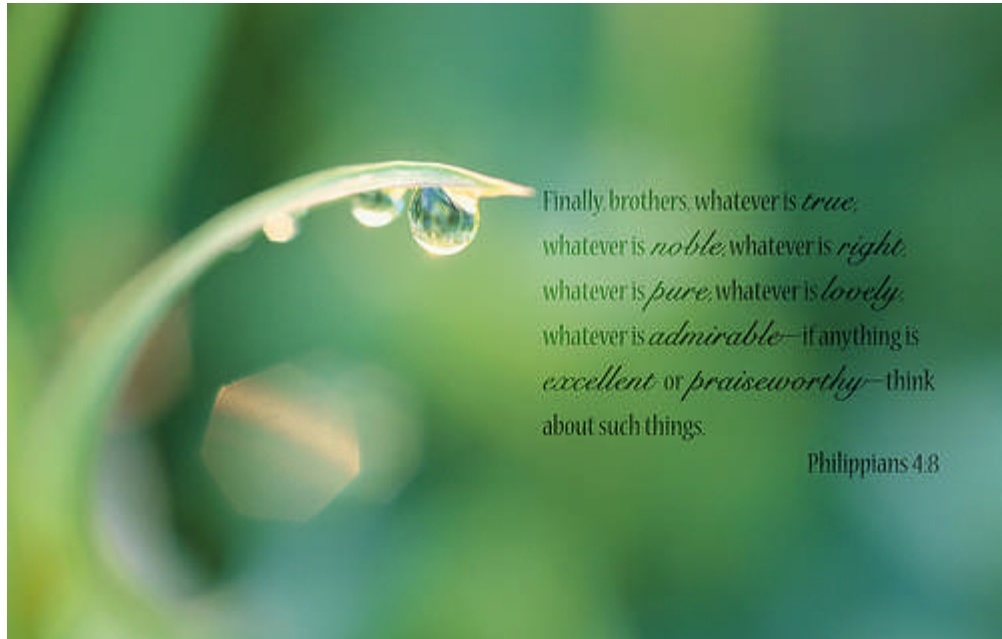


SIMPLE STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES
THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE PHILIPPIANS
STUDENT'S STUDY GUIDE
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The Epistle of Paul to the Philippians

Human Author: Paul

Divine Author: God the Holy Spirit

Date of Writing: AD 62

Key Word: Unity

Key Verse:

Philippians 1:27

“Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel.”

Historical Background

The city of Philippi was originally called Krenides, meaning *"The Little Fountains."* When Philip II, the father of Alexander the Great seized the throne of Macedonia in 359 BC he needed revenues. With the gold from the region in nearby Krenides, Philip was able to finance his army for future conquests. Time passed. The gold mines were depleted and the city Philippi, renamed after himself, was reduced to a small settlement. In 146 BC, Macedonia became one of the six provinces governed by Rome.

However, the city of Philippi was destined to become important once again because of a famous battle that occurred here in 42 BC. It was in that year that the historic battle of Philippi took place between Brutus and Cassius, who allied themselves against Antony and Octavian, avengers of the death of Julius Caesar.

After two engagements Antony and Octavian were victorious. Brutus and Cassius were dead. Soon after this battle Philippi was made a Roman colony. Antony settled some of his veterans there.

In 31 BC the naval battle of Actium took place. It was here that Octavian defeated his former ally, Antony, who had become infatuated with Cleopatra, the Egyptian queen who had also been the mistress of Julius Caesar. Realizing the hopelessness of their situation Antony and Cleopatra committed suicide.

Octavian was now the undisputed ruler of the Roman Empire. He changed his name to Caesar Augustus. A semi-gracious conqueror Octavian allowed the people of Italy, after he dispossessed the citizens of their estates, to join the settlers in Philippi, the Roman colony.

As a Roman colony, Philippi enjoyed all the special privileges of Roman citizens everywhere such as freedom from scourging, freedom from arrest except in extreme cases, and the right to appeal to the emperor. The people were allowed to dress according to Roman style. The veterans who settled in Philippi received from the emperor a grant of land. The citizens of the city were exempt from paying tribute and could regulate their own affairs.

By understanding these freedoms and privileges we can better understand how the church at Philippi was able to be established according to Acts 16 and why Paul would make mention of the progress of the gospel among the members of the Praetorian Guard in Philippians 1:13.

For the Christian in Philippi, life could be very hard (Phil. 1:27-30). Because it was a Roman colony, there was the presence of the imperial cult. The temptation would come to flatter the Emperor with divine titles and honors that belong only to Jesus Christ (Phil. 2:5-10). The Christian must resist without fear (Phil. 1:28) the worship of the Emperor.

The Church at Philippi

Acts 16 records the establishment of the church at Philippi. During his second missionary journey (AD 50-54), Paul accompanied by Silas and Timothy, traveled to the city of Troas. There Paul had a vision in the night (Phil. 16:9) of a man inviting him to come and preach the gospel in Macedonia. Being obedient to the heavenly vision, Paul and his party traveled to Neapolis, the port of Philippi. From Neapolis the missionary group proceeded on foot to Philippi where they would spend their first Sabbath in Europe. There is a river near the city of Philippi called the Gangites. Somewhere along the riverbank a place of prayer had been established. In the little group assembled was a woman named Lydia. Her hometown was Thyatira (now Akhisar, Turkey). Several facts can be noted about Lydia.

First, Lydia was a seller of purple. She was a businesswoman who specialized in the dye that was produced to enhance the beauty of the garments that were worn. Lydia was a woman of considerable wealth.

Second, Lydia worshipped God. The God Lydia worshipped was the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. As a proselyte to Judaism, Lydia was converted to God from her pagan practices.

Third, Lydia listened to the gospel. "*She heard us,*" wrote Luke. Lydia heard Paul preach the glorious gospel of redeeming grace. Lydia had her heart opened by the Lord. Here, once more is the ultimate truth that salvation is of the Lord. God must open a person's heart to let the gospel light shine in. Apart from Divine intervention the heart of the natural man will remain closed to the gospel. It may be refined, cultured, educated, and religious but the natural heart can only be renewed by God. Lydia was converted. Paul preached of faith, repentance, and personal responsibility.

