**Metadata**

* Philippi was located in eastern Macedonia, 10 miles inland from the Aegean Sea.
* There is no modern city anywhere near the ancient site of Philippi.
* The city was named after Philip II of Macedon (Alexander the Great’s father) who rebuilt the city in 358 B.C.
* Philippi came under Roman control in 168 B.C. and was established as a Roman colony (cf. Acts 16:12).
* The population of a Roman colony was predominately Romans. In Philippi there were also Macedonian Greeks and some Jews.
* Paul visited Philippi on his second missionary journey (Acts 16:11-40)
* He visited Macedonia a second time about 5 years later (this trip is alluded to in 1 Corinthians 16:5-6 & 2 Corinthians 1:15-17); and shortly after, returned (Acts 19:21; 20:1-3). He was in Philippi at least once during this time (cf. Acts 20:6).
* Paul wrote the letter while in prison in Rome, near the end of his two-year imprisonment (about AD 62).

**Concise Outline of Book**

*Taken from Walton Weaver’s commentary on Philippians*

1. **Introduction (1:1-11)**
   1. Brief salutation (1:1-2)
   2. Thanksgiving for them all (1:3-8)
   3. Petition that their love may grow (1:9-11)
2. **The Progress of the Gospel at Rome (1:12-26)**
   1. Christ’s gospel is advanced through Paul’s circumstances (1:12-14)
   2. Christ is preached even through unprincipled means (1:15-18)
   3. Christ is honored whether in life or in death (1:19-26)
3. **Practical Exhortations (1:27-2:18)**
   1. To steadfastness in suffering (1:17-30)
   2. To unity of spirit and lowliness (2:1-4)
   3. To have the mind of Christ (2:5-11)
   4. To work out salvation (2:12-16)
   5. To rejoice with Paul in sacrifice (2:17-18)
4. **The Proposed Visit of Timothy & Return of Epaphroditus to Philippi (2:19-30)**
5. **Warning Against the Judaizers (3:1-21)**
   1. Watch out for the evil workers (3:1-3)
   2. Paul’s own personal experience (3:4-14)
   3. Encouragement to the mature (3:15-16)
   4. A contrast of characters: the Judaizers VS the true citizens of heaven (3:17-21)
6. **Concluding Exhortations (4:1-9)**
   1. To stand firm (4:1)
   2. To personal unity (4:2-3)
   3. To rejoice, practice forbearance, and not be anxious (4:4-7)
   4. To keep our thinking high, like Paul (4:8-9)
7. **Their Fellowship with Paul in the Preaching of the Gospel and His Thanks for Their Gifts (4:10-20)**
   1. Paul’s own contentment (4:10-14)
   2. Paul remembers their previous gifts (4:15-20)
8. **Conclusion (4:21-23)**

**Paul’s Purpose in Writing**

* Paul wrote his letter to thank the Philippians for their support, and to make them aware both of his welfare, and that of their emissary, Epaphroditus.
* There was a strong exhortation to service, and to unity, indicating the dangers facing the Philippian church in this area.

**Chapter Synopses**

1. Paul expresses joy for their *“fellowship in the gospel.”* He expresses his devotion to them, and his prayers for their faithfulness. He references his imprisonment, and his faith that all will work out to God’s glory, whether in his life or in his death. He notes his confidence that he will be released from prison, and be able to help them. He calls upon them to live lives worthy of Christ.
2. Paul calls upon them to be of one mind, noting this is accomplished through a humble spirit. He notes Christ as the ultimate example, and shows how God glorified the Son. He calls upon them to *“work out”* their salvation, and to live faultless lives in the midst of an ungodly world. He notes his intention to send Timothy to them, and praises their messenger Epaphroditus.
3. Paul warns them about the Judaizing teachers. He defends his ministry, and notes what he had given up to win Christ, and attain eternal life. He talks of pressing on, and calls upon them to do so as well. He talks of the example of faithful brethren, and warns against the *“enemies of the cross of Christ.”* He reminds them of their future resurrection and glory!
4. He calls upon Euodia and Syntyche to be of one mind. He calls upon them to rejoice, and to refrain from anxiety, casting their cares upon God to attain peace. He exhorts them to meditate on all things praiseworthy, and again calls upon them to follow his example. He thanks them again for their unique generosity, and notes that God will bless them for their gift.

