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

Philippians 1.

(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 1.

Topics.

- Love and knowledge.
- Paul's imprisonment has help to advance the Gospel.
- Some preach Christ from envy and rivalry, but others from good-will.
- For Paul to live, is Christ, and to die is gain.
- To be with Christ is far better, but to remain is more necessary.
- Persecution is a sign of destruction for one, but of salvation for another.
- Suffering for Christ's sake.

INTRODUCTION: Philippians overflows with joy and thanksgiving, Paul wrote this letter from prison in Rome (probably about A.D. 61) to the church in Philippi to thank them for their gift. He reported the joyful news that Epaphroditus, who had brought their gift to him, had recovered from his illness and was returning to Philippi. Paul told them that he had learned the secret of being content in any situation and about his situation in prison. He expressed joy that more people were hearing about Christ, even if some were proclaiming the Gospel with wrong motives and desiring the Christians in Philippi to be unified, he challenged them to be servants just as Jesus was when he made himself nothing (meaning humble rather than exalting himself above 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.

Paul's greeting to the leaders and all who belong to Christ at Philippi.

Philip. 1:1-6 ----- ¹Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are at Philippi, with the overseers and deacons: ²Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. ³I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, ⁴always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, ⁵because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now ⁶And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.

NOTE: Paul is writing this letter from a prison in Rome (Philip. 1:13-14).

Paul is writing to every brother and sister in Christ at Philippi, he is overjoyed with their work in the Gospel. It is interesting to notice that Paul sees himself not as their head but as their partner in the faith. Most of us who love the Lord most likely (consciously or unconsciously) view Paul as one of the great men of the New Testament and though we can be justified in thinking in this manner, Paul himself never viewed himself in this light.

His mindset was that of a servant to Christ and those he ministered to, or as their brother in Christ or as a partner in the Gospel with those serving the Lord, though he was enormously gifted with revelations and miraculous power he never mentally considered himself to be superior or higher in status than any other brother or sister in Christ.

A Partnership in the Gospel: Paul tells the Philippi brothers and sisters that, "He always prays with joy because of their partnership in the gospel" (v5). There is nothing more joyful to those who serve the Lord than to fellowship with other faithful brothers and sisters who humbly and faithfully find their greatest joy in serving their eternal master in whatever manner they are able.

NOTE: the Gospel does not refer to every doctrine of the Bible, no-one has to be a walking Bible encyclopaedia to be saved to eternal life the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ refers to that message that delivers a repentant sinner from the kingdom of darkness into the Kingdom of Light.

The Gospel of salvation: begins with the universal law of Sin and Death which states:

- The wages of sin is death (Rom. 6:23)

Meaning whoever sins is already judged and condemned to eternal death and since not one of us is without sin we all stand guilty before this universal Law. Whereas the 'Good News of the Gospel states for all who trust in Christ have been granted the free gift of God which is: -

- Eternal life in the Lord Jesus Christ (Rom 6:23), because, the law of the Spirit of life has set them free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death (Rom. 8:2).

Thus Gospel states that the universal law of Sin and Death has no power over those who believe in Christ and faithfully follow him they like Christ will be raised to eternal life and everlasting glory.

The focus of the Gospel is salvation from eternal death to eternal life by faith and grace it is about believing in the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, recognising that one falls short of God's Glory and absolute Holiness. It is about repentance, baptism and abiding in the faith. Throughout the entire history of mankind there has only been one man who has ever been able to attain to God's perfect standard. The Gospel is about recognising this reality, repenting before God and accepting His foreordained plan of salvation. The Gospel is about trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ for one's own righteousness, looking forward to his return and being raised to eternal glory.

The majestic Good News of the Gospel states that whoever comes to God through repentance and faith in His Son the Lord Jesus Christ is not only approved of and accepted by God the Father but all their sins are forgiven, not because they are deserving of it, by any self-effort or religious good works, but because through faith in Christ righteousness is imputed from God to them as a pure and free gift, but this is not the end of the Gospel since God's promise also states that the faithful in Christ will be resurrected to eternal glory and everlasting life. Can there be any better news than this? Thus the reason it is called the, Good News of the Gospel.

