disciples of Jesus Christ.

Further, if we should deviate from in our mind from striving for perfection in our daily walk, we are told that God will reveal this unto us as well.

"Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing." For each of us that are striving to be the disciples of Jesus Christ we have attained to various degrees of success in our walk as disciples. We should not be satisfied that we are further down the road than when we first began, but continue to strive to attain to a state of perfection in our walk as disciples that we may more glorify God in our actions.

### **Phil. 3:17-21**

Phil. 3:17 "Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample. 18 (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: 19 Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.) 20 For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: 21 Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself."

"Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample." 1 Cor. 11:1 "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ." Paul was in not looking to make disciples for himself. He is teaching the brethren to follow him as he follows Christ. We should all be examples of a good disciple of Christ so that others would follow us in the path of discipleship. Paul followed Christ in the highway of holiness and desired that others would be followers together of him. As Paul and others followed Christ, we should use that as a standard of the proper walk of discipleship. By using this standard, we can judge how well we are doing in our walk of discipleship.

"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: 19 Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things." While it should be our desire that everyone who begins the walk of discipleship would continue in

that walk, the fact is that many depart from the walk of discipleship after they start. I have known some that we rejoiced together in walking as the disciples of Christ. Yet many of these same brethren have turned back and now mind earthly things. Their thoughts no longer are upon the cross or upon what Christ has done for them and how they ought to serve Christ. Their thoughts now are on how they can make money and gain position in life and be someone highly thought of in the world. They have set themselves up for much destruction in this life. Their glory is in their shame. It is a shame to make a god out of this world and its ways and yet that is what they glory in.

"For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ..." The word conversation refers to our behavior or walk. We, as the disciples of Christ, do not walk after earthly things, but walk after heavenly things. We walk in the kingdom of heaven and look for the return of our blessed Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ. He has promised to return and will return one day. We greatly long for our Lord's return.

"Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself." So long as we live in this life we have to deal with the sinful nature of our flesh. This vile body is always a hindrance to our walk of faith. We have a continual warfare of the flesh against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh. Yet, when our Lord returns from heaven, the warfare will be over forever. This vile sin-cursed body shall be changed and fashioned like the glorious body of Jesus Christ. When this happens, sin will be altogether in the past. By the very power that raised Jesus Christ from the dead, God will once again manifest his mighty power, raise the bodies of the elect from the dead, and change them to be fashioned to his glorious body. Praise be to the name of our Lord Jesus Christ who has blessed us exceedingly abundantly above all that we have ever asked or thought.

## **Phil. 4:1, 2**

Phil. 4:1 "Therefore, my brethren, dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved. 2 I beseech Euodias, and beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord."

The word, therefore, is a connecting word, connection the rationale of the previous thought or thoughts to the admonition in the current sentence. Paul has carefully written, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the first three chapters of the book of Philippians so that it builds to climaxing thought and admonition of the passage in Phil. 4:1.

Once again, Paul refers to the disciples of Christ at Philippi in several ways that typify their character as Christ's disciples:

1. He refers to them as "my brethren." Brethren is a term used to denote relationship and in an endearing way, fellowship. Paul certainly believed the disciples at Philippi were his brothers and sisters in Christ. This certainly indicates that they had experienced a spiritual birth by the Holy Spirit. Certainly, Paul and all the disciples at Philippi were all a part of the family of Christ. They were all chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world and quickened into spiritual life by the Holy Spirit at God's appointed time.

2. He refers to them as "dearly beloved." This phrase comes from the Greek word, "agapetos." This word indicates a love that comes from God. It is the same

love whereby God loves his children and which he has given us as a fruit of the spirit whereby we love God and the children of God. It is an endearing love. It indicates a love brought about by both relationship and fellowship.

3. He refers to them as "longed for." There are times in our lives when we are absent from our loved ones that we began to greatly long for their presence and fellowship. I have found this to be true both with my natural family and I have found it to be true with my spiritual family. Having brethren nearly half way around the world and not being able to see them very often, I get to greatly longing for their fellowship and companionship. I remember the sweet fellowship that we have had in the past and greatly long to see them and once again have that sweet fellowship.

4. Paul also referred to them as "my joy." No doubt, Paul rejoiced in the evidence of their spiritual birth that was manifest in their ready receipt of the gospel of Jesus Christ. He also, no doubt, rejoiced when they publicly professed Christ and entered into His church kingdom on earth through water baptism. Further, he no doubt rejoiced in their faithful discipleship of the Lord Jesus Christ. In addition, I am sure that he rejoiced in the sweet fellowship he had with them.