Fourth, Lydia was obedient to the gospel duties. She was baptized without delay (Phil. 16:15) and she became a soul winner. Not only did she believe the gospel but she exposed her household to the message of salvation as well and they believed. In gratitude Lydia gladly ministered to them, to Paul and his party for it is the natural heart of a Christian to do good. Lydia did much good to others. She was gracious. What was hers was shared with the other people of God.

What Must I Do to Be Saved? Acts 16:31

Associated with the founding of the church in Philippi is the conversion of the Philippian jailer. The narrative of his dramatic conversion began the day Paul cast a demonic spirit (lit. a python Acts 16:16) out of a girl that was being used by men to make money because of her ability to make predictions. Paul did not want the gospel message being associated with Beelzebub.

When the girl turned around and began to follow the missionary group the apostle had enough, for the girl was proclaiming, *“These men are servants of the Most High God who proclaim to you the way of salvation.”*

It was true what the girl said but everyone knew she was demon possessed. The message was associated with the messenger and was being rejected!

In the name of Christ Paul cast out the demon that possessed the girl. That is when the real trouble began, for Paul and Silas were arrested and subjected to gross injustice. Despite being Roman citizens they were scourged, publicly disgraced, lied about, and imprisoned; all this without a trial!

In the providence of God, this injustice was going to work for His own glory for while in prison Paul and Silas ministered to all who came under the sound of their voice. They sang songs and gave praises to the Lord. Suddenly, the earth shook and the prison doors were thrown open. The chains which bound the prisoners were unfastened. The men could leave at will.

When the keeper of the prison saw what was happening he knew that his life would be forfeited if the prisoners escaped (Acts 12:19). Rather than suffer public pain he would take his own life. Drawing his sword he was about to perish when Paul called out to him to stop. "The prisoners are all here," said Paul. The jailer could not believe it was true. *“What must I do to be save?”* he cried.

This question must have reference to physical salvation from the predicament he was in. Paul, being sensitive to the situation used the opportunity to turn the mind of the man to eternal salvation, which he did (Acts 16:31).

The next day the officials of the city sent word to release Paul and Silas. The officials were shocked and distressed when they discovered they had committed a serious offense against fellow Roman citizens.

Had Paul and Silas wanted to press charges the officials and all that were involved in the beatings could have been in serious trouble. But Paul and Silas were gracious and they soon departed the city as requested, grateful that a church had been firmly established and many souls had found the Saviour (Acts 16:40).

PHILIPPIANS 1

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

2 Grace *be* unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and *from* the Lord Jesus Christ.

1:2 **Grace.** In examining the concept of the grace of God the subject becomes overwhelming. There is so much that testifies to the unmerited favor God displays. Certainly in the area of salvation the grace of God is manifested for while we Christians were yet sinners Christ died. While we were still hostile to the Christian message the gospel invitation went forth so that it can be said, *“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, not of works, lest an many should boast”* (Eph. 2:8-9). Because of grace believers have a secure position in Christ. *“There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit”* (Rom. 8:1). Because of grace we are under no obligations to try to gain merit with God by performing legal duties. Love not Law compels obedience. *“For if they which are of the Law be heirs of salvation, faith is made void, and the promise of none effect”* (Rom. 4:14). The angels do not know grace as far as the Scriptural references indicate, which may be one reason why they are so fascinated with the salvation of men. The elect angels have been confirmed in holiness. The non-elect angels have been confirmed in evil. Only man, fallen like the non-elect angels, has been restored to righteousness, like the elect angels and all because of the free spiritual gifts of God. Titus 3:7 says, *“That being justified by His grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.”* While grace is free, it is precious and should not be cheapened. The grace of God can be diminished, it can be abused. One way that grace is abused is by making light of sin. *“What shall we say then? Shall we continue to sin that grace may abound?”* The logical answer is *“No.”* Grace is not a license to sin but freedom to operate according to the Law of Life of the Spirit in Christ Jesus. Paul never ceased to marvel that he was the object of redeeming grace.

1:2 **Peace.** As a Christian enjoys the grace of God there is also the peace of God. The word peace is a great word used often in the *Bible*. It is used in twenty-five of the twenty-seven books of the *New Testament*. While used in a variety of ways the word peace suggests most of all a harmonious relationship. Because of sin in the Garden of Eden the peace man once had with God has been broken. Because of sin the peace man had with his neighbor has been broken. Because of sin, any peace and harmony man had with himself has been broken. Life is one constant struggle. How can man have peace with God? How can man have peace with his neighbor? How can man have personal peace with himself? The spiritual battle is real. The reason for all the various religions in the world is because man desperately wants to have peace with God but he does not know how. The reason for the UN is because man wants, on one level, for the killing to stop but he does not know how. The reason for so many psychologists and self-help programs is because individuals long for personal peace. It is easy to grow weary of the stress of existing from day to day. The great irony is that in grace God has told man how to have peace or harmony once more but mankind is not listening.

In the *Old Testament* there was a peace offering that could be made (Lev. 4). The peace offering followed the burnt offering for sin and the trespass covering for sanctification. The purpose of the peace offering was to communicate that fellowship with God is still possible. But man must meet God on God's terms.

In the *New Testament* era God's terms of peace are manifested in the Cross (Eph. 2:14; Col. 3:15). Those who want peace with God must go to Calvary. The terms of surrender are clear and comprehensive. Man must repent of his rebellion. Man must confess his need of a Saviour. Man must believe that Jesus Christ is Lord. Man must submit to the Lordship of Christ.

Apart from acceptance of these gospel terms man will remain an enemy of the Cross and the spiritual warfare will continue.

As the *Bible* speaks about peace with God, the Scriptures also speak of the peace from God.

- *1 Timothy 1:2 Unto Timothy, my own son in the faith: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord.*
- *Titus 1:4 To Titus, mine own son after the common faith: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour.*

It is this peace from God that promotes harmony among the saints. Paul prayed for this peace on behalf of the churches he ministered to (Phil. 1:3; 2 Thess. 1:2) as did Peter (1 Pet. 1:2) and John (2 John 1:3).