At the Day of Jesus Christ.

The words, "He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ" (v6) refers to that glorious day when the Lord returns in spectacular and awesome power and glory as, King of kings and Lord of lords (Rev. 19:11-16) to 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 glorious millennial reign.

In the first resurrection (Rev. 20:4-5) 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).

I hold you in my Heart.

Philip. 1:7-11 ----- ⁷It is right for me to feel this way about you all, because I hold you in my heart, for you are all partakers with me of grace, both in my imprisonment and in the defence and confirmation of the gospel. ⁸For God is my witness, how I yearn for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus. ⁹And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, ¹⁰so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, ¹¹filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

Paul has a great love and affection for the Philippian brothers and sisters, so much so they held a place of love in his heart. It is interesting to notice that Paul wonders if it is right for him to have such strong affection. Even though Paul cared as a father cares for his children for those he ministered to it is most likely that he never felt such deep emotional affection for everyone he served. The Philippian brothers and sisters financially aided Paul when he was ministering in Macedonia and Thessalonica and they not only shared his troubles but had genuine concern for him (Philip. 4:14-16).

It is only natural that when others are concerned for our well-being, support us as the Philippians did Paul (v7) and show their gratitude by offering to help in whatever manner they are able we like Paul are going to feel a greater affection toward them than those who are indifferent to our well-being. Even God is storing up eternal rewards in heaven for those who are faithful to His Son the Lord Jesus Christ.

Love and Knowledge.

NOTICE: when Paul prays "Love would abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment (v9) that the emphasis is on love, which shows that the purpose of knowledge and discernment is to increase love. Biblical knowledge without being clothed in love (grace, mercy, compassion, kindness and forgiveness) is left cold and harsh, legalistic and dogmatic. Paul in his letter to the Corinthians stated this same principle in the following powerful words: -

- If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, *I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal* and if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, *I am nothing*. Even if I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love, *I gain nothing* (1 Cor. 13:1-3).

Clearly showing that in God's hierarchy of the things most important to His heart love is at the top of the list.

Knowledge and discernment: (v9) the purpose of knowledge and discernment in this context is so that we might know what is the right and loving thing to do in any given situation and circumstance.

Be pure and blameless: (Philippians 1:10) does not mean be without sin if it was possible for anyone of us to achieve this glorious state while in this mortal and fallen body then Christ died for no purpose.

Rather the words, "Be pure and blameless" mean live a lifestyle that honours God and the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. It means, forsake those things that are against God's will and behaviour that could be harmful to another human physically, financially, sexually, emotionally, verbally, mentally or spiritually and instead of being led by self, ego, pride, lust and greed be filled with the fruits of the Spirit (i.e., love, compassion, kindness, forgiveness, patience, grace and mercy and such like things).

To be pure and blameless also embraces the idea that we trust solely in our faith in Christ and God's grace for our righteousness, contrasted to trusting in self-effort or any religious rite, custom or tradition we may follow and crowning our biblical knowledge in the royal robes of love contrasted to being harsh, dogmatic and legalistic. It is doing as much as is in our power to maintain the unity of the faith in contrast to causing divisions, arguments, contentions and strife. It means confessing our sin before the Lord, repenting when we have offended God or hurt another person especially a brother or sister in the Lord and putting things right where possible when a wrong has been done.

Be filled with the fruit of righteousness: (Philippians 1:11) means be filled with LOVE as recorded in Paul's letter to the Corinthians, (i.e., faithfulness, patience, goodness, kindness, self-control, wishing the best for others and being thrilled and excited for people when they are greatly blessed, it is being humble, courteous, giving, gentle, unassuming, modest and hating injustice) (i.e., people being treated unfairly) (1 Cor. 13:4-6) (Gal. 5:22-26). Acts of righteousness refer to anything we do that is clothed in the fruits of righteousness and can be summed up with the words, good conduct and good deeds.

The Day of Christ (v10) for information concerning the Day of Christ see: -

- The title, "At the Day of Jesus Christ" following (v1-6) (above).

Paul's Imprisonment has Help to Advance the Gospel.

