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God, through His Son Jesus, provides eternal grace for our failures and human limitations.

Philippians 2.

(2013)

The Bible not only reveals God's eternal plans purposes and promises

But also shows how you can know God for yourself.

Teach it, don't demand it.

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Philippians 2.

Topics.

- Have the same mind, the same love and be in full accord with one another.
- Count others as more significant than yourself.
- Christ though in the form of God, did not consider himself equal with God.
- Christ was born in the likeness of men and found in human form.
- The name above every name.
- Every knee will bow at the name of Jesus.
- Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.
- God works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.
- Shine as lights in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation
- Seek the interest of Jesus not your own.

The Previous Chapter: in the previous chapter Paul spoke of the beautiful connection of love to knowledge and how his imprisonment had helped advance the Gospel and made many bolder to speak without fear. He spoke of some preaching Christ from envy and rivalry and others from good-will and said, for him to live, is Christ, but to die is gain. He encouraged the Philippians to suffer for Christ sake and told them that persecution is a sign of destruction for some, but of salvation for others.

NOTE: for information concerning people, places and the meaning of words see Map Locations and People of the Bible, and Bible Dictionary on Website Menu.

Have the Same Mind, the Same Love and Be in Full Accord with One Another.

Philip. 2:1-2 ----- ¹So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, ²complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind.

Paul says his joy will be complete if the Philippians: -

1. Have the same mind (one mind in King James Bible).
 2. Have the same love.
 3. Are in full accord with each other.
- 1. Having the same mind:** notice; having one mind is in the context of love and having the same attitude. To be of one mind in this context does not mean that every brother and sister in Christ must dogmatically and legalistically believe every detail of the Bible in the exact same manner.

Having the same mind is about accepting as a brother or sister in Christ whoever has come to God through repentance and water baptism believing that Jesus is the Son of God who died and rose to the right hand side of the Father in heaven and is fully aware that it is only by their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and God's grace that they are counted as righteous by God and not because of their own self-effort or any religious rites, customs or traditions that they maybe keeping.

Having the same mind is about loving the Lord and desiring to honour God and the name of Jesus. It is about being fully assured the Lord will return from heaven and believing the dead in Christ will be resurrected and those who are alive will be raised to be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air and so will they always be with the Lord in eternal glory (1 Thess. 4:14-18).

Having the same mind is about being united on these core foundational truths and accepting that despite other difference if these things are the foundation and passion of anyone who faithfully follows the Lord Jesus Christ they are in the Kingdom of God and are a brother or sister in the family of Christ.

- 2. Having the same love:** means being filled with the fruits of the Spirit, (i.e., compassion, kindness, grace, forgiveness, patience mercy and such like things). It embraces the idea of being empathetic and doing as much as we can that is in our power to encourage, support and strengthen others in the family of Christ.

Having the same love is understanding that in the global family of Christ there will be brothers and sisters acting as infants in Christ who can still only be fed on milk (Scriptures that teach right behaviour) and not solid food (Scriptures that teach Revelations and prophecies etc.) because they are not only still being merely human, but are also behaving in a human manner? (1 Cor. 3:1-4), but that does not mean that they are excluded from the Kingdom of God, but it may mean that they will suffer loss since Paul states: -

- No one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ, but if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw their work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done and if it survives, they will receive a reward, but if it is burned up, they will suffer loss, though they will be saved, but only as through fire" (1 Cor. 3:10-15).

Having the same love is about understanding this principal and rather than judging and condemning brothers and sisters who maybe acting in a human manner we imitate Paul who with love and compassion did all he could to help the brothers and sisters who were still behaving in a human manner from suffering loss when Christ returns.

- 3. Being in full accord:** the word accord from Strong's Concordance means to be similar in spirit and sentiment, meaning, similar in opinion, emotion, feeling, judgement, and attitude and thought it implies a companionship of like-mindedness with a resemblance in possessions, hobbies and enjoyment. When Paul said, "Be in full accord and of one mind" he was not saying that we all have to be clones of each other, but rather that we are similar in spirit and judgment, meaning that our mindset should be one of showing patience, grace and forgiveness toward each other in contrast to being jealous and envious.