This peace from God that promotes harmony is a gift of grace and is grounded in gospel obedience to the *Word of Truth* believed. Let the principles of church conduct prevail and there will be peace among men. Let the ethical teachings of Christ be implemented and there will be harmony among the saints.

The *Bible* speaks not only of peace with God which is reconciliation, and peace from God which is the basis for the communion of the saints, but also about the peace of God which passeth all understanding (Phil. 4:7).

This peace is personal. It is the inner peace that is so desperately sought for. It is possible to be reconciled with God on the basis of justification. It is possible to be part of a fellowship that enjoys peace from God and still have no inner peace.

There are many reasons for not having personal peace.

- Unconfessed sin (1 John 1:9).
- A besetting sin or a secret addiction.
- A love for sin.
- A resistance to an obedient thought prompted by the Holy Spirit.

Sin robs individuals of peace in their hearts. To have peace, the source of sin must be dealt with. The good news is that in Christ sin can be conquered for Christ has come to set the captives free. In Christ man once more has a will free to sin or free to choose righteousness in the search for happiness.

3 I thank my God upon every remembrance of you,

1:3 In these words we find that prayer is personal. "*I thank my God,*" says Paul. When the disciples come to Jesus they said, "*Lord, teach us to pray*". And Jesus said, "*When you pray say...*" all of which reinforces the concept that individuals must pray. Pastors cannot alone pray. Parents cannot alone pray. Like the sound of rushing waters, God delights to hear the rushing waves of many praying people to form a river before the throne of glass.

As prayer is personal so it is to be characterized by thanksgiving and the object of thanksgiving is to be God.

"Praise God, from
Whom all blessings flow;
Praise Him, all creatures here below;
Praise Him above, ye heavenly host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost."

Paul knew that every expression of goodness from the Philippians had its ultimate source in the goodness and mercy of God.

4 Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy,

1:3-4. **In every prayer.** A church is no stronger and no healthier than the people who pray. E. M. Bounds has said, "*He who can set the Church to praying will be the greatest of reformers and apostles.*" From time to time the breath of revival has blown across the land and when revival comes people begin to pray. People begin to pray to beg God for forgiveness of sin, to praise God for his goodness and blessing, to plead for the salvation of souls to plead for justice to prevail in the courts of Law and to plead for the young people to be protected from the tragic consequences of immorality. While revival tarries, there must be prayer. While waiting continues for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, we need to pray.

5 For your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now;

6 Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform *it* until the day of Jesus Christ:

1:6 In addition to the work of God the Father and the work of God the Son, there is the work of God the Holy Spirit to make certain that the good work of salvation which has begun will be completed until the Day of Christ. The work of the Holy Spirit includes the following.

The Holy Spirit regenerates the lost sinner.

- *John 3:3-7 Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. 4 Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? 5 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. 6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7 Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.*
- *Titus 3:5 Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;*
- *James 1:18 Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first fruits of his creatures. 1 Peter 1:23 Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.*

The Holy Spirit baptizes the believer into the body of Christ.

- *Romans 6:3-4 Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? 4 Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.*
- *1 Corinthians 12:13 For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.*

Galatians 3:27 For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

Ephesians 4:4-5 There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; 5 One Lord, one faith, one baptism, Colossians 2:12 Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.

The Holy Spirit indwells the believer.

- *John 7:37-39 In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. 38 He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. 39 (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)*
- *John 14:16 And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;*

- *Romans 8:9 But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.*
- *1 Corinthians 2:12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.*
- *1 Corinthians 3:16 Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?*
- *1 Corinthians 6:19 What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?*
- *1 John 3:24 And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.*

The Holy Spirit seals the believer.

- *2 Corinthians 1:22 Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.*
- *2 Corinthians 5:5 Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit.*
- *Ephesians 1:13-14 13 In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, 14 Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.*
- *Ephesians 4:30 And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.*

7 Even as it is meet [proper] for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart; inasmuch as both in my bonds, and in the defence and confirmation of the gospel, ye all are partakers [partners] of my grace.

8 For God is my record, how greatly I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ.

1:3-8 By praising God Paul was also honoring the believers at Philippi. They were his brothers and sisters in the Lord. They were the objects of redeeming grace. Every time Paul remembered them he gave thanks to God. Why? Verse 5 explains. The people at Philippi had united with Paul in the sphere of the gospel from the first day until now. There was a strong bond of faithfulness between Paul and the Philippians. This is rare in human relationships for the tendency is to break fellowship under pressure. When there is plenty of money, when there is good health, when there is harmony of will, all is well.

But the test of friendship, the test of faithfulness comes under pressure. When Paul was arrested by the Roman officials a lot of people turned away from him, but not the people at Philippi. They sent Paul financial support (4:10, 18). They also sent Epaphroditus on a journey of some 800 difficult miles to see how to help the apostle.

Is it any wonder when Paul thought of the Philippians, love for them swelled in his heart and gratitude to God graced his lips? As prayer is to be personal, as prayer is to be full of thanksgiving, so prayer is to be frequent. The sense of these verses is that Paul prayed frequently. From the pages of human history come examples of godly people who found pleasure in prayer. They prayed for long periods of time and they prayed frequently. In reading about the great saints such as Robert M. McCheyne, David Brainerd and Martin Luther, it is observed their prayer life was filled with a longing to be more holy before God. The great challenge for God's people is to pray personally and to pray with thanksgiving, and to pray often. The fourth principle of prayer is that it should be specific reflected in verse 9 and following.

9 And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more *in* knowledge and in all judgment;

10 That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ;

11 Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.

1:9-11 Paul asks God to grant the believers at Philippi the following.

- A love that is constant.
- The ability to approve all things that are excellent.
- A life characterized by sincerity and consistency and without offense until the day of Christ.
- The filling of the Holy Spirit in order to produce the fruits of righteousness.

Paul begins by asking that love may abound. The love of which Paul speaks is agape love, which means it is an intelligent and purposeful love. This love manifests itself in an attitude of humility, tenderness, and a forgiving spirit. This love is demonstrated in words of encouragement, truthfulness, and mildness and in deeds of self-denial, loyalty, and kindness. The object of agape love is God Himself and other people, believers and unbelievers. Such love is not natural to the human heart. It must be placed there by a Divine act of regeneration. It must be nurtured so it grows and grows. It is possible to stop loving the brethren. It is possible to stop loving God.

