

Philippians ch. 1

- I. **SALUTATION and GREETING** (1:1-2) There were 3 Parts to a typical greeting in the first-century world:
sender--recipient--greeting

1:1-2 Salutation
1:3-8 prayer of thanks
1:9-11 prayer of intercession
cf. Acts 23:26

A. Senders = **"Paul and Timothy"** (1:1)

1. Paul is undoubtedly the sole author of the letter/notice (v. 3ff.)
 - a. There are over 50 uses of "I" "me" and "my" in this very personal letter.
 - b. It is likely that Timothy is included because he had played a significant role in the founding of the Church. There was an attachment of some sort between Timothy and Philippian Christians (cf. v. 2:22)
2. Paul describes Timothy and himself as *douloi* or servants.
 - a. Paul uses this self-description in his salutations only here and in Rom. 1:1; Tit. 1:1. In Rom. and Titus he joins it with a reference to his position as apostle. Here there is no need to invoke his apostolic authority.
 - b. The word *douloi* literally means "slaves" and thus carries overtones of humility and submission
 - c. Why might he choose to describe himself this way here?
 - (1) Significant in view of the emphasis on humility in Philippians--calls to mind lowly service instead of privileged position.
 - (2) Frank Thielman says: this is the best way to picture "the total claim of God on a believer's life.... He is Christ's slave because Christ's goals are his goals and God's call is his mission, and because it is his responsibility to fulfill the command of his master even when doing so is personally convenient" (p. 47)

B. Recipients = **"to all the saints... and deacons"** (1:1), i.e., the whole church in the city of Philippi

1. **"saints in Christ Jesus"**
 - a. The word "saints" literally means "holy ones," or "those set apart for God." It is an Old Testament belonging term--the holy people of God--they belong to Him and are to manifest his character in the world. This involved some ethical responsibilities: cf. 1 Pet. 2:9-11. Our behavior is to match our status!
 - b. In Christ--i.e., in union with Him, in solidarity with Him and not by virtue of how many and how great their good deeds are--but simply because of their connection with Jesus Christ. Their identity is forever bound to Christ and thus every Christian is a saint.
 - c. So this phrase indicates that they are God's elect, God's people, in the city of Philippi. We and all our fellow Christians here are God's elect, God's people, in whatever city we live.

2. **“all”** -- to emphasize the whole church-->unity. See 1:4, 7, 8, 25; 2:17, 26; 4:21, 22, 23.
3. **“Overseers and deacons”** – the church leaders; we don’t know why they are singled out.

C. Greeting = **"Grace to you and peace..."** (1:2)

1. The typical greeting in Greek letters was *charein*, which means “greetings.” Paul modified *charein* to *charis* which sounds similar but means grace.
2. He joins this with the typical Hebrew greeting which was *shalom*, peace. In the Bible, peace suggests the idea of wholeness, of wellness, and blessing, not just the absence of conflict.
3. So Paul’s greeting effectively communicates a desire for them experience and appreciate God’s grace more and more, and for them to experience the peace and wholeness that comes for God’s presence in their lives.

II. Opening Prayer (1:3-11)

Overview - In these verses, Paul tells the Philippians about his gratitude for them (vv. 3-6); which includes a very warm and personal statement of affection and concern for them; and tells them of his present request of God on their behalf (vv. 9-11). It is one of most earnest thanksgivings of Paul’s letters.

vv. 1:3-4 The sense of this is "everytime I pray for all of you, I do it with joy"

"always" doesn’t mean that he’s always in prayer, but that every time he prays for them he always give thanks for them. In other words, every time you guys come to mind I offer thanks for you. He has a deep sense of gratitude toward God for them.

v. 1:5 Why is he so thankful and joyful?

First, he is thankful because from the very first day he preached the gospel to them til now (about 10 years), they’ve *shared* with him in the gospel (v.5)

The word "participation" is *koinonia* in Greek. It refers to sharing together, partnership, including practical support, such as money, housing, etc. According to Philippians 2:25, they had sent Epaphroditus to minister to his need. They had also sent a gift of money with him (4:17).

WHAT KINDS OF ACTIVITIES MIGHT BE DESCRIBED AS PARTICIPATION IN THE GOSPEL TODAY?

v. 1:6 Why is he so thankful?

Second, he is thankful because he is confident that God will complete His work in them. (v.6; cf. 1 Thess. 5:24). He is certain of this, convinced (this same word used in LXX in Psalms to describe man’s confidence in God). God started a good work in them- work of grace, and he will complete it.

The word **"Perfect"** (ἐπιτελέζι) means bring it to completion.

He will complete His work in them at the "day of Christ Jesus," that is, the day of His return

v. 1:7 Paul says that it is only right for him to be so thankful for them because they are "**partakers of grace with me**"

The word "partakers" is *synteknoi*. It is used of business partners outside Bible. So Paul is saying, "you are my partners in the work of grace"

The sense of v. 7 then is: both in my chains and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel you all are my partners of the grace, you all are my partners in this ministry that I was given. They practiced costly cooperation in the work of the gospel. See Thielman, 52

v. 1:8 "God is my witness..."

This speaks of great seriousness -- an oath to impress upon them how deep his love for them is. He loves them with nothing less than the love of Jesus Christ. God will verify that I actually feel this way about you!!!

"How I long for you all...of Christ Jesus" – The same way Jesus loves you is how I love you. He longs for them with the same kind of deep-seated emotion ("**affection**") that Jesus has.

vv. 9-11 Record what Paul has been praying for the Philippian church. He prayed for them to have a love guided by knowledge which resulted in pure living.

v. 1:9 "love may abound still more and more"

This literally means love to overflowing (*perissoteo*). Paul is praying that their love will overflow more and more, i.e., keep progressing in your overflowing love.

Paul prays that their love might increase in two ways:

1. "**Knowledge**" (*epignosis*) in Paul's letters this always refers to religious knowledge:

of God (Rom. 1:28; Eph. 1:17)

Of God's Righteousness (Rom. 10:2)

of His Son (Eph. 4:13)

of His Will (Col. 1:9)

It refers to a deep mental awareness of who God is and what He wants.

2. "**discernment**" (*diakrisis*)

This word is used only here in NT. It refers to moral perception, the ability to know the right thing to do in a given situation.