5. Moreover, Paul referred to the Philippian brethren as his "crown." The word, crown, comes from the Greek word, *stephanos*, meaning a wreath or chaplet which was used as a prize in the public games or a badge of honor. Paul referred to the Philippian brethren as being his "crown." The "crown" of the gospel ministry is for those to whom they preach the gospel to join the Lord's church through water baptism and to become the disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ and to continue in that discipleship. This is the prize of our labors.

Now comes the admonition of this verse: "Now stand fast in the Lord." Standing fast simply means that you do not move from your current position. As the disciples of the Lord we need to understand that we are to continue in that discipleship until the day we die. There is no room for retreat or for going beyond the Lord's bounds in our discipleship. We are to stand fast.

"I beseech Euodias, and beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord." By implication, Euodias and Syntyche were not of the same mind. Our attention is called back to chapter two in which Paul had admonished the brethren to be of one same mind and of one accord. Further, Paul had taught that we are to have the mind of Christ. In order for us to be of the same mind, then we have to have something in common in our mind. Amos 3:3 asks: "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" The implied answer is that two cannot walk together except they be agreed. Likewise, we cannot be of the same mind unless we are agreed. The ground of our common agreement is the word of God. When we are prone to disagree, we need to take the issue to the word of God and let it be our guide. When we properly divide the word of truth we will be agreed and subsequently of one mind.

### **Phil. 4:3-7**

Phil. 4:3 "And I entreat thee also, true yokefellow, help those women which laboured with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and with other my fellowlabourers, whose names are in the book of life. 4 Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say,

Rejoice. 5 Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand. 6 Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. 7 And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

In this letter to the church at Philippi, Paul entreats the members to help others. This certainly is an important principle, as we are to give our lives in service to our brethren. The Lord said, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." Also, we are created in Christ Jesus unto good works and we should walk in them. We do this when we are busy helping others.

Paul calls the brethren "true yokefellows." A yoke is used to join two oxen together so that they can jointly pull a load. Likewise, we are to be joined together in the service of our Lord Jesus Christ. We each are to help carry that load. In the above passage, Paul asks the church members to "help those women which laboured with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and with other my fellowlabourers..." Each of the above were labouring in the service of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Not all were preachers, but they were busy labouring toward the furtherance of the gospel kingdom of God on earth. Paul asks that each church member engage themselves in helping in this effort. The same is true for us today. We all should be laboring together for the furtherance of the church kingdom of God on earth.

Paul stated that all in this verse have their names in the book of life. We will first look at what the book of life is and then see why Paul was sure that all of the above were written in that book. The following verses pertain to the Lamb's book of life:

1. Luke 10:19 "Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you. 20 Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven."

2. Rev. 13:8 "And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world."

3. Rev. 17:8 "The beast that thou sawest was, and is not;...and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world..."

4. Rev. 20:15 "And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."

5. Rev. 21:27 "And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life."

We make the following observations from the above verses:

1. Those whose names are in the book of life were written there before the foundation of the world.

2. Having ones name in the Lamb's book of life is a cause of great rejoicing.

3. Having ones name in the Lamb's book of life exempts you from the lake of fire.

4. Having ones name in the Lamb's book of life enables you to enter into the Holy City (the church) here in time.



Now was Paul given an opportunity to look into the Lamb's book of life and see that those he mentioned were written in the book? Of course not! Paul knew their names were written therein because of the evidence. He could see by the evidences of their labors that they were children of God and therefore had their names written in heaven. When God grants us to see the evidence in our own labors that we are children of God then we can have the same assurance and confidence that our names are written in heaven.

"Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice." The Lord is the cause of our rejoicing. It is by the grace of God that we were chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world to be children of God. It is by the grace of God that we are quickened by the still small voice of Jesus Christ and given spiritual life. It is by the grace of God that Christ came and redeemed us from our sins. It is by the grace of God that we have been given the word of God and we have been given the church. It is by the grace of God that we have been given spiritual gifts. It is by the grace of God that we have been given a throne of grace to which we may come boldly and make our petitions known to God. All spiritual blessings are in Christ Jesus. Yes, Christ is the cause of our rejoicing.

"Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand." The word, moderation, comes from the Greek word, *epieikes*, meaning gentle or patient. It is translated moderation once, patient once, and gentle three times. Our gently nature, given to us in the spiritual birth, and our patient waiting upon the Lord should be evident in the walk of our lives. In this manner we let our moderation be known unto all men.

"Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God." The word, careful, comes from a Greek word meaning "anxious about." What needless and harmful anxiety many of us have when we worry about things that we have no control over. Anxiety is not good for us or becoming to us as children of God. The Lord said in Matt. 6:25 "Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?"

26 Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? 27 Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature? 28 And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: 29 And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. 30 Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? 31 Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? 32 (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.

33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. 34 Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof."