**Suggested Memory Work**

**(1:9-11),** *“And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment, 10 that you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ, 11 being filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.”*

**(1:18),** *“What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is preached; and in this I rejoice, yes, and will rejoice.”*

**(1:21),** *“For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain.”*

**(1:23-24),** *“For I am hard-pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better. 24 Nevertheless to remain in the flesh is more needful for you.”*

**(2:1-2),** *“Therefore if there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, 2 fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.”*

**(2:8-11),** *“And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. 9 Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, 10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, 11 and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”*

**(2:12-13),** *“Therefore, my beloved, as you 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 who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.”*

**(2:14-15),** *“Do all things without complaining and disputing, 15 that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world…”*

**(3:7-8),** *“But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. 8 Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence*

*of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ…”*

**(3:13-14),** *“Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, 14 I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.”*

**(3:20-21),** *“For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, 21 who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.”*

**(4:4),** *“Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!”*

**(4:6-7),** *“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; 7 and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”*

**(4:8-9),** *“Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things. 9 The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you.”*

**(4:11-12),** *“Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content: 12 I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.”*

**(4:13),** *“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”*

**Difficult Passages**

* Explain the phrase*, “He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ”* (1:6)
* Explain the phrase, *“which is to them a proof of perdition, but to you of salvation”* (1:28)
* What does the phrase *“did not consider it robbery to be equal with God”* mean? (2:6)
* What happened when Christ *“made Himself of no reputation”* (2:7)
* Explain the phrase *“for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.”* (2:13)
* Explain the phrase *“For me to write the same things to you is not tedious”* (3:1)
* Who are the dogs, evil workers and mutilation? (3:2)
* Explain how Paul’s righteousness was from the law, but the righteousness of God is by faith? (3:9)
* Explain the phrase *“by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself”* (3:21)
* What is the “Book of Life”? (4:3)
* To what is Paul referring by the phrase *“the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding”* (4:7)
* Discuss the phrase *“All the saints greet you, but especially those who are of Caesar’s household”* (4:22)

**Doctrinal Considerations**

* The nature of the Christian’s hope (1:20)
* **The Christian’s worthy walk (1:27-30; 2:12-18; 3:12-21; 4:1; 4:9)**
* **The importance of humility (2:1-4; 3:16)**
* **The humbling and exaltation of Christ (2:5-11)**
* **Christians are the Circumcision (3:2-3)**
* The Priority of Christ (3:7-11)
* The New Testament lives of Christians serve as a pattern for us to follow (3:17-21)
* Generosity and its reward (4:10-20)
* **Pattern: Evangelical support (4:15-16)**

**Practical Considerations**

* Paul’s common expression of *“grace and peace from God”* indicates an important consideration we should have as brethren! (1:2, 4:23)
* Prayer on behalf of the brethren is appropriate and helpful (1:3-11, 19)
* Continual and repeated supplications are a part of prayer (1:3-4)
* The *“defense and confirmation of the gospel”* is an important work (1:7)
* Characteristics of Maturity: Love, Discernment, Righteousness (1:9-11)
* Standing up for the Lord (even to the point of persecution) is an encouragement to all brethren (1:12-14)
* We should have the same perspective as that stated by Paul in (1:21-26)
* Proper action is required whether authority is present or absent (1:27, 2:12)
* *“Lowliness of mind”* is necessary to be united with others (2:3-4)
* Doing right must be accompanied by a proper attitude! (2:14)
* A righteous life is a life of great influence (2:15)
* Worldly accomplishments have no value in Christ (3:4-7)
* The ultimate goal of the Christian is the resurrection from the dead (3:10-11)
* Maturity and unity go hand in hand (3:15-16)
* Walking with a worldly focus makes you an enemy of the cross of Christ (3:18-19)
* Walking with a heavenly focus will bring transformation! (3:20-21)
* Consider the graciousness of Paul’s words in (4:1), and strive to emulate! This is especially important in the midst of exhortation.
* Anxiety is handled by placing your trust in God (4:6-7)
* We can learn how to be content. How? (4:11-12)
* Paul declares the support of preaching a *“sweet-smelling aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well pleasing to God”* (4:18)

**Questions to Consider**

* What are the offices of bishop and deacon? (Identify and describe) (1:2)
* What is *“fellowship”* as Paul uses the term in (1:5)
* What is the relationship of *“love”* with *“knowledge and discernment”* (1:9)
* Do Paul’s words excuse one who preaches out of mere pretense? If not, what does he mean? (1:15-18)
* How did Paul *“know”* that he would remain alive? How sure was he? (1:25)
* How is suffering for Christ considered a granted favor? (1:29-30)
* What are some practical examples of putting others’ interests first? (2:4)
* When will every knee bow, and every tongue confess Jesus Christ is Lord? (2:10-11)
* How unique was Timothy? Does that indicate anything about how rare it is to find someone who serves in the gospel? (2:19-24)
* What does it mean to hold someone in esteem? Describe the merits of Epaphroditus (2:25-30; 4:18)
* Practically, how can we *“press on”* (3:12-14)
* Is Paul’s exhortation to Euodia and Syntyche an indication of strife between the two? If so, how can their dispute, and Paul’s admonition be applied to us? (4:2-3)
* How can we tie the exhortation to gentleness to the declaration *“The Lord is at hand.”* (4:5)
* What are the items (please define) that we are to meditate upon? (4:8)
* What is the extent of *“all things”* in Paul’s declaration? (4:13)
* What are *“my necessities”* to which Paul refers? (4:16)
* What is the greeting Paul instructs them to give to *“every saint in Christ Jesus”*? What does this admonition teach us? (4:21)

**Student Questions**

*(Use the rest of this page to prepare questions and comments for class discussion. Since this is not a “verse by verse” study, make sure that all your questions concerning the text are answered).*

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