Being in full accord carries the idea that we understand that many brothers and sisters in the global family of Christ come from different cultural backgrounds and have different levels of education (especially religious). It is about understanding that many are battling to overcome various past habits or deep emotional hurts while some are struggling to support their families and others are coping with persecutions or the emotional hurts of divorce and broken families and such like things.

Being in full accord is about setting our minds to work together in a kindred spirit to encourage, support and strengthen each other in the faith understanding that not one of us stands perfect before the Lord and that each faithful brother and sister in the family of Christ has their own particular troubles to cope with.

Count Others as More Significant than Yourself.

Philip. 2:3-8 ----- ³Do nothing from rivalry or conceit (Vain glory in KJV) but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. ⁴Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. ⁵Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus,

⁶who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, ⁸he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

Conceit: (Vain glory in KJV) means empty glorying (i.e., boasting of self).

Having the same mind: carries the idea of doing nothing in the Lord from a spirit of competition (i.e., as though competing against another brother and sisters for recognition, status or position or from self-conceit or for self-glory), but rather doing all things from an attitude of humility counting others as being of great value to God and because we enjoy seeing others succeeding and growing in the faith. This is what Paul means when he says, "Count others as more or significant than yourself" (v4).

Esteem others better than yourself: means encourage and build others up in contrast to spending all our effort and time on establishing our own dreams and goals, but that does not mean lay aside whatever work God has called us to, but rather don't use others as merchandise to achieve them. 'Esteem others better than yourself' is about knowing that God does not love or value a person who has a great talent or is enormously gifted over and above those who may lack such skills, esteeming others is about supporting and caring about peoples interest and goals and helping them achieve them.

Have this mind among yourselves: Paul's statement, "Have this mind among yourselves" (v5) means whether we are a president of a nation or the head of a world-wide church never allow the destructive power of pride and ego to exalt us above others or allow the deceptive, silent and seductive voices of pride and ego deceive our minds into thinking we are superior and that others are less.

The words, "Which is yours in Christ Jesus" (v5) means this is the type of mind that Christ had, he was the beloved Son of God, the most exalted of all who has ever walked on this earth, yet rather than exalt himself as the royal and majestic King that he was, he instead took on the form of a humble servant riding into the city of God on a donkey and laying aside the joys of this world to serve others.

Christ though in the Form of God, did not consider Himself Equal with God.

The following words of Paul, "Though Christ was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped" (thought it not robbery to be equal with God) (in the KJV) (v6) are used by some religious teachers to support the theory that Jesus is God, but this is a gross misunderstanding of what Paul is saying. The entire context on both sides of this verse is humility.

Paul is not implying that Jesus is God, but that though he was the perfect image of God (meaning God's Spirit dwelt within him without limitation and he manifested God's power and His character of love in absolute perfection). The words, "Jesus did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped," means that even though Jesus would have been fully justified in considering himself equal with God he never did, but instead "Made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant (v7). Meaning he humbled himself to serve others.

An earthy example (howbeit limited) it is very much like an earthly father who owns a multi-billion dollar global oil industry giving all his authority and power to his son to run the business. The son has equal power and authority as his Father had and all those who the son has authority over would be right in considering the son equal with the father in power and authority and even the son himself would be justified to see himself in this manner, but no-one would ever think that this meant the son was the father so it begs the question, "Why do some religious ministers use these verses to support the mistaken theory that Jesus God's most beloved Son is actually God the Father?"

Words of Comfort and Encouragement: since the teaching that Jesus is God has such a strong hold on much of traditional Christianity the following will encourage and comfort faithful brothers and sisters in Christ who maybe in some doubt and unsure of what to believe concerning the Father and the Son.

The Bible very clearly shows that even if Jesus was God no one has to know this to be saved to eternal life since there is not one verse in the entire Bible that states: -

- We must believe that Jesus is God to be saved.

Nor is there one verse from Genesis to Revelations that says: -

- Whoever believes that Jesus is God the Son will be saved.

In total contrast to this silence there are literally multitudes of Scriptures throughout the pages of the New Testament that very clearly proclaim: -

- We must believe that Jesus is the Son of God to be saved.

And that say: -

- Whoever believes that Jesus is the Son of God will be saved.