Philip. 1:12-14 ----- ¹²I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel, ¹³so that it has become known throughout the whole imperial guard and to all the rest that my imprisonment is for Christ. ¹⁴And most of the brothers, having become confident in the Lord by my imprisonment, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.

Ponder for a moment: every brother and sister who watched Paul being taken captive by the Roman guards and thrown into prison would most likely have thought God had forsaken him. But since Paul's greatest joy was to proclaim the Gospel and see men and women without hope translated from the kingdom of darkness into the Kingdom of light. Paul simply continued his ministry to the prisoners, the soldiers and the guards and anyone else he came in contact with while in the prison system. He could not be stopped, as long as there were people around him the environment made no difference it simply meant the Gospel was going out to a different crowd of people and as long as the Good News of the Gospel was going out into the world Paul rejoiced.

NOTICE: what Paul encourages his brothers and sisters in Christ with, it is not riches, wealth or anything of this world, nor is it anything that would appeal to self, ego and pride, but rather that he is still able to proclaim the Gospel and that it is advancing throughout the Roman imperial guards. This is what thrilled the heart of those who knew Christ at the time of Paul since there was nothing more precious to them than the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ which delivers sinners from eternal death to eternal life and everlasting glory.

Consider: if our world's top scientist and medical practitioners could invent a pill that would give people eternal life, the billionaires of this world would write out a cheque no matter what the cost to buy them for all their family and friends, and almost all the world would sell everything they had to purchase one. This is the high value Paul placed on the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. To Paul and the faithful brothers and sisters who supported him there was nothing in this world more valuable for any man or woman to possess than the gift of eternal life.

How sad it is that in some modern churches today this high value of eternal life has been lost and replaced by a Gospel that focuses on a blessed, prosperous and successful life now in this mortal and corrupt world and messages that appeal to self, ego and pride. Especially when one considers what it cost God the Father and the high price his Son paid to purchase this gift of eternal life for all who would humbly accept by faith the Good News of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul's imprisonment has made many, Bold to Speak without Fear.

Paul's words, most of the brothers, have become more confident in the Lord by my imprisonment, are much more-bold to speak the word without fear (v14) means that Paul's attitude toward suffering and imprisonment gave others in Christ courage to speak the Gospel without fear.

Prior to Paul's imprisonment Christian brothers and sisters most likely considered being put in prison to be a shameful thing, as it identifies the one being imprisoned with criminals thus those in Christ believing imprisonment would bring shame to the name of Christ would have done all they could to avoid it. But Paul by accepting his imprisonment as suffering for Christ not only changed the thinking of those who were afraid, but encouraged them to be prepared to suffer for their faith, and the name of Jesus Christ even if it meant prison or death.

Some preach Christ from Envy and Rivalry, but others from Good-Will

Philip. 1:15-18 ----- ¹⁵Some indeed preach Christ from envy and rivalry, but others from good will. ¹⁶The latter do it out of love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel. ¹⁷The former proclaim Christ out of rivalry, not sincerely but thinking to afflict me in my imprisonment. ¹⁸What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretence or in truth, Christ is proclaimed, and in that I rejoice. Yes, and I will rejoice,

Preaching the Gospel from Envy.

Envy: carries the idea of jealousy greed and spite.

Rivalry: carries the idea of competitiveness and jealousy.

Pretence: carries the idea of imagination and fantasy.

Preaching the Gospel in pretence: some religious leaders (most likely the Jewish ones) upon seeing the crowds that were embracing the Gospel that Paul was proclaiming were full of envy and jealousy and therefore proclaimed the same message themselves, but in contrast to Paul in whom Christ dwelt these religious leaders were not only devoid of the Spirit of Christ, but their motivation was not from love, but rather to rob Paul of his followers and thereby expand their own religious empire.

Paul's statement, they proclaim the Gospel in pretence carries the following two ideas firstly they are hypocritical because they don't do what they preach to others and secondly since they are devoid of the Spirit; Christ is simply a fantasy in their imagination.