So Paul is praying that they will express love in a way that shows an awareness of who God is and what he wants in general, and express it with a keen eye for what is best and right in a given situation in particular.

v. 1:10 – There are two results of this knowledge-guided love:

1. "So that you may approve the things that are excellent"

choose what is vital, best.

know the really important issues.

The word "approve" means to test for positive results, to examine

see if something is worthwhile.

The point here then is that they can figure out the things that really matter

2. in order to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ!

The word "sincere" refers to INNER ALLEGIANCE. The only other NT use is 2 Pet. 3:1. It has to do with purity of heart: what appears on the outside is the same as on the inside.

The word "blameless" refers to OUTER ALLEGIANCE. It means without offence.

Concerning this kind of love guided by knowledge that enables us to figure what is most in accord with God, See Thielman, 53-54, who suggests 2 things that could help the current church grow in a love full of knowledge and insight:

1. Formal structures- spiritually mature teaching recent converts
2. Develop a plan for lovingly correcting those who stray morally or theologically.

v. 1:11 All of this will evidence that we have been fill with the **"fruit of righteousness which is through Christ Jesus."**

See Jn 15:4-5. Christ is the source of our fruit- bearing life. Your life produces fruit because Jesus is in you!

And this fruit leads to "the glory and praise of God." Since God is the ultimate source of all this He gets the credit. A life that is full of Christian Character which is sincere and blameless results in glory and praise to God.

1:12-26- Overview: In this section, Paul describes his circumstances to the Philippians. Yet it is much more than a bare "news" report. It serves an important function in the letter. Here Paul sets up his circumstances as an example of how the Philippians ought to be handling their own.

- v. 1:12** Paul says that his circumstances—being in prison—have actually turned out for the **"progress"** (προκοπή) of the gospel. The word "progress" is very specific. It pictures making an advance in spite of obstacles. So what Paul is saying is "what's happened to me has actually led to the advance of the gospel rather than otherwise."

An important observation here is that when Paul talks about his circumstances he talks about the gospel. In other words, instead of telling them how he's doing he tells them how the gospel was doing (Theilman, 63). His life is so caught up with the gospel that he can't talk about his life without talking about the gospel.

vv. 13-14

How has the gospel been advanced? Paul tells us 2 ways:

1. The fact that Paul is in prison for Jesus and the Gospel has become clear to the praetorium and all the rest (v. 13)

When Paul wrote this he was in prison in Rome. According to Acts, he had a soldier chained to him (Acts 28:16,20) and he preached freely (Acts 28:30-31). The result is that word naturally spread through the soldiers and guards about Paul, Jesus, and the gospel.

"Praetorian guard" could have several meanings:

- a. general's tent in an army camp (note that this would fit with the "Caesarean-imprisonment" notion)
- b. governor's residence (Acts 23:35)
- c. But most specifically it meant the camp of the Praetorian soldiers in Rome. This is the meaning here.

Point: all the Roman soldiers and officials involved in Paul's imprisonment and trial have heard that he is in prison for Jesus Christ.

2. Also, fellow-Christians have been emboldened to preach Jesus more fearlessly. Literally, they are far more daring to speak the word of God fearlessly

Paul's example-preaching in Rome where he's in prison for preaching- made them bold and courageous.

Note: Paul's heart is here revealed: nothing stirred in him any greater excitement and passion than the progress of the gospel. His circumstances are really irrelevant as long as the gospel is preached.

1:15-18- Overview: Even though more preaching is happening, not all are preaching for the right reasons. But at least Jesus is preached! a contrast of motives

v. 15 Some preach from "**envy and strife**"

- jealousy and content/rivalry – wishing to gain something for yourself and at the same time hurt someone else. Somehow they hoped to stick a barb into Paul

vs.

Some preached out of "**goodwill**"

-kind and generous spirit that wants to do good for someone

Note: BOTH PREACH CHRIST. We're dealing with motive not heresy.

vv. 16-17 - amplify these 2 different motives

Those that preach from "goodwill" do so with good will towards Paul, because they know that God assigned Paul the position of "minister of defense" - to defend the gospel. The others, filled with jealousy and rivalry, attempt rub salt in Paul's wounds.

"selfish ambition"

used in Aristotle for "self-seeking pursuit of political office by unfair means" (BAGD, 309) self-seeking with perhaps an underlying connotation of bitter rivalry. They have ulterior motives not pure motives. Perhaps they hope to make Paul feel rotten because he's stuck in prison and can't travel and preach.

v.18

What's Paul's reaction to these contrasting group of preachers?

Praise the Lord that Jesus is preached. He says in essence, "I'm not going to get angry because these folks advance their name while advancing the gospel - I'm glad the gospel is going forward."

Note the contrast with Gal. 1:7-9.

Does this mean Paul is completely unconcerned about a preacher's motives?

motives matter to Paul:

His own - 1 Thess. 2:1-12; 1 Cor. 9:11-12

others - 2 Cor. 10:12 - compared selves with others

11:6 - bested his speech

Paul isn't writing to his rivals, so there is no need to correct the Philippians. They're aren't the problem. Instead, remind them that he had no personal vengeance in mind for the actions of those with poor motives. God can even use perversely motivated men to get the message about Jesus out.

SPECIAL NOTE CONCERNING vv. 12-18: Here Paul has provided for the Philippians a model of the attitude he wishes them to have.

1. Attitude #1: Greater concern for the well-being of the gospel than for personal well-being.
2. Attitude #2: An unwillingness to be angered and moved to personal vengeance by people's proud and selfish, and even "Anti-Paul/me," motives.

vv. 1:18b.-20

These verse mark a shift: Paul rejoices in the present situation and he WILL rejoice when he considers his future situation.

In these vv. Paul tells us that he knows something and that he anticipates something.

WHAT DOES PAUL KNOW? (1:19):

He knows "that this will turn out for my deliverance

"this" refers to the whole situation he's described in vv. 12ff., namely the gospel's progress through imprisonment and the courage it's given others to speak

The word "deliverance" is literally salvation. It could refer to salvation the normal way we mean that or it could refer to Paul's "salvation" or "deliverance" from jail.

Which one does this refer to?

It probably refers to his ultimate vindication before God, final salvation (not deliverance from jail). Notice the end of the sentence: "life or death" ... he's not sure if he'll live or die but even his death can result in his deliverance. Thus, it's talking about salvation not release from jail.