Surely if it was important to believe that Jesus was actually God to be saved to eternal life Jesus, the apostles and Paul would have told us at least once in all their teaching concerning salvation, but all we hear from Paul, the apostles and Jesus himself is them saying that we must believe that Jesus is the Son of God to be saved to eternal life. Jesus himself said, "This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God 'and' Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent (John 17:3).

For further information see the title: -

- Trinity (The Doctrine of the Trinity) in Various Topics (ON WEBSITE MENU).

NOTE: Christ's great humbleness and servant spirit even to death was the reason God, "Seated him at his right hand in heavenly places, far above all rule authority, power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come and put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church" (Ephes. 1:20-23) (Col 2:10).

Christ was born in the Likeness of Men and Found in Human Form.

Some religious teachers use the following words, "Jesus was born in the likeness of men and found in human form" (v7) to support the mistaken theory that Jesus pre-existed with God before time began, but this is reading far more into the verse than it is actually saying. Paul is simply highlighting the awe-inspiring glory and the overwhelming wonder of the following Bible prophecies that speak: -

- Of the coming of a promised seed of the woman in (Gen 3:15) who will conquer all evil.
- Of the coming of the promised seed of Abraham who will inherit the world.
- Of the promised seed of David who will be an everlasting King over the world.
- Of the many prophecies that speak of the coming Messiah, the Christ and Saviour of the world.

Paul is shining a floodlight on the fact that this promised seed and promised eternal King and Messiah the Christ and Saviour of the world humbly arrived on earth born of a woman and born as a human man.

NOTE: Christ was certainly in the eternal mind of God the Father before the foundations of the world began and also the majestic, glorious eternal and central focus of God's stunning and humbling foreordained eternal plan of salvation for all mankind. Peter wrote, "Christ was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was made manifest in the last times for your sake (1 Peter 1:20) clearly showing that Jesus did not pre-exist as some conscious spirit entity and then become a foetus in the womb of Mary, but that he was the central focus of God's eternal mind.

Much like the mind of an architect planning to build a magnificent building, long before the building is constructed he not only plans the entire structure in his mind, but also sees every detail of it in vivid clarity long before the builders begin to construct it and long before the workers even set foot on the site where it is to be built.

Likewise an excited expectant mother plans in her mind her baby's room long before the baby is born, she not only sees in her mind the design and colours of that room, but also the lighting, furniture and clothing long before the child is born. In the same manner God planned and purposed in his timeless mind that Christ would be the central focus of His sovereign plan for mankind's eternal salvation long before Jesus came into the world.

The Name above Every Name.

Philip. 2:9-11 ----- ⁹Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Though Christ was humbled and appeared in the form of a servant God has now raised him up to the throne of glory and to universal dominion and, "Given him a name which is above every name (v10) a name that no other name can be compared with, this name stands alone. Jesus is not only the Redeemer, Saviour and the Christ the anointed of God, but is also the only Son of God and as such his rank, his titles, his dignity are above all others.

The name above every name refers to the name of Jesus the Saviour as no other being either in heaven or on earth can possess this name as Christ who is the Redeemer of the world does. Jesus alone is the only Saviour for fallen mankind there is no other that can redeem us to God, but Christ and throughout eternity he will ever appear as the sole Saviour of the human race.

Even before his birth, Gabriel stated that his name should be called Jesus and gave the reasons for this stating that he will save his people from their sins. The qualifications of the Saviour of the world were so extraordinary, the redeeming acts so marvellous, and the results so glorious both to God and man, that it is impossible to conceive a higher name or title than that of Jesus the Saviour of the world.

Every Knee will Bow at the Name of Jesus.

The glorious words, "Every knee will bow at the name of Jesus and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord" (v10-11) means that a New Age is coming in which every angelic being in heaven, everyone on earth and everyone raised from the dead will submit themselves to Christ and honour him as Lord and King. This immediately transcends the mind of the ardent Bible student to John's vision of Christ in the book of Revelation where the Lord is pictured as a great warrior with the name, King of kings and Lord of lords written on his robe and on his thigh" (v16).

This is a picture of a mighty and universal deliverer of nations, a title of great honour? Here Christ is exalted to be the Prince and the Saviour of men and women of all nations. In this New Age Christ the King will rule and reign from God's Holy City Jerusalem (on Mount Zion God's Holy Mountain) to establish God's Kingdom on earth during his millennial reign.