Preaching the Gospel from good will: in contrast to those who proclaim the Gospel for their own gain there are others who are motivated by love and good will these people are concerned for the lost and are not in the ministry for their own gain, but to serve the Lord, this group is led by a passion to rescue the lost and encourage and help brothers and sisters grow in the knowledge and love of Christ.

The Wonder, Splendour and Beauty of the Gospel of Christ.

The following words of Paul are stunningly fabulous and show the eternal and saving power of God's Spirit on his word: -

- Whether in pretence or in truth, Christ is proclaimed, I rejoice (v18).

Paul rejoices because the Gospel is not bound by the motive of the heart of those who proclaim it, but rather by the heart of those who hear it. If a preacher is proclaiming the Gospel message of the Lord Jesus Christ, but is in the ministry for his own pride and ego or for riches, importance and fame it will not prevent the Gospel from taking root in the heart of a person who is seeking God.

A practical example: (howbeit very limited) a very rich man living in a third world country is moved as he sees thousands of men, women and children starving so he spends what he has and buys tons of seed and they produce an abundance of food. This man rejoices at seeing the joy on the faces of those who are now able to eat. Another rich man sees the same crowd of starving people and thinks; "I can greatly multiply my wealth" so he like the first man also buys tons of seed and they also produce in abundance, but this man sells the food and rejoices at the great profit he is making.

In this story both men had the same food, both crowds were feed, even though the motive of both men was totally different. Those staving ate and were satisfied, but one man stored up for himself eternal rewards in heaven while the other stored up judgment. Obviously self-serving preachers who are in the ministry are a bad testimony to the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and will be judged accordingly when Christ returns.

It should always be remembered: it is not the person proclaiming the Gospel that saves to eternal life, but the Holy Spirit working through the word of God convicting the seeking heart and drawing that individual to Christ. A person with great oratory skills, clever speech and who has the ability to persuade and entice others (especially with mood altering music) may extract a confession of faith, but without the work of the Holy Spirit on the heart they will most likely fall away since a forced or false confession will have no power to change the desire, the motivation and inner being of that person's life.

For to me to live, is Christ, and to die is gain.

Philip. 1:19-20 ----- ¹⁹for I know that through your prayers and the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ this will turn out for my deliverance, ²⁰as it is my eager expectation and hope that I will not be at all ashamed, but that with full courage now as always Christ will be honoured in my body, whether by life or by death.

Paul's words, "This will turn out for my deliverance" (v19) refer to the following two things: -

1. The prayers of the Philippians.
2. To the fact that the Gospel had gone throughout the whole Roman imperial guard (v13).

Christ will be honoured in my body: one of Paul's greatest desires was that his life would honour Christ, thus the words, "With full courage, I will not be ashamed, but now as always Christ will be honoured in my body" (v20) means that Paul will not stop proclaiming the Gospel no matter what the consequences and in this way not only will Christ will be honoured, but when he does visit the Philippian brothers and sisters again he will feel no shame.

For Paul to Live is Christ, and to Die is Gain.

Philip. 1:21-26 ----- ²¹For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. ²²If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labour for me. Yet which I shall choose I cannot tell. ²³I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better. ²⁴But to remain in the flesh is more necessary on your account. ²⁵Convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with you all, for your progress and joy in the faith ²⁶so that in me you may have ample cause to glory in Christ Jesus, because of my coming to you again.

This is not only a stunning insight into Paul's faith, but also shows to what glorious heights the love of Christ can transcend the human heart and to how high it lifts the mind and passions of those who experience it above the things of this world. To Paul death was gain this is the heavenly place to where the breath-taking love of Christ had lifted him. Throughout my early Christian life I often saw brothers and sisters seeking the magic keys to being more spiritual (myself being one of them), but it is interesting to notice that when Paul talks about those in Christ being more spiritual he has the following two things in focus,

1. Walking in the Spirit contrasted to walking in the flesh, meaning living a lifestyle of love (i.e., showing compassion kindness, grace and mercy to others etc.), contrasted to living for self and to satisfy our ego, pride and greed.
2. It is in reference to increasing in the love of Christ that is so gloriously deep and fulfilling to the heart that it transcends the person who is filled with it far beyond the attachments of this world and the pleasures it offers. In fact this love that is found in Christ is so overwhelmingly majestic those who possess it are willing to lay down their lives for it. Paul was so overwhelmed by this love that he saw, death as actual gain.