Rather than having anxiety over our problems or concerns, we should take those things to the Lord in prayer. 1 Pet. 5:7 says, "Casting all your care upon him; for he

careth for you." In making our request, Paul teaches us that we are to make our prayers and supplications with thanksgiving to God. Thus, our prayers will contain requests not only for ourselves, but for others also, and they will be seasoned with much thanksgiving unto God.

"And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." The opposite of anxiety is peace. When we cast our care upon the Lord and leave our burdens and concerns in His hand, he sendeth peace into our hearts and minds. This peace passes all understanding. How this is done, we do not have words or thoughts that can explain it, but we know God has brought peace unto our hearts.

### **Phil. 4:8, 9**

Phil. 4:8 "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. 9 Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you."

In this passage of scripture, Paul exhorts the church to think on some things and to do some things. The things that they are to think on and to do are not just anything, but are specific things.

We begin with those things that we are to think on. The first thing is "whatsoever things are true." God is a God of truth: Deu. 32:4 "He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he." Next, God's word in the mouth of his prophet is truth: 1 Ki. 17:24 "And the woman said to Elijah, Now by this I know that thou art a man of God, and that the word of the LORD in thy mouth is truth." In addition, God's works are truth: Dan. 4:37 "Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honour the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment: and those that walk in pride he is able to abase." Moreover, the church, New Jerusalem is called a city of truth: Zec. 8:3 "Thus saith the LORD; I am returned unto Zion, and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem: and Jerusalem shall be called a city of truth; and the mountain of the LORD of hosts the holy mountain." The Holy Comforter is the Spirit of Truth: John 15:26 "But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me:" Finally, all the word of God is truth: John 17:17 "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth."

Second, we are to think on "whatsoever things are honest." The word, honest, is translated from the Greek word, "semnos." Semnos appears four times in the New Testament and three times it is translated grave, and one time honest. Thus, the word semnos indicates both an honest and grave or serious character. No doubt, these are characteristics of God. They are also characteristics that a disciple of the Lord are supposed to exhibit. When it comes to the worship and service of God we are to be honest and grave or serious minded. This is not a trivial matter to worship and serve the Lord, but is to be taken quite seriously.

Third, we are to think on "whatsoever things are just." One of the most, if not the most broadly established characteristics of God taught in the bible is that God is just: Deu. 32:4 "He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he." One of the great themes of the bible is the justice of God in saving his people from their sins, while satisfying the just demands of the law: Ps. 85:10 "Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other." In the sacrificial atonement of Christ, God established our righteousness or justness: 2 Cor. 5:21 "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." God made us, the elect, perfectly just before Him: Rom. 8:33 "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. 34 Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us."

Fourth, we are to think on "whatsoever things are pure." The scriptures speak of several things that are pure. We should think on these things:

1. 1 Tim. 1:5 "Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned:"

2. 1 Tim. 3:9 "Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience."

3. James 1:27 "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world."

4. James 3:17 "But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy."

5. 2 Pet. 3:1 "This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance:"

6. Rev. 15:6 "And the seven angels came out of the temple, having the seven plagues, clothed in pure and white linen, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles.

7. Ps. 12:6, 7 "The words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. Thou shalt keep them, O LORD, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever."

The above verses speak of a pure heart, a pure conscience, a pure religion, a pure wisdom, a pure mind, a pure linen, and pure words. These are a lot of things to think upon that are pure.

Fifth we are to think upon "whatsoever things are lovely." The word, lovely, comes from the Greek word, *prospheiles*, meaning towards friendship. Thus the meaning is that we should think upon those things that lead us to a friendship with God and with his disciples.

Sixth, we are to think upon "whatsoever things are of good report." A good report is that which is well spoken of. We should think upon those things that are well spoken of. To get a sample of things well spoken of we can look at a couple of examples of people that were well spoken of:

1. Acts 10:1 "There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of the band called the Italian band, 2 A devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway... 22

And they said, Cornelius the centurion, a just man, and one that feareth God, and of good report among all the nation of the Jews, was warned from God by an holy angel to send for thee into his house, and to hear words of thee."

2. Heb. 11:1 "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. 2 For by it the elders obtained a good report."

3. 3 John 1:12 "Demetrius hath good report of all men, and of the truth itself: yea, and we also bear record; and ye know that our record is true."

The things that brought about Cornelius' good report include his devotion to God, his fear of God with all his house, his giving of alms to the people, and his continual praying to God. The things that brought about the good report of the elders were the things that they did by faith. While we are not told specifically what brought about Demetrius' good report, we are told that the truth itself bore record towards his good report.

Seventh, we are to think on those things that have virtue. The Greek word for virtue is "arête" meaning moral excellence. The only other time this word is used is in 2 Pet. 1:3, 5: "According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:... And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge;" God has called us to walk in the way of moral excellence. We are taught that we should add this quality to ourselves as the disciples of the Lord. Thus, we should think upon those things whereby we can walk morally upright before God.