The dead in Christ and the faithful, who are alive, will be gathered together to rule and reign as kings and priests with the Lord over those nations who are left outside the Holy city of God. Christ the King united with his people will not only bring peace to the Middle East, but establish God's Kingdom of steadfast love, faithfulness, righteousness, joy and peace throughout the world and the glory of God will cover the earth. Jesus will do justice to the poor and oppressed, he will be a faithful and compassionate King forever. He will not allow anyone to strike terror in the earth, or use lies and deception to enlarge their own wealth and power. The land will abundantly produce and even the deserts will flourish.

The animals will not feed on each other and even the lamb will be able to lie down with the wolf and everyone will eat of their own hands because all that they plant will produce. All nations the LORD has made will come and worship before the Lord Jesus Christ. They will glorify God's Name, proclaiming the LORD is great and does wondrous things and that He alone is God.

The book of Revelation states: -

- Jesus Christ, the faithful witness who loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood has made us kings and priests unto God and his Father is coming in glory and every eye shall see him, and they also who pierced him and all kindreds of the earth (Revelation 1:5-7).

And in Revelation chapter five we are told that: -

- Christ was slain, and by his blood he redeemed a people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation and made them a kingdom and priests to God and they shall reign on the earth (Revelation 5:9-10).

At the end of this glorious Kingdom age God descends to earth on a Great White Throne the sea, death and hades (the grave) give up the dead. They stand before God and are judged according to what is written in certain heavenly books according to what they have done.

Death and those counted unworthy are cast into the Lake of Fire a symbol of eternal destruction (i.e., total extinction) (also called the, Second Death) (Rev. 20:11-15). Christ hands the Kingdom over to his heavenly Father and God is ALL in ALL and ETERNITY begins in all its fullness and majestic royal glory.

For further information see titles: -

- Kingdom of God (ON WEBSITE MENU).
- The Second or Great White Throne Judgment.

In, Resurrection (ON WEBSITE MENU).

Work out your Own Salvation with Fear and Trembling.

Philip. 2:12 ----- ¹²Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling,

The words, "Not only as in my presence but much more in my absence work out your own salvation with fear and trembling" (v12) is a universal principal for every brother and sister in Christ throughout all ages to live by because the measure of a Christians character is not measured when they are in church or with their brothers and sisters in Christ since we are all on our best religious behaviour in these moments.

The true measure is when we are on our own or with work colleagues or secular friends it is then that we can be tempted to deny our faith or compromise our standards and speak or behave in a worldly manner to be popular or deny Christ to advance our career opportunities.

The words, "With fear and trembling" (v12) carry the following three ideas: -

- 1 Having a healthy respect for God and the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and knowing that: -
 - If, anyone builds on the foundation (the Lord Jesus Christ) with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw each one's work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, they will receive a reward, but if anyone's work is burned up, they will suffer loss, though they themselves will be saved, but only as through fire (1 Corinthians 3:12-15).

Since no brother or sister wants to stand naked (i.e., disgraced and ashamed before the Lord) we should be endeavouring to do all we can to avoid any behaviour that would not only offend God and bring a bad testimony to the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, but that would bring harm and hurt to another human especially our brothers and sisters in Christ.

- 2 It is always being conscious that if anyone could be justified through the law, then Christ died for no purpose and knowing that we are only saved by FAITH in Christ and by God's grace so that we are never tempted to justify ourselves by our own self-effort and religious works and thereby nullify the grace of God. Thus in this context, "Working out our own salvation in fear and trembling" embraces the idea of having a healthy fear against trusting in anything other than Christ alone for salvation.

This is because the moment we do trust in ourselves or anything else we nullify the grace of God (Gal. 2:21).and by our actions declare that Christ's death was of no value (Gal. 2:21). Equally as horrific as this is the fact that when we forsake grace we separate ourselves from Christ (Gal. 5:4) because it was only by grace that God made us alive in Christ (Eph. 2:5).and it is only by grace that any brother or sister has been saved (Eph. 2:8)."