1:19

cf. Job 13:16 -- almost identical in LXX -- Job expresses confidence that in spite of the accusation leveled against him, he will be acquitted in God's court. (See O'Brien, 109.) Perhaps these people were saying God was "punishing" Paul (as Job's friends)? Paul says he knew that the circumstances of his imprisonment will lead to his salvation/deliverance in God's court.
cf. 2 Tim. 4:8

"through... spirit... Christ"

Paul attributes his vindication before God to the

1. prayers of the Philippians
2. help/support of the Holy Spirit, what the spirit supplies

The grammar (1 preposition and article with the prayer and supply) suggests that these 2 are closely connected. "**Prayers**" is literally prayer, i.e., your prayer for me, the focused prayer of entire congregation for Paul and that is providing Paul with the help, aid, support, provision of the Holy Spirit (BAGD).

Summary so far:

Paul is saying...

The fact that the gospel is still advancing even while I'm in prison - both through me and the others- will lead to my deliverance in God's court, and your prayers and the help of the Holy Spirit has made that possible.

v. 20 WHAT DOES PAUL ANTICIPATE?

this deliverance will come about "according to (in line with; in keeping) my earnest expectation and hope" What is your hope (expectation) Paul? My hope is "that I shall be put to shame in nothing, but in everything with all boldness, now as always, Christ will be magnified in my body, whether live or die."

Notice that this is not a wish. He is not hoping perhaps he won't be ashamed of himself at his upcoming trial. Hopefully I'll act in such a way so as to glorify Christ. They can kill me and I'll have nothing to be ashamed of. He's saying: He will not be put to shame and that Christ will be glorified - even if they kill him! He's confident of it.

1: 21-25- Overview: sounds almost like an internal debate with the two choices that are pressing in on Him:

- life is Christ; but death is gain
- life equals fruitful labor; but death is to be with Christ.
- life, however, is more necessary for the Philippians.

This section reveals "Paul's absolute devotion to the gospel" (Theilman, 80)

1:21 "to live is Christ and to die is Gain"

Christ = Paul's/our life

Col. 3:4-5

death = gain, not loss

2 Cor. 5:6-8

The thing that compels him to live is productive work for the kingdom.

1:23-24 NASB: "I'm hard-pressed..." NIV "I'm torn..."

Lit. I'm pressured from both sides

I'm caught between a rock and a hard place.

He has a #1 desire:

death = immediately being with Christ.

To be with the Christ! (the best)

But duty =

- to help Christians (in Philippi; it's a duty He wants to fulfill)

1:25

Statement of faith based on what's best for the church and what's going around him.