Eight, we are to think upon those things that are praiseworthy. While we do not think of ourselves as being praiseworthy, yet we can live our lives in a commendable way. This is not to seek praise, but to have the approval of our Lord and Master. This is what the Lord said to the man who had the five talents and gained five others and the man who had two talents and gained two others: "Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord."

"Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you." Elsewhere Paul wrote: "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ." Paul is admonishing the brethren at Philippi to be followers of Christ by doing the things that Paul had taught them, gave to them, the things they had heard from Paul and the example that Paul had given them. Paul said that in doing those things that the God of peace would be with them. Likewise, when we do the things that God's word teaches us, including the things we have heard in the preaching of the word, and the godly examples in our lives the God of peace will be with us also.

### **Phil. 4:10-19**

Phil. 4:10 "But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at the last your care of me hath flourished again; wherein ye were also careful, but ye lacked opportunity. 11 Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. 12 I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where

and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. 13 I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

14 Notwithstanding ye have well done, that ye did communicate with my affliction. 15 Now ye Philippians know also, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only. 16 For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity. 17 Not because I desire a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound to your account. 18 But I have all, and abound: I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, wellpleasing to God. 19 But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus."

This passage of scripture deals with the needs of the gospel minister; the church's helping with those needs; and the Lord blessing those who help with those needs. Let us first deal with the attitude of the gospel minister to receiving material support from the church. First, we need to learn to be content: Paul said, "for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content." Throughout history, God-called ministers of the gospel have been in different states in their personal lives. Some have had to deal with great needs in their personal lives in times of great hardships. Others have had to deal with abounding goods that lead our minds away from the knowledge that we are poor and needy creatures and that without the Lord we can do nothing. Paul said that he had been in both conditions: "I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need."

This statement of Paul can be taken both in a natural sense and in a spiritual sense. We can suffer great material need and depend on the Lord to move others to supply our need or we can abound with much goods and should be willing to share our bounty with others in need. Likewise, we are instructed in God's word to know that we are "poor in Spirit." When we realize we are poor, hell-deserving creatures, then we realize our great need of Christ knowing that it is by his grace we have been delivered from our sins. Likewise, when we are lifted up in Spirit, we should also realize that we will not always be on the mountaintop in our experiences, but valleys also await us in this life.

We are to be content with whatever condition we find ourselves. We can be content when we realize that our help comes from the Lord and it is he who strengthens us. Realizing our strength comes from the Lord, we can then do all things that the Lord would have us to do through Christ which strengthens us.

Next, we consider the position of the church in helping the gospel ministers. First, it is pleasing to God for the church to supply the needs of the gospel ministers:

1. "Notwithstanding ye have well done, that ye did communicate with my affliction."

2. "I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, wellpleasing to God."

Paul informed the Philippian brethren that their sacrifice in communicating to his needs was "wellpleasing to God." He said it was to God "an odour of a sweet smell." In 1 Cor. chapter 9 Paul taught the principle of the church helping those who labor in the gospel. He taught that it was a joint labor with the gospel ministers and the congregation.

The gospel ministers provided their labors in the word and the church provided material things to the needs of the gospel ministers.

Notice that Paul said the church at Philippi sent once and again to his "necessity" and to his "affliction." They did not send to his "wants." The communicating was not to the "wants" of the gospel ministers, but to the necessities or needs of the gospel ministers.

Finally, we see where the ability of the church to send to the needs of the gospel ministers comes from: "But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." God supplied the needs of the congregation and they in turn assisted with the needs of the gospel minister. Without God supplying the needs of the congregation, they would have been unable to supply the needs of the gospel minister. Notice the certainty in which Paul spoke: God "shall" supply all your needs..." Paul was certain that God would supply the needs of the congregation.

### **Phil. 4:20-23**

Phil. 4:20 "Now unto God and our Father be glory for ever and ever. Amen. 21 Salute every saint in Christ Jesus. The brethren which are with me greet you. 22 All the saints salute you, chiefly they that are of Caesar's household. 23 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen."

Again, the scriptures teach us that all glory and praise belongs to God and our Father. We do not deserve any glory or praise, but God deserves all the glory and praise. Let us be mindful to continuously give God the glory and praise that justly belongs to Him.

In this passage, Paul exchanges greetings between the disciples at Rome and the disciples at Philippi. Sometimes we get caught up in the concerns of our own congregation that we forget about the like needs and struggles that sister congregations are going through. We should be mindful of the needs, concerns, and joys of our sister churches.

Once again, Paul ends the epistle with the mention of God's grace as he does in all the epistles that he wrote. Paul opened and closed his epistles with the mention of God's grace and then he frequently spoke of God's grace throughout the epistle. Certainly the theme of Paul's writings is the grace of God as is the entire bible.