Because true godly love is not alone Paul asks it may be accompanied by knowledge and judgment. There is a type of knowledge, which is purely academic and makes a person proud (1 Cor. 8:1). There is a type of knowledge that may be possessed apart from love that will leave its possessor void of spiritual graces (1 Cor. 13:2). But there is also a type of spiritual knowledge that is profitable. What a joy it is to know the doctrine of the Trinity, the doctrine of salvation by grace through faith alone and the doctrine of eternal life. Spiritual knowledge is water to a thirsty soul, bread to a hungry heart, and ointment for a wounded spirit.

Spiritual knowledge allows spiritual judgments to be made. Christians would save themselves a lot of grief if they had more of a godly discerning spirit. Good intentions sometimes overshadow wise discernment. By abounding in love accompanied by spiritual knowledge and spiritual discernment, the Christian church will be able to approve the things that are excellent. As Moses had the Tabernacle constructed, as Noah built the Ark, so Solomon built the Temple, as Barnabas supported John Mark, so too must the church approve things that are excellent. Only then will God's people be sincere [pure] and without offense [blameless] in the day of the Lord.

12 But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things *which happened* unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel;

1:12 Having introduced himself as the servant of Jesus Christ, having invoked the blessings of God, having prayed for the church, the apostle Paul now seeks to assure the believers at Philippi that the gospel is going forth despite his imprisonment. Apparently, Epaphroditus had told Paul that the church of Philippi was concerned that his bondage in a Roman prison cell would bring a cessation of his missionary work. With great confidence Paul writes to reassure the saints that the spread of the gospel was not halted with his arrest. In fact, just the opposite happened. The gospel advanced. Paul uses the word "*furtherance*" in verse 12, which is an interesting word. It means, "*to act before.*" The word was used of an army of woodcutters, which precedes the regular army, cutting a road through a dense forest so that the army could advance into a region unapproachable.

To Paul, his imprisonment cut out an opportunity to reach into the heart of the Roman government through the military. In Caesar's court and in many other places the apostolic man and his message became known and more importantly was understood. It would not be hard to understand how this could happen. Paul was a Roman citizen. What was a citizen of Rome doing in prison? The jailers would want to know. Not one to be shy about his faith, Paul would preach Christ to anyone who asked. What a marvelous story he had to tell.

He who once persecuted Christians had met the Living Christ. He was changed forever. As the Praetorian Guard, composed of the soldiers of the imperial regiments listened, the Holy Spirit brought conversion. Souls were saved. Enlisted men and officers alike learned about redeeming grace. And the gospel spread. A quiet revolution was taking place in Rome. The revolution came not from the outside but from the inside. The revolt took place in the hearts of the most unlikely people, the soldiers of Rome.

13 So that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace [Caesar's court], and in all other *places*;

14 And many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.

1:13-14 In addition to the powerful manifestation of the gospel throughout the Praetorian Guard, Paul speaks of the increase of preaching Christ outside the prison walls, in the city of Rome. He reports that many of the brethren in the Lord grew confident by Paul's imprisonment.

Here is an amazing thing. The imprisonment of Paul was designed to silence him and to intimidate others. At first, it seemed to work. The thought of going to jail for any reason is frightening. The desire to be free and to hold on to our possessions and lifestyle is powerful. But once the decision is made in the mentality of the soul to loose everything if necessary for the cause of Christ then there is holy boldness to be found. Jim Eliot found this freedom and wrote, "*A man is no fool to give up what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose.*"

A.W. Tozer tells of wrestling with God over his son. Tozer loved his child and thought that God was going to take his life. Like David he pleaded with God. Like Abraham, Tozer discovered that God was just testing him to see if he was willing to give up his Isaac. We find freedom when we become like Job and say, "*Though he slay me, yet will I trust him.*"

In Rome, many, not all, but many of the brethren in the Lord were inspired by the courage of Paul. "*If he can go to jail,*" they thought, "*we will risk the same consequences.*" And they did. And fear fled. As Paul analyzed the motive behind the preaching of the gospel by those in Rome, he discerned that there were at least two groups of people preaching with very different reasons.

15 Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some also of good will:

16 The one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds:

17 But the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defense of the gospel.

1:15-17 "*Some,*" said the apostle, "*preach Christ of envy and strife.*" These people are contentious and hypocritical. They wanted to hurt Paul more and he knew it. Who were these people who dared to hurt Paul by preaching the gospel? The answer is the Judaizers. Judaizers were professing Jewish Christians who believed and taught that the Gentiles had to enter Christianity through the gate of Judaism. The Judaizers preached Christ as the promised Messiah. They accepted His death as the atonement for sin. They believed in the resurrection of Christ from the dead and insisted upon salvation by faith. But the Judaizers insisted upon observing the Law of Moses with its demands for circumcision, ceremonies, and sacrifices. They saw in Paul a great obstacle to proclaiming their message, for Paul taught that the pure gospel abolished the ceremonial demands of the Law because they were fulfilled in Christ. Why should the shadow, the sacrifices, be allowed to continue since the substance, Christ has come.

The Judaizers were jealous of the number of converts Paul was having and in their jealousy they worked harder to bring people to Christ under their understanding of the gospel. The second group that preached Christ in Rome were Gentile converts, the friends of Paul who understood redeeming grace. They had no desire to become like the Jews to follow Christ, nor should they.

18 What then? Notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretence, or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice.

19 For I know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer, and the supply [wealth] of the Spirit of Jesus Christ,

1:19 Paul's overall attitude towards the preaching of the gospel by both groups was one of pleasure and we have to ask why. Why did Paul have such a gracious attitude even toward those who even disagree with his presentation of the gospel and who wished to hurt him? Perhaps several factors are involved.

First, Paul understood the necessity of growing in grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour. Just as children and young people have much different points of view than those more mature, so Christians need to grow in knowledge of the Lord.

Second, Paul understood human nature. Human nature will not allow total agreement by all people.