To be with Christ is far better, but to remain is more necessary: Paul's words, "Yet which I shall choose I cannot tell" (v22) show that the both the love of Christ and the glorious eternal hope was so awe-inspiring to Paul that he was mentally and emotionally torn between whether he would chose to live or die (should he be given a choice). He knew his ministry was of great benefit to those he served, but his love to be eternally and literally with Christ was equally as deep thus he makes the statement (if he had the choice) he does not know whether he would chose to live and serve or die and be with the Lord. The love of Christ has taken root so deeply in Paul that while here on this earth all his joy comes from serving the Lord.

You may have ample cause to glory in Christ Jesus: Paul's words of faith, "So that in me you may have ample cause to glory in Christ Jesus, because of my coming to you again" (v26) reveal the following two things: -

1. The close relationship Paul had with the Philippian brothers and sisters since these words clearly show that he was fully aware that they would be overjoyed with excitement to see him again.
2. Paul was confident he would be released from prison.

The word glory in the expression, "Ample cause to glory in Christ Jesus" (v26), refers to overwhelming excitement and joy, it is spoken of as, "Being in the Lord," because it is in Christ that Paul and the Philippian brothers and sisters were united and bonded together in love.

Let your Manner of Life be Worthy of the Gospel of Christ.

Philip. 1:27-30 ----- ²⁷Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel, ²⁸and not frightened in anything by your opponents. This is a clear sign to them of their destruction, but of your salvation, and that from God. ²⁹For it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in him but also suffer for his sake ³⁰engaged in the same conflict that you saw I had and now hear that I still have.

All brothers and sisters of Christ are called to live a lifestyle that honours the Gospel, honours God and honours the name of Christ whether they are with other Christians or their secular friends they are to live, speak and behave in a manner that honours the Lord.

NOTICE: in these verses Paul does not picture each brother and sister standing alone, but like a Roman army in battle with each soldier standing alongside the next with their shields up protecting each other from the arrows of the enemy standing side by side supporting, strengthening, encouraging each other with one mind and one spirit all striving together to win the victory of the battle.

Persecution is a Sign of Destruction for One, but of Salvation for Another.

The words, "This is a clear sign to them of their destruction, but of your salvation" means that the Philippians lack of fear of those who persecute them is not only a clear sign that testifies to their salvation but also a sign that testifies to the destruction those who persecute them. This is because whoever persecutes anyone who belongs to Christ is openly manifesting his or her unbelief and hatred toward Christ. It is in this sense that those who oppose to the Gospel clearly manifest their own eternal destruction. In contrast to this those who stand without fear against them are clearly manifesting their belief of the Gospel and thereby their salvation to eternal life.

Suffering for Christ's Sake.

Paul knowing that his imprisonment has openly shown the Philippians that going to prison for Christ's name is not a shameful thing and also being fully aware that they are facing the same type of conflict and opposition to the Gospel as he did encourages them with the following words: -

- Suffer for Christ sake engaged in the same conflict that you saw I had and now hear that I still have (v31-32).

Paul is reassuring the Philippians that they should continue to proclaim the Gospel in love and without fear for Christ's sake even in the face of opposition and regardless of the consequences. In the context of this entire chapter suffering for Christ is not limited only to persecution or imprisonment, but also embraces denying those things that the flesh (self, ego and pride,) desires when their action or behaviour will result in offending or dishonouring God and the name of the Lord Jesus Christ or bring harm to another human.

NOTE: suffering for Christ in any form evidences two things in a brother or sisters life: -

1. The strength of their faith.
2. The depth of Christ's love dwelling in their heart since no-one is going to suffer for another unless they are deeply bonded in love with that person.

Simply put: Paul is saying to brothers and sisters in Christ, "Stand up for Christ and for the Gospel (in love) and let the chips fall where they will fall."
When we do this God is storing up eternal rewards
In the vaults of heaven.

End