This is what Paul would choose and believes God's desire is.

~~~~~

Notice some important lessons he teaches them and how pertinent they are in view of the tendency towards divisive pride.

1. circumstances/life ought to be subordinate to the gospel (1:12,20)
2. People's desire to show you up is less important than Christ being preached. (1:17-18)
3. We should give up benefits to ourselves (even the greatest of going to heaven) in order to serve others. (1:23-25)

These are lessons he explicitly calls the Philippians to obey later in the letter; in this section he uses his current situation to induce thinking in these terms.

## **1:27 ff.**

Paul has expressed his thanks to God for them; he's prayed for them to grow to maturity. He has explained "his" circumstances, showing them how gospel - interests affect lifestyle; choices and attitudes.

Now he turns attention to his chief concern for this favorite congregation - unity through humility

### **"Conduct yourselves"**

Political overtones to Roman Citizens - Roman colony

behave as citizens

cf. 3:20

### **"worthy of the gospel"**

gospel key reference point for behavior - connection with the gospel (affects) lifestyle

Don't want to smear dirt on the gospel.

### **"standing firm in one spirit..."**

unity is chief concern

disunity is beneath the gospel = unworthy of it!

### **"striving together"**

struggle together, compete together

What strive for?

for the faith (not against anything)

## **1:28**

Christian way - non-retaliation and exemplary living that our detractors are ashamed of their conduct and make a change.

### **"in no way alarmed by your opponents"**

"alarmed"

- frightened ... terrified

- used of the uncontrollable stampede of frightened horses

- Why do we act so surprised that non-Christians ignore us, trivialize us, or working against us?

Christians standing together are a lot stronger than 10 Christians on their own- doing their own thing.

Make efforts to have one unified attitude and mindset.

Working together for the faith told about in the gospel and not being alarmed by those who work against you.

### **"Which is a sign...for them"**

Christians constant, unified, stance against anti-Christian opposition is a sign, an indication.

It indicates two contrasting ends:

1. "destruction (for them)"

2. "salvation for you" cf. 2 Thess. 1:4-10

When Christians respond to opposition with grace and composure - standing together for the faith - it lets whoever will perceive it know that Christians are going to be saved and their opponents will be destroyed.

**1:29-30 "for you have been granted...to suffer"**

given as a gift the chance to suffer Jesus.

Acts 5:41; 1 Thess. 3:3; 2 Tim. 3:12

What they suffer is the same kind of thing Paul suffers.

**SPECIAL NOTE:CHRISTIAN UNITY**

Why is it so difficult?

Beause of the whole spectrum of different backgrounds.

Yet unity must be admitted as a fact because of our common allegiance.

Here: "gospel" 1:27

Also: Eph. 4:3-6

It must also be preserved: Eph. 4:3, Phil. 1:27

It must also be attained: Eph. 4:12-13

## Philippians ch. 2

**2:1-11- Overview:** Paul continues his discussion of unity. (Recall that this was a problem but not like at Corinth. Here it seems small and in the beginning stages) In these verses he's focusing on the basis of unity, namely, humility. He states the principle and then illustrates it with Jesus' example. (He will give other examples in 2:19-30)

**2:1** Why does Paul appeal for unity; that is, on what basis?

Paul appeals on the basis of "all their deepest experiences as Christians" (Lightfoot, 122).

**The Basis for Harmony:** (these are given in a very positive manner - not harsh criticism.) He's saying, in essence, "look at the things that bind together."

**1. encouragement in Christ**

encouragement or comfort refers to the bolstering of your strength/ spirit; thus "strengthening" in Christ.

If being in Christ strengthens you to good and right things, if it calls to your heart and stirs you up

**2. "comfort of love"**

"Comfort" means to soothe, comfort, address cheering words to (Colin Brown, 1:328)

Cf. 1 Thess 2:11-12 "encouraging" in this passage is the same word as here.

Often when linked with *paraklesis* It carries the notion of appeal; so here.

**3. "fellowship of the Spirit"**

Two possibilities:

\*the fellowship/communion with the spirit

\*the bond/unity/sharing together created by the Spirit. This is best here in view of the context.

cf. 1 Cor. 12:13; Eph. 4:3

**4. "affection and compassion"**

Any tender affection, care, kindness

Paul is saying if you enjoy all these benefits from your relationship with Christ [and I assume you do], fulfill my joy and put them into practice with the others.

2:2

**"fulfill my joy"**

make me happy ... proud

Notice "fulfill" . . . you're already giving me joy, now fill it up to overflowing

**"same-minded"** ... like minded

- this is the GOAL he desires them to pursue.

In the following 5 phrases he describes what he has in mind by like- mindedness, and thus these are the attitudes to cultivate if you want a harmonious church/group.

1. **Having the same love,**

mutual affection, concern, and care for each other.

2. [Being] **united in soul**

lit = joint- souled; soul-mates; knit together in soul

3. **Thinking one thing**

one common focus or orientation

4. **Regarding one another as more important than yourselves.**

This requires you to do nothing according (i.e., get rid of) selfishness or empty conceit.

Selfishness translates *eritheia*, which has the sense of rivalry, selfish ambition, party spirit, agenda pursuing. Before the New Testament it only appears in Aristotle in the sense of "selfish striving for advantage in a group" (EDNT, 2: 52).

"Empty conceit" describes thinking too highly of oneself

Replace with humility, which considers others more important than yourself

the basic cause of their disunity was selfishness and the root of selfishness is pride. No more looking out for #1!

5. **not looking out to his own things but each{of you] the others things.**

I'm more interested in what you need than what I need.

Reflection: This section is all about "others.". Instead of promoting ourself or serving ourself, we think of others. We are willing to work hard at maintaining unity and harmony by thinking of the other person first!!!

**2:5-11- Overview:** These verses offer an illustration of the greatest example of this humility – Jesus. The describe a downward slide from the highest height (being God) to the lowest low (death as a criminal):

1. The form of God (v.6)
2. Empty self (v.7a.)
3. Assumed form of slave (7b)
4. Obedient to point of death (8)
5. death on a cross (8)

The point of the illustration in context: How far will you go to get along with and to help your Christian brothers and sisters?

## **2:5 "Have this attitude in you which was also in Christ Jesus"**

### **"in Christ"**

1. Some have claimed that in Christ means the special sense common to Paul: e.g., "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ." Usually those who assert this is a hymn.
2. Better: in Christ personally; the attitude Christ demonstrated. This alone makes sense of the comparison between "in you" and "in Christ"

Paul is saying: "Think in this way (humility and self-sacrifice) just as Jesus thought in this way"

In your interactions with each other have the same attitude that Jesus had.  
Jesus = the epitome of humility, as he said, "I am gentle and humble of heart."

## **2:6 "although he existed in the form of God"**

**form** refers to that which truly expressed the being/nature underlying the form. It "pictures the pre-existent Christ as clothed in the garments of divine majesty and splendor." (O'Brien, 211). In other words, whatever form God/divinity has - Jesus "wore" it! cf. John 17:5; Hebrews 1:3

*Note:* v. 7 "form of a bond-servant"