Third, Paul realized that there is room in the family of God for much error as long as the heart is right. Paul's heart was right even when the heart of the Judaizers was wrong. Therefore, Paul would rejoice. He could and he would be happy. Here then are two ways to present the gospel. The gospel can be presented in love or with envy, in pretense or in truth, with sincerity or with hypocrisy, with good will or with ill will. But the gospel must be presented.

20 According to my earnest expectation and *my* hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but *that* with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether *it be* by life, or by death.

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

1:20-21 Because the gospel was preached, whether in pretence or in truth, Paul was happy. Moreover, he was confident that he would be delivered from his prison cell. The basis of Paul's expectation was both human [*your prayer*] and Divine [*the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ*]. The Holy Spirit changes hearts and when hearts are changed behavior is changed. No matter what happens Paul had prepared himself for the worst so that he would never be put to shame. Unlike Judas who betrayed Christ, unlike Peter who denied Christ, unlike the Twelve who fled with fear into the night, Paul was determined to demonstrate unflinching courage so that the Lord Jesus should be magnified whether by life or by death. These two great themes are brought together in 1:21 where Paul says, "*For me to live is Christ, but to die is gain.*" When Paul declared that by living he would be magnifying Christ he meant what Will L. Thompson meant when he wrote the familiar lines,

“Jesus is all the world to me,
My life, my joy, my all;
He is my strength from day to day,
Without Him I would fall.”

Like Mary we can spend time with Christ. Like Barnabas we can minister to those who have failed. Like Peter we can prefer others better than ourselves. Like Paul we can consciously consider the Lord and seek to be part of His fellowship so that we say,

“When I am sad to Him I go,
No other One can cheer me so;
When I am sad He makes me glad,
He's my Friend.”

To have Jesus as a Friend is not a mystical experience divorced from reality. It is because Jesus is alive and acts as our Prophet, Priest, and King that we believe Him to be also our Friend.

Jesus is a Faithful Friend. He has promised never to leave us alone.

Jesus is an Intimate Friend who is closer than a brother.

Jesus is a Loving Friend who will teach and give of His possessions.

Paul knew His Friend so well that there was a bonding to the point he could say, *"For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."*

22 But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labour: yet what I shall choose I wot [know] not.

23 For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better:

1:21-23 **To die is gain.** Paul believed there was something *"far better"* than this present life. He believed that to die was to gain.

First, to die is to gain a new perception of Christ. As wonderful as Jesus is, as marvelous as the human tongue can set forth the excellencies of saving grace, it all pales in comparison to being with Christ in the sphere of eternity. The best we can do in time is to sing a song of hope.

“Face to face with
Christ my Saviour,
Face to face, what will it be.
Oh! When rapture I behold Him,
Jesus Christ who died for me.”

Second, to die is to gain a new perspective of truth. In life, it is so hard to arrive at the truth. To discover truth in human relationships is difficult. To discover truth in almost any field of investigation is a challenge whether it be science [creationism or evolution], history [who killed JFK?], or religion [Christianity, Islam, Buddhism]. Paul said that we see in a glass darkly but in heaven all of that shall be changed and we shall see clearly.

Third, to die is to gain peace of mind. In life there is much that disturbs the mind. In death, there is peace. As Paul considered all the advantages of departing to be with Christ there was a longing in his heart, being the final journey home. Nevertheless, there were other thoughts which pressed onto Paul's conscious and that was his obligations to the people at Philippi.

24 Nevertheless to abide in the flesh *is* more needful for you.

2:24 Like a good shepherd, Paul wanted to make sure all his sheep were safely in the fold. Like a careful architect, the apostle wanted to finish the spiritual house he was building. "*To abide in the flesh is more needful for you,*" he wrote.

These words do not reflect arrogance as if Paul were indispensable. No man is indispensable as Moses himself discovered (Ex. 4:24). On another level there are certain projects which only the right person in the right place at the right time can accomplish. Consider how the history of America would have been far different without a George Washington or an Abraham Lincoln. There are indeed key people who need to be present at critical moments in history.

No one else will quite do. As Paul thought on all these things, the Holy Spirit gave him permission to believe that he would not die and that he would abide on earth a little while longer so the people of Philippi could make spiritual progress and discover the joy of faith. Spiritual progress would include more moments of prayer, more knowledge of the word of God and the God of the Word, more times of study, more fellowship with the saints, and more decisions for holiness.

25 And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide and continue with you all for your furtherance and joy of faith;

1:25 **Joy of faith.** Paul also longed for the saints to know the joy of faith. The joy of faith is obtained when all known sins are confessed, when Christ is thought of often, when there is a passion for holiness, when worship is meaningful, and the Holy Spirit is not grieved.

26 That your rejoicing may be more abundant in Jesus Christ for me by my coming to you again.

1:26 Paul knew that progress and joy of faith found in the Philippians would lead to a time of rejoicing when he visited with them again which indicates a wonderful love affair between the pastor and his people. He had the best interest of the people in his heart and the people knew this and loved him for it.

27 Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast [firm] in one spirit, with one mind striving [working] together for the faith of the gospel;

1: 27 As an apostle with a shepherd's heart, Paul exhorts the believers at Philippi in a series of imperatives. The believers are to live in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. The believers are to stand firm in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel. There is to be no repeat of what took place in the days of the judges where every person did that which was right in his own eyes (Judges 21:25).

28 And in nothing terrified [dismayed] by your adversaries: which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God.

1:28 As there are things which a Christian is to do, so there are things which a Christian is not to do. In particular, a Christian is not to be terrified by adversaries. The adversaries of the Christian are threefold in the World, the Flesh and the Devil. Since the Christian is surrounded by so many powerful enemies it is easy to become fearful. "*In nothing be terrified,*" says Paul. How are fears conquered?

- Fear is conquered by remembering the power of God. The power of the One who is able to create the world and rule over the nations is available for the Christian.
- Fear is conquered by remembering the wealth of the Lord. The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof. While we may lack resources, God does not. If we ask, He will answer.
- Fear is removed by remembering what God has already done on behalf of His own. God wants us to fear nothing but Himself. God delights to honor those who honor Him.