Thus the reason we should have a healthy fear against trusting in self-effort or adhering to ceremonial rites, holy days and keeping religious customs, traditions to save us to eternal life especially when we know that Scripture teaches that every brother and sisters salvation is not their own doing, but the gift of God and without grace no-one can be united to Christ and whoever is without Christ is separated from God and without God no-one can be saved to eternal life.

This means in regards to eternal salvation, Christ, God, Grace and Faith, are all on an equal par with each other since no-one can be saved to eternal life without any one of them.

This is the reason the author in the book of Hebrews spends so many chapters brilliantly and skilfully explaining to the Hebrews that they must stop their sin of trusting in religious works, the Levitical Law and their priesthood to be counted righteous before God and start trusting in the grace of God that is in Christ and in his righteousness to be saved to eternal life.

By extension this means that Christians must stop trusting in attending a church building every week, strictly adhering to ceremonial rites and holy days and keeping religious customs and traditions to be saved. Though the practise of some of these maybe good in themselves they become grossly sinful when believers trust in them for their salvation since not one of them has any power to save to eternal life.

Thus "Working out our own salvation with fear and trembling" (v12) also means make sure no-one entices us back under the law to be saved. There is a danger for Christians who are faithful in religious ministry, church and Bible meeting attendance, regular study or daily reading the Bible to begin to trust these things for their salvation, but though they are all good in themselves, not one of them has any power to save us to eternal life, our trust for righteousness that leads to eternal salvation must be solely fixed in the Lord Jesus Christ and God's Grace.

- 3 Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling" (v12) is living with a mental consciousness that the Lord Jesus Christ will return as the King of kings and Lord of lords and not only judge the world, but also all who have confessed to believe in his name will stand before him and give an account of themselves, tragically: -

- Not everyone who says to him, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who did the will of his Father who is in heaven. On that day many will say to Christ, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?' And then will he declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness' (Matthew 7:21-23).

Those who will enter the Kingdom of Heaven.

The spirit behind the law is love, because each law protects another human from harm. In the book of Romans Paul states, "Love does no wrong to a neighbour; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law" (Rom 13:10). The spirit of the law is to protect the innocent from physical, financial, sexual, verbal, emotional and spiritual harm, thus those who know God aim to keep the Law because it is the right and loving thing to do. It fulfils the Ten Commandments regarding man, and the Royal law "Love thy neighbour as thyself" (Mark 12:31) (Jas 2:8). It pleases God and brings a good testimony to His name and the name of, Jesus and the church.

Those who belong to Christ aim to keep the law not to get saved, but because they are saved. They understand that righteousness is a free gift of God that comes through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and cannot be earned by self-effort.

Though the law is splendid as a guide to understanding God's will, as a means of reunion with God, the God we have sinned against, it is a hopeless failure nevertheless both law and grace go together, the law without the Gospel is diagnosis without remedy, but the Gospel without law is only the Good News of salvation for people who don't believe they need it because they have never heard the bad news of judgment, the law is not the Gospel, but the Gospel is not lawless (Rom. 3:19-20) (Eph. 2:13-22) thus those who will enter the Kingdom of God will be those who endeavour to live by the royal law "Love your neighbour as yourself."

Workers of Lawlessness.

- Micah wrote: "What the LORD requires of mankind is to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with their God" (Micah 6:5-10).
- Isaiah says: "The LORD loves justice, hates robbery and wrong doing" (Isaiah 61:8).
- Jeremiah said: "Those who know God practise steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth, because it is in these things that God delights" (Jer. 9:24).

The great prophets Micah, Isaiah and Jeremiah clearly show us that the people the LORD loves are not only those who acknowledge God, but who also uphold justice, do not lie, deceive or make promises they do not intend to keep, but speak the truth, do what is right, show respect and give help to others when able and make choices that lead to peace. These are the things the LORD delights in and that bring His favour.

The constant theme throughout Jesus famous Sermon on the Mount is doing what is right before God by seeking the way of peace in all situations. Jesus in this sermon calls Christians to treat people fairly and with respect, dignity, decency grace compassion, kindness, mercy and to be quick to forgive. Biblically a wicked person is primarily one who deliberately and consciously denies the existence of God and does harm to other humans, in contrast to this a good person is one who worships God and the Lord Jesus Christ and do all they can, to do what is right, and what is just (i.e., fair for all).