### **"[he] did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped"**

equality with God was something he already possessed; yet he did not consider this fact to be something to be clung to and taken advantage of. He didn't consider his equality with God something to be used for his own advantage.

He viewed his equality with God not as a matter of getting but of giving (O'Brien, 214). This is how he expressed his deity.

## **2:7 "he emptied himself"**

Voluntary

used four other times in the NT, all metaphorical, meaning "to make of no account" or "nullifying something"

4:14;

1 Cor. 1:17; 9:15;

2 Cor. 9:3

Thus Jesus lowered his status; to all appearances His value was reduced. cf. 2 Cor. 8:9

However...

Did Christ "lose" or "give up" any aspect of His nature at the incarnation? He was no longer everywhere present or all-powerful; he got tired and hungry. But this wasn't because he lost his divinity; it was because he added to his divinity human nature.

Paul describes the way in which he "emptied" / lowered his status. He emptied himself by...

1. **"taking the form of a bond-servant"** i.e, slaves were everywhere in Roman world

Recall from above: from form of God - to form of slave; cf. Mk. 10:44; Jn. 13:1-20. Jesus voluntarily lowered his status and became a slave for the sake of others.

## **2. "being made in the likeness of men"**

while he existed beforehand as God, he became human--essential identify with humanity

He didn't just look like us; He was like us. "being made" means became; it is not always what he was.

So Christ expressed His deity not by using it for His own gain, but by becoming a slave and a human being.

## **2:8 "being found in appearance as a man"**

parallel to former a repetition of the idea expressed above that prepares for the idea that follows.

The emphasis here is on the way people saw him - that everything about Him, as far as eyes could tell, was human, nothing more, nothing less.

## **"he humbled himself"**

The two main verbs in this illustration about Jesus are he emptied/lowered himself and he humbled himself. It was a major step down for Christ to become a human; he went lower than that!!! How low did he go? He obeyed to the point of death, even death on a cross.

How low did he go? to the bottom of the deepest pit imaginable!

He obeyed to the utmost possible - the farthest extremity imaginable. Is it too much to ask us to humble ourselves, too?

## **"death on a cross"**

This phrase just hangs there as if the idea so staggered Paul it too and took his breath away: "to the point of death... and death of a cross"

Crucifixion was the most despicable and detested form of death known to Romans. It was reserved as a form of execution especially used for slaves, violent crimes, and elements in outlying provinces (such as Judea). It was so horrible that the kind of thought it evoked was: "He was crucified... He must've done something really terrible." In fact, the word "cross" and the idea of crucifixion wasn't talked about in polite company if it could be helped. It was considered too vulgar. It was the most shameful way to die. Christ had hit rock bottom when he went to the cross.

## **2:9**

The Result: God has exalted Jesus to the highest place and has given him the highest name.

**"highly exalted"** lit. hyper-exalted from the deepest depths to the highest height.

**"Gave him the name..."**

What's the name? "Lord" (v.11)= YAHWEH in the OT.

## **2:10-11**

**"Every knee will bow"** in humble acknowledgement of Christ's lordship (cf. Is. 45:23-24).

Every knee!!! "Those in heaven, those on the earth, those under the earth."

Even the proudest, most powerful persons will fall on their knees - angels, demons, Satan - every knee!!!

Statement not meant to describe where people are but the scope of who will bow.

**"Confess..."**

"One day, the universe will acknowledge what the small, persecuted community at Philippi confesses in its worship - Jesus Christ is Lord." (Theilman, 122)

## **CONCLUSION**

We are here urged to adopt an "incarnational demeanor" (Theilman, 129)

**WILL YOU PRACTICE THE PATTERN OF THE CROSS?**

By self-giving, not self-getting

By self-sacrificing; not self-serving

By giving up rights, preferences, possessions to serve, to welcome, and to love others in Jesus' name . . . people who don't look right, act right, smell right, dress right.



**2:12 "So then... work out your own salvation with fear and trembling"**

He is expecting them to obey especially now that he's not able to be there.

Obey what? "Therefore" indicates the connection with the preceding.

He's drawing a statement of conclusion from his challenge (2:1-4) and the illustration of Christ (2:5-11).

Obey this plea for self-sacrificial humility and "do all things without grumbling and disputing"

**"work out your own salvation"**

Not work for, but work out...not work to obtain, but bring to fruition

"carry it through to completion" (TDNT 3. 634)

**"fear and trembling"** -reverence and awe

**2:13 "for it is God who is at work in you both to will and to work for this good pleasure"**

Tells why and how they should work out their salvation with fear and trembling.

God is among them!

God is the one who works in you! And if he works in you, how can you not work out your salvation with fear and trembling.

It's not you who's saving yourself; you participate, but it's God's work.

What 2 ideas are expressed by "to will and to work"?

He gives both the will (desire) and the energy (ability).

**2:14 "Do all things without grumbling or disputing"**

this is the sin that had apparently been disturbing the Philippian fellowship.

These two words are used of Israel during the Exodus: Num. 11:1-6; 14:1-14

Apparently there were some quarrels with the church and an undercurrent of murmuring and grumbling against fellow Christians.

**2:15 "that you may prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent"**

blameless and innocent vs. grumbling and disputing

blameless = no one can rightly point an accusing finger at you

innocent = undilute, unmixed wine or unalloyed metal; pure

**"crooked and perverse"** - twisted, warped society

**"whom you appear as lights in the world"** - stars, the moon, the sun; genuine Christian unity and Christian character stand out in the world just as the moon and stars at night. We should be as different as night and day. Don't just blend in.

**2:16 "holding fast the word of life"**

hanging on to

**"word of life"** cf. 1 John 1:1-2

**"so that...run in vain"** -he doesn't want them to throw in the towel and so his whole ministry was wasted - nothing to show for it.

## **2:17-18**

Paul uses imagery from the OT sacrificial system (although pagans had similar sorts of practices) to picture how he views and wants them to view his situation and theirs.

Paul here pictures their life of faith, their continued obedience and faithfulness in the face of opposition, as a sacrifice— like a burnt offering onto which his life might possibly be poured out as a drink offering around the altar.

It is probably an allusion to his death- Even if I'm killed...that would be like pouring a drink offering on the offer as an addition the sacrifice of your faith- So even if I'm killed I rejoice and he desires to rejoice with them.

Not only that, but v. 18 indicates that he wants them to rejoice too and to rejoice with him.

## **2:19-30: INTORDUCTORY OVERVIEW**

Why all of a sudden travel plans? Usually Paul includes travel plans at the end of his letters. Did Paul intend to end his letter here?

No. The travel plans of these two furnish two more examples of conduct worthy of the gospel. Both Timothy and Epaphroditus demonstrate gospel- interests/others -interest lifestyle.

1. Paul (1:12-26)
2. Jesus (2:5-11)
3. Timothy (2:19-24)
4. Epaphroditus (2:25-30)

"A theology abstracted from the behavior it demanded was distorted and inadequate" (Theilman, 158).