29 For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake;

30 Having the same conflict which ye saw in me, and now hear *to be* in me.

The Epistle of Paul to the Philippians

Philippians 1

Review

1. Why do some professing believers not have peace in their hearts?

Answer. Several factors keep some believers from having peace in their hearts.

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2. Lists the four gifts of divine grace Paul requests on behalf of the Philippians.

Answer.

Paul asked for the following.

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3. Why did Paul have such a gracious attitude even towards those who even disagree with his presentation of the gospel and who wished to hurt him? Perhaps several factors are involved.

Answer.

4. How are fears conquered?

Answer.

5. What can be gained by dying?

Answer.

Personal Application and Reflection

1. After examining the signs of salvation, how many of the signs apply to you? Be specific with the number. Which ones?
2. When Christians think of you do they remember you with joy? Have you brought sadness and sorrow to others or gladness and joy?
3. How would others characterize your manner of Christian life?
4. Do you believe that to die is gain? Are you afraid of death and dying?
5. What do you fear in life? Why?

Hiding God's Word in My Heart

Philippians 1:21 For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

PHILIPPIANS 2

1 If [because] *there* be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies,

2 Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.

2:1-2 Only by understanding the causes and cures of disharmony can there be hope for unity. If the cause of disruption of church fellowship is every person with his or her own self-interest and self will, something else must be done to solve the problem. Paul presents five motivational factors to bring it to pass.

- Consolation in Christ.
- Comfort of love.
- Fellowship of the Spirit.
- Tender compassion.
- A personal appeal.

First, consolation in Christ. Two facts should be noted about this phrase. First, the word "*if*" which precedes this phrase is better rendered "*because*." Because of consolation, because of love, because of the fellowship of the Spirit, because of tender compassion, believers should be of one accord. There is not a shadow of doubt in Paul's mind. He assumes a condition of reality. Second, the word consolation should be translated "*exhortations*". The meaning of the clause is this. Because every believer shares in the life of Christ, there is a holy obligation to listen and to obey the words of exhortation of the apostles of Christ to work together in harmony. "*For all who are 'in Christ' are subject to the rule of Christ, and must therefore so listen to the word of Christ that they may never behave in a way which is contrary to the mind of Christ*" (Geoffrey B. Wilson). When ministers of the gospel preach faithfully what Christ taught there is a holy responsibility placed upon the congregation to listen seriously to what is said and to obey. Not to obey is to undermine authority.

A 1992 national poll revealed that 56 % of Catholics in America do not believe what their church teaches regarding birth control, homosexuality, divorce, or women in the priesthood. The statistics of the Protestant church would probably be the same or higher which is one reason why there is so much fragmentation within the Christian religion.

The point Paul makes is well taken. Because of a shared life in Christ, the exhortations that the ministers of Christ communicate should be taken seriously. A superficial attitude toward the exhortations of pastoral preaching is not an innocent act. It is imperative that preaching be taken seriously and that is a decision of the will. The conclusion of the first point is clear. To have harmony in the church, take the exhortations of Christ seriously.

The second motivational appeal is based upon the comfort that Christians find in Christ's love. Several years ago Bill and Gloria Gather wrote a song. Some of the words include the thought,

*“I am loved,
I am loved,
I can risk loving you.
The One who knows me most,
Loves me best.”*

Paul would sing along in agreement with that song. The apostle understood that as Christians meditate upon the love of Christ, there is a natural desire to want to be loving towards others. By experiencing His love, there is constraining power "to silence all disputing and to promote the true spirit of concord between believers" (Geoffrey B. Wilson).

The third motivational principle which will foster harmony in the local assembly is for believers to recognize the fellowship of the Spirit. These words teach several things. The Holy Spirit has made believers part of the body of Christ. There is a fundamental unity that makes up the body. The purpose of having diversity within the body is for more functions to take place (Eph. 4:11-12). It is inconsistent to indulge in a spirit of self-assertion that generates division within the church.

Fourth, the apostle appeals directly to the feelings and affects which the Holy Spirit produces. Because the Christian has new bowels, a reference to the seat of emotions, and a new heart, there should be tenderness toward one another.

The final motivational principle Paul uses to exhort the believers at Philippi to be united is very personal as he asks them to, "make full my joy." It is interesting that Paul should use such a personal approach. The reason why it would be effective is because the people at Philippi knew that he had their best interest at heart.

3 Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory [pride]; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.

2:3 Strife. Having set forth the five motivational principles for establishing church unity, the apostle Paul sets forth some very practical steps for the saints to take.

First, nothing is to be done through strife (Phil. 2:3). The word "*strife*" has the idea of contentious. Apparently there were factions in the church at Philippi. The potential for factions occurs in every church due to the diversity of gifts and interest. As long as everyone has the best interest of others in mind it will all work out.

2:3 **Vainglory.** Second, nothing is to be done through an inner spirit of vainglory or pride. The word for vainglory is a word made of two words. One word means "empty," or "vain," used in the sense of, "to no purpose, futile," and the other word meaning "opinion." The total meaning is empty pride. In context, some at Philippi believed they were "perfect."

There is a great danger when someone or a group of people within the local church begin to claim to have already attained some form of spiritual perfection or to have received unusual spiritual knowledge that becomes the basis for ministry. Sometimes this "vainglory" comes when people feel God has visited them in a dream, with unknown tongues, through the pursuit of deep theological thoughts. This vainglory takes many forms. A Christian author wrote, "*It is a strange phenomenon in religious history that intense earnestness so frequently breeds a spirit mingled of censoriousness and conceit.*"

2:3 **lowliness of mind.** There is no kind way to deal with spiritual arrogance. A radical cure which reaches to the very root of the disease is needed. Paul provides the remedy. Believers must cultivate the lowliness of mind that counts in humility others better than themselves (Phil. 2:3).

With these words the apostle Paul challenges the religious or Greek moralists of his day. They despised the concept of humility because they regarded it as a form of servile subjection. They did not think the humble person was truly free.

Jesus dispelled the concept of human autonomy by living in submission to the will of the Father (Phil. 2:5-8) by subjecting Himself to the will of God, which included hunger and thirst, ridicule and rejection, beatings and crucifixion. Jesus became the servant of all. His life provides the pattern for authentic service (Mark 10:45; Luke 22:37). The divine command comes, "*Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.*"

4 Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.