To love in the biblical sense is not an emotional attitude, but the keeping of these laws in relation to our neighbour. This is the general law of justice, beyond that; our conduct is to be regulated by relationship. We must render honour and justice to all people wherever due, but we have a particular responsibility to care for our families and those who belong to Christ.

For further information on Jesus Famous Sermon see: -

- Matthew 5 in Commentary New Testament (ON WEBSITE MENU).

Work out your own salvation: the words, "Work out your own Salvation" (v12) clearly show that we should not be judging the salvation of another brother or sister or use the bad behaviour of others who confess Christ (especially those in leadership) as an excuse for our own lack of knowledge or for a reason to sin or forsake the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. Work out your own salvation is a call to take responsibility for our own actions, behaviour and salvation and our

relationship with God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. It means that when we stand before the Lord we will not be able to say, "But Lord they made me behave that way," or "But Lord he did the same thing and he was a minister." No excuses each of us will give account for ourselves regardless of the behaviour of others.

God works in you, Both to Will and to Work for His Good Pleasure.

Philip. 2:13-14 ----- ¹³for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure. ¹⁴Do all things without grumbling (murmuring in KJV) or questioning (Disputes in KJV).

The words, "God's will and his good pleasure" (v14) that He works in those who belong to Christ is that they would, "Do all things" (v14) that are lawful and pleasing to God without grumbling, murmuring and without disputes, contention, strife or questioning. It means that we should do all things from a spirit of love, compassion, patience, kindness showing grace and mercy toward each other and being quick to forgive these are the things that it is God's good pleasure to work in us. This of course is because the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ is a God of love.

Do all things that you may be Blameless amongst a Crooked Generation.

Philip. 2:15 ----- ¹⁵that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world,

The words, "That you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish" (v15) does not mean being without sin before God (only Christ was able to achieve that perfection of holiness). The focus and context is about being blameless and without blemish in the eyes of the secular world. Every brother and sister is called to do what is right and good in the world so that in the eyes of the lost we are seen as being decent, honest and trustworthy people so that we do not bring shame to the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and make our faith appear a sham and hypocritical to those we share the Gospel with.

In the Midst of a Crooked and Twisted Generation.

Paul's words, "In the midst of a crooked and twisted generation" (v15) clearly show the following two things: -

- 1 There has not been an age that has not been any better or any worse than another.
- 2 Since God already knows the world will continue in its wicked ways until Christ returns none of us should be surprised when we see or hear of certain false religious ministers and secular leaders of governments and nations in high places of authority and influence being corrupt since it is the normal and natural course of this sinful world.

NOTE: this does not mean that every secular man and woman is wicked or has a corrupt heart, many are full of great compassion and give their lives to helping the less fortunate, the weak and the poor, but it does mean that the dominant spirit of the world (i.e., the collective mind of the world) is against God and against Christ and against God's will and God's ways.

Among whom you Shine as Lights in the World.

The words, "Among whom you shine as lights in the world (v15) is the universal call of everyone who belongs to the family of Christ and the Kingdom of God. God has not called us all too great and marvellous works, nor does he expect us to achieve anything that is beyond our talents, gifts and ability, but He does expect us to live a lifestyle of doing-right and doing-good. The Royal law of the New Testament is "Love your neighbour as yourself" (James 2:8).

Jesus said the entire law regarding mankind can be summed up in the words, "Love your neighbour as yourself" (Mark 12:31) which means do not deliberately do harm to other humans. No sane person deliberately does things to inflict pain on themselves, loving others as you love yourself is not about feeling some warm and fuzzy emotion towards others, it is about not hurting others as you would not

hurt yourself. The thing God hates the most is when we do harm to another person, physically, financially, sexually, verbally, mentally, emotionally or spiritually and the thing God loves the most is when we do good to others. It is interesting to notice that the major crime that God points out in Noah's time and one of the main reasons for the flood was because of all the violence in the land.