"Timothy, Epaphroditus, and Paul...have understood that Christian commitment means losing one's life in order to find it, forfeiting the whole world but gaining one's soul." (Theilman,161)

### **Timothy (vv. 21-24)**

Paul plans on sending him soon, though not immediately. (v.19)  
he'll send him once the end is clearer for Paul (2:23)

"Kindred Spirit"

equal in soul- one souled (cf. 2:2)

Timothy understands what it means to be united in soul

Timothy's soul is so much like Paul's that he will be genuinely concerned for the well-being of the Philippians.

### **2:21**

This verse makes the connection. Unlike Timothy, everyone else at my disposal is more interested in their own things rather than Jesus Christ's things. cf. 2:4

### **2:22**

But not Timothy - he's been tested and proven to be truly dedicated to the gospel. Just as Jesus became a slave, so Timothy has enslaved himself to the gospel.

cf. 1:27

"you know"

The Philippians are aware of this: cf. Acts 16 – they knew Timothy; he was with Paul when the church got started.

## Epaphroditus (2:25-30)

Timothy's not coming immediately but Epaphroditus is -- he brings the letter.  
Paul thought it was necessary to send him back, even though he was probably supposed to stay longer and help out Paul.

Paul describes Epaphroditus here with a "fanfare of complimentary language" (Theilman, 154)

**"brother"** - overtones of affection

**"fellow -worker"** - co-worker with Paul on Christ's behalf

**"fellow - soldier"** - commraderie -- fought together for Gospel.

**"messenger"** - lit. = "apostle"

cf. 2 Cor. 8:23

It means he's an official representative of the church.

**"minister"** - one who renders religious service/duty.

So Paul is sending Epaphroditus back with his blessing - he's sending him because it will relieve both Epaphroditus anxiety and theirs.

There was concern over his illness; But Paul is sending him home, so welcome him back with joy (not suspicion or skepticism about how well he's done). Hold him in high regard; give him honor for his faithful service

Why? because he was so committed to Christ and His work that he almost died carrying it out.

He **"risked his life"** for the gospel ; lit. he gambled with his life

The idea that someone might risk their health in the service of another isn't a much touted virtue these days. But Paul holds Epaph in honor because that is precisely what he's done.

## Philippians ch. 3

**3:1** Be glad in what the Lord has done. cf. 4:4

So let me tell you something again, because its no trouble for me and its good protection for you. This refers to vv. 2-11. These "same things" he's going to write are things he's told them earlier his teaching them.

cf. 3:18- "I've often told you and tell you even now..."

In this section he's working to replace a "spirit proud in the flesh with a spirit humble in Christ" (D.F. Watson, Quoted in O'brien, p. 347)

**3:2** The way he words his description of these people here communicates urgency. It also uses alliteration - the words for dogs, for evil workers, and for false circumcision all begin with the same letter in Greek, a "k"

Beware of the *kunaς*;  
Beware of the *kakous ergatas*  
Beware of the *katatomen*

Since this is describing Jews it is "bitingly ironical" (O'brien, 354). It turns Jewish boasts upside down

### "beware of the dogs"

Dogs were semi-wild, scavengers that ate garbage around town and filth around town – not pets. Thus Jews couldn't touch without becoming unclean. cf. Mt. 7:6; (15:26-27). Therefore, the word "dog" was a term of contempt, a violent verbal attack, an insult.  
cf. 2 Pet. 2:22; Rev. 22:15

"evil workers" – The work they're engaged in isn't God's work; it's not good work. It's evil work.

### "false circumcision" (NIV: "mutilators of the flesh")

This is a play on words in Greek. Some Jewish Christians preached the falsehood that people needed to be circumcised to be part of God's people. The word for circumcision in Greek is peritomē; the word here in v. 2 is katatomē. It means mutilation, and often referred to pagan flesh-cutting ceremonies. Thus, he is saying circumcision is empty like pagan rituals.

When it comes to being right with God, circumcision is little more than fleshly laceration, kind of like pagan flesh cuttings.

**3:3** True circumcision equals circumcision of the heart (Jer. 4:4; Deut. 10:16; 30:6, Col. 2:11-12). Thus, those who have experienced this (the renewal of the Holy Spirit) are the true people of God.

There are 3 marks of these true people of God:

1. **worship in Spirit** ( Jn. 4:24); the service of God is given by Christians not Israel
2. **Glory in Christ** (boast in Christ) Jesus Christ is the church's glad boast
3. **no confidence in the flesh**
  - a) Jewish nation/ race -- heritage
  - b) circumcision

### **3:4-6 - Paul's Privileges and Past Achievements**

If people wanted to compare stat sheets and be confident in who they are and what they've achieved in the flesh, well, Paul's stats are better than anybody else.

1. circumcised the 8th day i.e., just as the Law prescribed.
2. of the nation of Israel- direct descent of the Jews
3. of the tribe of Benjamin (cf. Rom. 11:1) – the tribe Saul, the first king, was from
4. Hebrew of Hebrews – a true Jew; spoke Aramaic in home and Hebrew in the synagogue he grew up in; he was not a Hellinist (a Greek Jew)
5. A Pharisee - that is, he was the most conservative, Law-abiding Jew of the day; he was a member of the group whose goal was to be as faithful to the Law as possible.
6. Zealous- persecuted church (cf. Gal. 1:13-14) as an ardent Pharisee this was something to be proud of - but not anymore.
7. blameless according to the Old Testament Law – According to the righteousness demanded by the law, Paul was without fault. He had kept the Law - at least outwardly. Every other Pharisee would've looked at Paul and said, "There's a righteous man!" See Matt. 5:20

Paul had all of this. His rejection of such confidence wasn't because he was an outcast, wasn't because he didn't have good credentials. He had it all! But he now considered those things as worthless and sought only to achieve a personal knowledge of Jesus Christ (O'brien, 365).

**\*\* WHAT KINDS OF PRIVILEGES OR ACCOMPLISHMENTS CAUSE US TODAY TO RUN THE RISK OF PLACING CONFIDENCE IN THE FLESH?**

**3:7-11- Overview:** Paul's values have changed. He has had a "total reorientation" of life (O'Brien, 382).

FAITH IN CHRIST IS INCOMPATIBLE WITH CONFIDENCE IN THE FLESH!!! Paul no longer sees himself or life itself the same way. This is what becoming an Christian is all about - a complete shift of focus, a complete change in how we view this world.

**3:7** The language of "gains" and "losses" is accounting terminology.

Paul was an up-and-comer in Jewish society, on his way to the top. But all the privileges and achievements of Paul's former life were bad investments. They've turned out to be loss for Christ's sake. Now that he's met Jesus, he's moved over to the liability column all his past accomplishments as a Jew.

**3:8** Not only that, but everything else is a "loss" compared to knowing Christ. Jesus is the supreme asset. Nothing else compares. The one thing that is of any significant value is knowing Christ, being united with Christ. Paul counts everything else as "**rubbish**" (*skubala* in Greek).

*skubala*- was used of dung, muck, food gone bad, scraps left after a meal, and refuse. It describes worthless filth.

Paul lost a lot when he joined Christ: status and prestige with in Judaism; social world; perhaps disowned by family. And yet he says, as important and wonderful as those things were, they were like rubbish compared to gaining Christ.

#### "gain Christ"

Paul has expressed his over-riding ambition as simply "for the sake of Christ," and " for the sake of knowing Christ," and now the gaining of Christ.