5 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:

2:4-5 It will not be hard to esteem others better than oneself if the doctrine of total depravity is believed. To see ourselves in the light of the gospel record is to cry out, "*O wretched man that I am.*" Redeeming grace exposes the sinfulness of sin. The gospel presents the carnal mind as the cesspool of sin. David wrote, "*Behold, I was shapen in iniquity and in sin did my mother conceive me.*" The best of men are but men at best and so are subject to public and private acts of unspeakable sins against God in words, thoughts, and deeds. As we are gentle with ourselves, let us esteem others better.

There is a practical consideration concerning this matter that will stop an unreasonable interpretation of this passage. Dr. William Hendricks proposes the question. "*How can a man who knows that he is industrious regard the longing fellow-member as being better than himself?*"

Within the fellowship of any church the few always seem to do the work of the many. Some labor to the point of exhaustion in spiritual labors while others are not to be seen or heard from till all is done. Jesus knew that this would happen and commanded His small group of disciples to pray, the Lord of the harvest, that He will send forth laborers into His harvest.

While prayer is being offered the believer must be careful to scrutinize his own motives (1 Cor. 11:29, 31) and be careful not to ascribe to others evil motives. The apostle Paul is an example in this matter. In the work of the ministry he labored to the point of exhaustion. Yet, Paul calls himself, the least of the apostles (1 Cor. 15:9), the very least of all saints (Eph. 3:8) and the chief of sinners (1 Tim. 1:15).

Paul was not feigning humility. He had learned to view himself as a great sinner before God and therefore the object of great grace. When Paul labored, he took his eyes off of others and put them upon Christ. A third practical step to be taken in the quest for church unity is to become a helper (Phil. 2:4).

Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Here then are three practical steps for church unity. God's people are to do nothing through a spirit of strife but are to work for the common good. God's people are to do nothing through an inner spirit of empty pride but rather esteem others better than self. God's people are to be a servant to all and seek a way to help others.

Is Jesus God?

In his *book Evidence That Demands A Verdict*, Josh McDowell argues that Jesus Christ was either a liar, a lunatic or Lord. There is no doubt that Jesus made direct claims to being divine.

- ❖ **The claims of deity were made at His trial as per Mark 14:61-64 and Matthew 26:64**
- ❖ The claims of deity were made by Christ during His ministry: John 10:30-33; John 5:17-18; John 8:58; (cf. Ex. 3:14; Deut. 32:29); John 5:23-24; John 8:19; John 14:1; John 14:9
- ❖ Because Jesus believed He was Divine He accepted worship reflected in Matthew 8:2; John 9:35-49; John 20:27-29.
- ❖ Others said Jesus was God including:

Paul	Phil. 2:9-11
John the Baptist	Luke 3:22
Peter	Matt. 16:15-17
Stephen	Acts 7:59

These verses shed light on Philippians 2:6 which is difficult for some to understand because of the word "*form*."

6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:

7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:

2: 6-7 Why did Paul use the word "*form*"? Is Jesus not really very God of very God? The answer is that Jesus is God and what Paul refers to here is that before Jesus became man He had the form of God. He was God in His essence: eternity, holiness, and omnipresent, omnipotent, omniscience. Philippians 1:8 declares that the Lord took on the form of man so there is a basis for comparison and contrast.

Prior to his incarnation Jesus had the form of God. During the days of His ministry Jesus took on the form of a man. As He was truly God, so He was truly man. As God, Jesus made Himself of no reputation (1:7). He veiled His glory and took upon Himself the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of men. As man, Jesus did not consider it robbery to be equal with God.

A more accurate translation brings out the meaning of the passage: "*Who, being in the form of God, completely manifesting His divine nature, did not consider the display of His attributes demonstrating that He is equal with God, something to be held on to as a prize.*"

The veiling of glory can perhaps be illustrated by what happened one night in 1973. President Richard Nixon felt he was being held as a political prisoner in the Whitehouse because of public opinion against him. Despite his landslide victory in 1972, the Watergate affair had turned the country against the President. He did not know what to do. He began to drink more and more. He lost sleep. He roamed the rooms of the Whitehouse mansion.

One night, without telling anyone, President Nixon left the Whitehouse to go for a walk down Pennsylvania Avenue. He left all of the trappings of the presidency such as the secret service and the limousine and he began walking. The President walked to a shop, sat down at the counter and ordered a cup of coffee. Then he left the shop and walked over to the Lincoln memorial where he engaged some students in a conversation.

During this midnight journey the President never stopped being president even though he had none of the glory of his office nor exercised the regal power of that office. It was an amazing moment in some ways. Here was the most powerful man on Earth laying aside glory to take a stroll.

In a far grandeur way Christ laid aside His glory, not to take a stroll, but to become obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross.

8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

1:8 Attention is focused upon the Cross for three reasons. First, the Cross was a cursed thing. The Law said, "*Cursed is everyone that hangeth upon a tree.*" Second, the Cross was painful. Crucifixion is one of the most painful ways to ever put men to death that has ever been devised. Third, the Cross was shameful. Prisoners were made a spectacle to the world.

The condemned were marched through crowded streets bearing their own wood upon which they would be hung. There was no death with dignity for that was stripped from them. Jesus suffered great humiliation in order to have a name that is above every name. Because of the mindset of obedience, the Lord endured the Cross.

9 Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name:

10 That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of *things* in heaven, and *things* in earth, and *things* under the earth;

11 And *that* every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

12 Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.

2:12 The word "*wherefore*" gathers us all the doctrinal teaching that Paul has just communicated. Because of the humble example of Christ, because of the reward that shall be given to those who follow His example, because of the inner strength that is provided to all who long to live for Christ, because of all these things, the believers at Philippi were to work out their salvation with fear and trembling.

2:12 **My beloved.** Paul refers to the people at Philippi as "*my beloved*" which indicates his great tenderness for the church. It is a rare and wonderful thing when people hold their pastor in high esteem and when the pastor holds the people near his heart. When Paul was at Philippi the people were able to bring their problems to him and receive counsel. What the apostle said, they did, with the result being a wonderful measure of church harmony. But now Paul has left and turmoil has come into the church. The sins of the saints were subtle but altogether deadly.