Leviticus chapter nineteen makes it clear that our neighbour is every other person, showing that the law requires justice to all people. The six commandments regarding mankind should be applied to everyone and we must abide by them ourselves. To love in the biblical sense is not an emotional attitude, but the keeping of these laws in relation to our neighbour. This is the general law of justice, beyond that; our conduct is to be regulated by relationship. We must render honour and justice to all people wherever due, but we have a particular responsibility to care for our families and those who belong to Christ. It is by living in this manner amongst the lost that that we not only shine as lights in the world, but are also storing up eternal rewards in heaven.

NOTE: James states, "If you really fulfil the Royal law according to the Scripture, you shall love your neighbour as yourself, you are doing well" (James 2:8) this is the universal will of God for every brother and sister in Christ, there is nothing that delights God's heart greater than seeing those in Christ's Kingdom living with this attitude underpinning everything they do in life, nor is there any better testimony for the global body of Christ when its family members live in this way.

Since not one of us attains to this goal in absolute perfection there are two things that should always be remembered: -

- 1 It is by God's grace that we are saved.
- 2 To keep uppermost in our minds the steadfast attitude Paul lived his life before Christ with, which he so beautifully expressed in the following words,

Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own the one thing I do forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus"
(Philip 3:12-14).

Holding Fast to the Word of Life.

Philip. 2:16 ----- 16 holding fast to the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I may be proud that I did not run in vain or labour in vain.

NOTICE: Paul does not say he holds on fast to doctrines of Christ, but, "The word of life", which refers to the Lord Jesus Christ himself, he is the word of life. Jesus himself said: -

- I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me (John 14:6).

Salvation is in Christ, not in intellectual head knowledge, the purpose of the knowledge is to bring us to Christ thus the reason Paul states that, "He holds fast to the word of life," It is the Good News of the Gospel that convicts us before God and opens the door of salvation to God's Son the eternal word of life the Saviour of all who come to him in humble repentance.

The Day of Christ.

The day of Christ (v16) refers to that glorious and breath-taking day when: -

- The Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God and the dead in Christ will rise first then those who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so will they always be with the Lord in eternal glory (1 Thessalonians 4:16-18).

Paul is poured out for the Philippians as a Sacrificial Drink Offering.

Philip. 2:17-18 ----- ¹⁷Even if I am to be poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrificial offering of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all. ¹⁸Likewise you also should be glad and rejoice with me.

Paul having a shepherds heart and caring for the Philippians as though they were his own children was willing to labour and endure suffering on their behalf if it resulted in their joy in the Lord and added others to the faith. These were not empty words on Paul behalf since he had already suffered much on their account and been made a prisoner of Rome so when he told the Philippians that he was willing to die for their benefit and if this did happen he would not regret it, but rather rejoice if it meant that they might be strengthened in the faith and others might hear the Gospel they knew that he was expressing his genuine love for them and not simply saying empty words of flattery to win their affections.

Drink offerings; a drink offering of wine was poured out on an animal that was about to be slain in sacrifice, as a solemn act of devoting it to God (Num. 15:5) (Num. 28:7) (Num. 28:14). Paul in like manner viewed himself as being poured out for the Philippian brothers and sisters as a servant who was sacrificing himself so that others would be an acceptable and devoted people for the Lord. Paul is saying that if his death were necessary to make the Philippians salvation of the highest and most acceptable kind, he was willing to endure anything in their cause, if it would tend to make their service more pure, spiritual, and acceptable to God. We have a similar use of language, when we say, "A man sacrifices himself for his friends or his country."

Paul encourages and uplifts the Philippian brothers and sisters who were greatly concerned for him by telling them that if his suffering and the fruits of his death benefit them and promotes their joy then he is more than willing to endure any type of hardship since his joy is also greatly increased when he sees them benefiting in the faith from his service to them and therefore they should rejoice with him.

This is true love: when our joy comes from seeing and individual or others increase in joy (as Paul's joy did) because they have benefited in some manner from our service to them it evidences that we have a true love for that person or that group. Jesus himself expressed the same thing with the following words, "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35) this is true for two reasons: -

- 1 Joy is produced in the giver when they see the joy of the one receiving the gift, if anyone thinks this is not a true statement travel to a third world country, find a family who hasn't eaten for a few days and give them food. The giving Jesus has in mind is not about luxurious and excessive gifts given to those who already have more than enough, but to those who are in need. The joy is in direct proportion to the need that is fulfilled in the life of the person receiving the gift (i.e., the greater the lack the greater the joy).
- 2 It is more blessed to give because when we sacrifice anything whether it is time, labour or money to benefit another human especially our brothers and sisters in Christ God stores up eternal rewards for us in the royal and spiritual vaults of heaven to be given out when the Lord Jesus Christ returns in glory.