All of these phrases picture a loyal, intimate, submissive involvement with Jesus Christ. It's not only to know Him relationally, but it also includes a knowledge of His will and a willingness to obey Him . . . "not only feeling his presence but especially living in faithfulness to God and his word" every day (Theilman, 177-78).

The point of Paul words is this: Is being a Christian worth it? You bet!! Just the simple privilege and pleasure of knowing Christ outweighs everything else.

What have we counted as loss? Have we written it off as completely as Paul so that we're don't stop and stare longingly at it wondering what could've been?

**3:9** Paul's great ambition for himself is to gain Christ and to be found in Him. By being found in him Paul probably has in mind being found in Him on the final day when Christ returns. On that day, Paul wants to be found having a God-given righteousness.

Two Contrasting Kinds of Righteousness:

1. A self-attained righteousness derived from keeping the Old Testament Law. Paul does not want this kind of righteousness. This would be Paul's own moral achievement through obedience in an attempt to establish himself as worthy of a right standing with God.
2. God-given righteousness through faith in Christ. This is qualitatively superior, and this is what Paul wants.

Note some of the contrasts:

1. One righteousness is "from law," the other is "from God."
2. One is "my own" the other is "through Christ"

**3:10** **"To know Christ"** is repeated. This is what life is all about!!

This involved two experiences for Paul:

1. knowing the power of his resurrection  
the same power by which Christ was raised now works in us: see Eph. 1:19-20 and 2:5-6; Rom. 6:4, 11-12
2. knowing the partnership with his sufferings  
We live so connected to Him that we share in His suffering. And thus we are conformed to his death. See 2:5-8 again, where Jesus death is a self-giving act for the sake of others.

**v. 11** **"if somehow ..."**

Paul does not doubt that it will happen, but it is not in Paul's power to make happen. The phrase suggests that it hasn't happened yet and he's not sure when or how it will.

Experiencing the power of Christ's resurrection here and now leads to final resurrection of body. We have already experienced "phase 1" of our resurrection (new birth, new life); we are awaiting "phase 2" (new body).

cf.: Eph. 2:5-6, Rom. 6:4ff., Rom. 8:10-11, 23, 2 Cor. 4:16 (see v. 14) --> 2 Cor. 5:1ff.



- v. 12** This verse says that Paul hasn't arrived yet. He has obtained or received everything he's just described yet. It his goal and ambition, which as he said in 1:21 will be gained at death cf. 2 Cor. 5:1-9. Paul did not believe that the quality of our present fellowship w/ Christ is as good as it gets -- it's by faith, someday (when it's by sight) we will gain Christ fully. So Paul hasn't arrived yet; and if any of the Philippians believe they have, Paul wants them to think otherwise.

Because he hasn't arrived, Paul "**presses on**" to lay hold of what Christ has promised. To press on means to pursue. So Paul's present life is one in pursuit of Christ and all Christ has to offer.

- 3:13-14** Verses 13-14 further explain how the knowledge that he hasn't arrived and received everything yet impacts his behavior. Since he hasn't arrived, he keeps his focus on the goal, straining towards it. Like a good runner in a race, he doesn't keep looking back over his shoulder; instead he keeps his eyes forward, towards the goal, the prize.

He refuses to rest on his past successes & accomplishments, instead he keeps on running & striving with the goal in view.

Notice the participles "forgetting" & "reaching." They tell HOW Paul runs, the manner in which Paul pursues the Prize ...

And notice in v. 14 it is the PRIZE he pursues, the prize promised in God's upward call in Christ.

- v. 15 "Therefore as many as are mature let is think this way"**

So as many as are perfect, or mature in Christ, should think like this. Like how?

With this determined attitude of focusing on the goal, pursuing the prize, and not thinking we've arrived yet. And it seems that perhaps there was a tendency among in the congregation to think otherwise, thinking they'd arrived. Paul says (end of v. 15) to them that God will make it clear to them that they are thinking wrongly.

"It was a mark of the mature to recognize that such perfection was unattainable during mortal life" (Bruce, 124).

It's a mark of the mature to keep pressing on, not resting on past successes, not thinking we've attained spiritual perfection.

Christian maturity thus refuses to focus on past achievements and instead focuses one's energy on keeping progressing

**"if in anything you think differently, also this God will reveal to you"**

God will make the truth plain to them. He will help them see the truth of what Paul has just told them. cf. Phil 1:6 -- Paul knows that God's started a good work in them, and that he'll perfect it(!) but only at the day of Christ.

### 3:16

Literally this verse reads, “Nevertheless unto the thing which we attained/achieved, to the same to conduct.” In other words, let your life be guided by the truth you presently have received. Be sure to live up to the level of spiritual maturity and understanding you've reached. Live at the level you've reached, not below it!!

**3:17** Paul offers himself as a pattern for to the Philippians. Verse 17 literally reads: "be joint-imitators of me, brothers, and watch [closely] those who walk in this way just as you have a pattern -- us." Paul and his associates have set a pattern for the Philippians of Christian conduct, especially with reference to what their ambition ought to be and how they view fleshly desires and achievements.

This "heavenly focus" that Paul had for the fulfillment of his life ought to be imitated by Christians! This "heavenly focus" (cf. 3:19) which motivates Paul to progress in holiness is godliness gives us a model of Christian living (2 Cor. 5:9-10)

**3:18** Paul warns them of negative examples. Paul had told them about these kind of people earlier. It appears that the people Paul has in mind professed to be Christians, but their lifestyle revealed that .. they were "**enemies of the cross.**" "Those who deliberately indulge in sin and repudiate the will of God deny all that the cross of Christ stands for" (129, Bruce). And for Paul this is a reason to weep.

**3:19** How does Paul describe these kind of people?

4 things --

1. Their destination is destruction
2. Their "god" is their appetites (belly/stomach); they are driven by their own fleshly indulgences. Cf. Rom. 16:18
3. Their glory is their shame. That is, they are proud of what they should have been ashamed of.
4. They think only about earthly things. They have a sensuous, worldly focus (not the things of heaven). "‘Earthly things’ are not the practical affairs of everyday life, but things that characterize worldly life in opposition to God" (Theilman, 198).

**3:20** Christians, on the other hand, don't set their minds on such things. Why?

**"Because our citizenship is in heaven."** Our legal residence ultimately in heaven not in the world. This language appeals to their civic pride.

"**citizenship**" = politeuma in Greek. Because of its history, the city of Philippi was given a special status in the ancient world. Citizens of Philippi were also citizens of Rome; they were to be governed as if on Italian soil. They paid less taxes, spoke Latin, and were treated like a bit of Rome.

Playing off that experience, Paul says that Christians living in Philippi (or anywhere else – Boise or Haiti for example) are actually citizens of heaven. They are like a colony of heaven on earth. Thus they actually have a more important citizenship -- they're under the government of heaven!

**"from which [heaven] we wait for a Savior"**

Paul appears to be carrying the parallel with the Philippians citizenship a little further. The Roman Emperor Octavian (Caesar Augustus of Luke 2) is the one who conferred their citizenship status on to them. Thus, they referred to Octavian (Augustus) as their soter -- savior, as did so much of the empire. *Soter* (savior) and *Kyrios* (lord) were two primary titles for the emperor at this time (Fee, 31). The emperor cult in a city like Philippi would mean that virtually every public activity would be done with the acknowledgment that Nero (at this time) was savior and lord (Fee, 31).

Christians, however, have a better citizenship & a better savior! We eagerly wait for him to return --> anticipation, great expectations ... excitement.

**3:21** What will Jesus, our savior do when he gets here?

He “**will transform**” our bodies. This present body is described a “**humble**” body. It is weak, tainted by sin, subject to disease and death. When Jesus returns he will transform our body so that it will come into “**conformity**” with Jesus’ glorified body. Christ shared our humiliation so that we might share his glory! He will do this by the power he has as universal Lord of all.

## Philippians ch. 4

**4:2-3** This passage refers to two specific ladies— **Euodia and Syntyche** —at odds with each other. Who are they? Paul says that they have shared in his struggle (*sunathleō*). This is the same word for "striving together" in 1:27. These two women are fellow workers who took part in Paul's ministry with Clement and others. So they are two significant and influential women, and apparently they are having a hard time getting along or they are in some sort of disagreement. Paul's plea to them: have the same mind. Why? How? Because they are both in the Lord.

Paul urges the main leader and one who will read the letter first (his "true comrade") to help these women.

**4:4-7 -Overview:** These verses are a series of exhortations that can be describes as three hallmarks of a Christian attitude. These three result in peace.

**4:4** 1) "Rejoice in the Lord..."

Paul is emphatic: joy is a hallmark of a Christian life. Thus he repeats himself here.

Where is joy ultimately to be found? In the Lord (not in circumstances, not in finances, etc.). Jesus is the source and object of our joy regardless of circumstances. We rejoice *in* Him.

Paul had modeled this for the Philippians: Acts 16:22-25.

Paul learned this from Jesus, who spoke of his joy and ours on the night before His crucifixion (John 15:11)..

**4:5** 2) "Let your forbearing Spirit ... Lord is near"

The word "forbearing" means gentleness and graciousness. We put up with a lot and aren't easily irritated or angered. It includes a spirit of non-retaliation when you've been wronged!

We are supposed to have this attitude towards "all men." Christian and non-Christian; the kind and they unkind; those with who it's easy and those with whom it's not.

One reason for this is because the "Lord is near." Jesus is close by; his coming could be at any time. He'll take care of the injustices.

**4:6** 3) "be anxious for nothing"  
Cf. Matt. 6:25-34.

Life is full of uncertainties. We can't control much of it. But Paul isn't telling us to not worry about it; or to not think about it. Paul doesn't mean ignore hardships and difficulties. Ignoring them isn't God's solution. What is?

Thankful prayer! "**in everything ... known to God**" We should entrust our difficulties to God who is in control of everything. This is the antidote for worry. cf. 1 Pet. 5:7

Paul emphasizes prayer by piling up the adjectives to describe it.

“prayer” which emphasizes reverence.

“supplication” which refers to a cry for help and an earnest sharing of needs

“thanksgiving” by which we express our appreciation

“requests” which mean asking for things we need or would like to see done

**4:7** What's the result of these three attitudes?

Peace!! Biblical peace is the presence of wholeness and a sense of blessing, not merely the absence of difficulty or conflict.

Who's the source of this peace? God!! He's full of peace and he gives it to us.

What is it like? The peace is inexplicable! It's so great that it's beyond our ability to explain it completely.

What does it do? Sets up a guard camp and marches sentry duty around our heart.

**4:8** Describes the kind of things that Christians ought to think about.

THINGS THAT ARE ...

TRUE -- things based on reality

HONORABLE -- noble, dignified, respectable; not base and vulgar

RIGHT -- just, righteous

PURE -- holy, chaste, clean

LOVELY -- attractive, pleasing,

GOOD REPUTE-- admirable, has essential worthiness, doesn't offend

EXCELLENT -praise worthy

It is on these things that we should "think." This word means consider and reckon. We should give weight to these things in your life, take them into account.

**4:9** Paul once again offers himself as a concrete example of what he's teaching them. He says they should practice everything Paul had taught and modeled for them. If they do so, the God of Peace will be with them.

Peace isn't an end to be sought in & of itself. Peace is a by-product of a right lifestyle. We should seek to live right and peace will follow.

- vv. 10-20** These are parting words of thanks for the gift the Philippians had sent to Paul. In saying thanks, Paul models humility and contentment for them and us.
- 4:10** It really made Paul happy that they had renewed their concern for him by sending him a gift. Prior to sending this gift to Paul they really did not have a recent chance to help him out.
- Paul is truly grateful, but he doesn't want the Philippians to think that he couldn't have coped without their help.
- 4:11** Paul had learned to be **content**. Contentment refers to accepting the situation – not that you pretend the situation isn't difficult or bad, but that you know that God and His wisdom and grace are sufficient for the situation.
- 4:12** Paul amplifies what he has in mind regarding contentment. Specifically here he's thinking of having a little ("**humble means**") or a lot ("**prosperity**"). Having a little is difficult, but having a lot presents its own dangers and temptations that require "skills" to handle. Paul says he's learned these skills, he's learned that secret.
- 4:13** What is the secret? Paul had the ability to be content, to face any situation, to cope, because of Christ who gave him strength. The strength of Christ enables him to be content.
- 4:14** While he wasn't in "want" and was "content" with his situation in Rome, he assures the Philippians that it was really good of them to share with him by sending a gift.
- 4:15-16** In these verse, Paul reflects on their past goodness to him – from the first time he preached to them and from when he left them for Thessalonica they gave to him and his ministry.
- see Acts 16:11 and 2 Thess 3:8-10
- 4:17** Paul didn't seek the gift (as charlatan philosophers frequently did). Instead, his real desire was for their account to grow -- accrue interest and profit in their spiritual bank account. He's more concerned about their "treasure in heaven" and their spiritual gain
- 4:18** This verse is kind of like a receipt. The word "**received**" was a technical business term for the "receipt of full payment for goods delivered or service rendered" (Theilman. 237). In fact he says has an abundance (even though he's under house arrest). He says their gift was not only a gift to Paul but also to God, a fragrant, acceptable, well-pleasing gift/offering.
- 4:19** Since Paul is unable to do anything for them (he's under house arrest), he assures them that their needs will be met by God. Whatever the need, whatever the situation our rich God will be there with just what we need.
- 4:20-22** Concluding words of praise and greeting. To God be the glory!
- The "saint" refers to Christians as those set apart for God.
- "Those of Caesar's household" would be Christians inside the royal palace. What an encouragement: somehow right at the heart of empire there are brothers and sisters in Christ!