Seek the Interest of Jesus not your Own.

Philip. 2:19-21 ----- ¹⁹I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, so that I too may be cheered by news of you. ²⁰For I have no one like him, who will be genuinely concerned for your welfare. ²¹They all seek their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ.

How tragic it this statement of Paul's, Timothy is the only one Paul knows who is in the ministry because he has a genuine concern for the welfare of those who he ministers to, contrasted to others who are in the ministry to serve their own interests. Throughout all ages including this present one there are religious ministers who are in the ministry for their own selfish ambition and gain, they love the importance, the fame and the wealth that can be generated by having large congregations and therefore use their followers as merchandise to further their own religious empire as did the chief priests, Pharisees and scribes in Jesus era.

This is one of the reasons Paul said to the Corinthian brothers and sisters who he loved as his own children, "You have countless guides in Christ, but you do not have many fathers (1 Cor. 4:15).

Timothy a Fellow Worker with Paul.

Philip. 2:22-24 ----- ²²But you know Timothy's proven worth, how as a son with a father he has served with me in the gospel. ²³I hope therefore to send him just as soon as I see how it will go with me, ²⁴and I trust in the Lord that shortly I myself will come also.

Paul says Timothy is of proven worth. It is easy to be full of joy, praise and zealous for the Lord when life is prosperous, even those without faith enjoy life when it is free of troubles and hardships, but it is only in hardship and troubles that a Christians true worth or the genuineness of their faith is tested and proven not only to others but also to themselves. Through hardships not only do we find out if our faith will be valued as silver and gold or as wood hay and stubble, but so do those who know us.

NOTICE: Paul does not view himself as Timothy's superior or as his teacher, but as his spiritual father this is the kindred spirit we are called to have with each other, (i.e., not as one being superior to another because of their gifts or talents, but as brothers and sisters, fathers and sons or mothers and daughters). The global church of Christ is a family made up of people from all cultures, backgrounds, nations and various levels of education (especially in religious) and the uniting spirit that flows amongst this global entity should be one of a kindred spirit since in Christ all are related by the Gospel and spiritual birth into the one family.

Epaphroditus a Fellow Worker with Paul.

Philip. 2:25-30 ----- ²⁵I have thought it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus my brother and fellow worker (companion in KJV) and fellow soldier, and your messenger and minister to my need, ²⁶for he has been longing for you all and has been distressed because you heard that he was ill. ²⁷Indeed he was ill, near to death. But God had mercy on him, and not only on him but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow. ²⁸I am the more eager to send him (Epaphroditus) therefore, that you may rejoice at seeing him again, and that I may be less anxious. ²⁹So receive him Epaphroditus in the Lord with all joy, and honour such men, ³⁰for he nearly died for the work of Christ, risking his life to complete what was lacking in your service to me.

It is interesting to notice that Epaphroditus was ill most likely for quite some time since the Philippians had heard about it and his sickness was so severe that he almost died and Paul seemed helpless to heal him since there is no mention that Paul did any miracle, nor is it likely that he did since if Paul was able to heal him he would certainly not have allowed Epaphroditus to suffer for so long or waited until he was almost dead.

NOTICE: Paul sees those that work with him not only as his fellow companions and messengers, but also as soldiers this is because Paul and those with him constantly faced opposition. This clearly shows us two things: -

- 1 Paul never expected proclaiming the Gospel to be easy or free of hardships.
- 2 Just because our hearts might be fully devoted to the Lord and surrendered to serving him as Paul was it is not a guarantee that everything we do for the Lord will smoothly and calmly fall into place or that our lives will be blessed with prosperity, good health and ease, but it does mean that we are storing up eternal treasures in heaven.

Working for Christ is not limited to church buildings and teaching the Bible it embraces not only serving, helping and doing-good to those who belong to the family of Christ, but also to those who don't.

End