- There was spiritual pride.
- There were expressions of self-interest.
- There was self-complacency. Gone were the days of selfless service.

Gone were the moments of being sensitive about not speaking words that wound. Gone was the unity of the fellowship. "*Bring it all back!*" cried Paul. "*How?*" asked the Church. The answer is forthcoming: "*Obey the word of God and, with fear and trembling, work out your own salvation.*"

2:12 **With fear and trembling.** These words remind professing Christians that salvation is a process (Luke 13:23-30; Acts 2:41-47; Matt. 7:21-23). In the process of salvation the professing believer is not passive or dormant. The Christian takes an active part.

The Christian experience is spoken of as a pursuit, a following after (Phil. 3:12; Rom. 14:19), a pressing on, a contest, a fight (1 Tim. 6:12), a race (1 Cor. 9:24). The Christian's life is that of a continuous, sustained, strenuous effort.

Such a lifestyle is not easy. To fight against the world, the flesh, and the devil, is to fight against incredible odds and forces. There is only one way to victory and that is by obedience to the known will of God with fear and trembling. What is the Christian to fear? Not man, nor Satan, nor the future. We are to fear offending God (Heb. 12:28).

13 For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of *his* good pleasure.

2:13 The Bible declares that God works in the elect "*both to will and to do of His good pleasure.*" This divine work began prior to the creation of the world. Before Jesus Christ spoke and the world sprang into existence. God determined to work a work of grace.

Focusing on the salvation of sinners the bible teaches that it is possible for the fallen sons of Adam to be saved. In the act of salvation, there is a wonderful deliverance from sin. The power of sin is broken. The pollution of sin is purified. The reign of sin as a guiding principle is over.

- Salvation means to be delivered from the wrath of God.
- Salvation means to be rescued from hell.
- Salvation means to be brought to Christ and enabled to lay hold on Him by faith.

To be saved means that there will be perseverance within the sphere of faith for only he who endures to the end shall be saved. Such is the nature of salvation. But is this understanding of salvation according to grace (Eph. 2:8-9)?

In order to understand the answer, it is important to understand how the *Bible* uses the term grace.

The first observation is that grace is the expression of God's good will toward man. When God shows pity and love, when God demonstrates mercy and kindness toward man, He expresses grace for neither the gifts of God or the goodness of God is deserved. "*For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish disobedient, deceived, serving divers lust and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared. Not by works of righteousness, which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost (Titus 3:3-5).*

Second, the word grace intimates that all of the expressions of God's mercy and long-suffering and goodness are based upon His own sovereign will.

Freely does God love us.

Freely does He show mercy.

Freely does He manifest His kindness.

Freely is the sinner justified by His grace (Rom. 3:24).

In the gospel parable Jesus speaks of a good master who could not be paid by his servants so *"he frankly forgave them both"* (Luke 7:42). If man somehow deserved to be redeemed then salvation is no more of grace but is of works (Rom. 11:6).

Here is the controversy for many. They do not appreciate the grace of God. They want to merit salvation and so not be obligated to bow down and say *"thank you, Lord."* But for those of us who are saved, we are glad to be saved by grace.

As we study the scriptures we discover that there is a distinguishing grace manifested by the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Consider.

- It is God the Father who by His grace has determined who shall go into heaven. 2 Timothy 1:8-9 reveals that election is not the act of the Son but of the Father (Eph. 1:4,5).
- It is God the Father who, by His grace, ordained that the son should undertake the great work of redemption (Eph. 1:7). The Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.
- It is God the Father who, by His grace has determined that those who are to be saved shall never perish (John 6:38, 39; 17:2, 12; Luke 12:32).

As the Father saves us by grace so does the Son. The greatness of the grace of Christ is revealed in how rich He was.

How rich was Christ? He was as rich as the Father, *"All things that the Father hath are mine."* Even the attributes of God are in Christ. He thought it not robbery to be equal with God (Phil. 2:6). There is glory in Christ.

- Jesus has the glory of earth's dominion (Matt. 28:19, 20).
- Jesus has the glory of heaven's dominion as the angels protected him.
- Jesus has the glory of creation's dominion. He speaks and the wind obeys His voice.

In matchless grace the Lord shares His glory with those He saves. *"He became poor, that we through His poverty might be made rich."*

How poor did Christ become? So poor that He was able to say, *"Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nest but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head."*

Out of earthly poverty there is the opportunity to focus upon spiritual riches freely granted in grace. Paul tells the church at Corinth, *"You know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ."*

- Grace was in all His tears.
- Grace came bubbling out of His bloody side.
- Grace came forth with every word of His sweet mouth.
- Grace allowed a whip to sting His back.
- Grace permitted men to tear out His beard.
- Grace put spikes through His hands and feet.

As salvation is by the grace of the Father and of the Son, so salvation is by the grace of God the Holy Spirit.

- The grace of the Father is that He chooses us.
- The grace of the Son is that He died for us.
- The grace of the Holy Spirit is that He sustains us.

This saving grace of the Holy Spirit is manifested in several ways.

- The Holy Spirit makes our heart His home (1 Cor. 3:16; 6:19; Eph. 2:21, 23).
- The Holy Spirit illuminates our understanding. He is called the Spirit of revelation (Eph. 1:17).
- The Holy Spirit causes us to repent (John 16:7-13).
- The Holy Spirit works faith in our hearts (Rom. 15:13; Mark 16:6).
- The Holy Spirit helps us to praise God (Rom. 8:26; Eph. 6:18; 1 Cor. 14:15).
- The Holy Spirit seals us until the day of redemption (Eph. 1:14).

All these things are necessary to salvation. How can they be manifested except by the grace work of the Holy Spirit. It is the grace, not of One but of Three, which saves us.

The love of the Father without the blood of the Son will not save (Heb. 9:22). The love of the Father and the blood of the Son will not save without the holiness of the Spirit of God for without holiness no one shall see God. To be saved by grace is to be saved by the work of the Father, by the work of the Son, and by the work of the Holy Spirit.

14 Do all things without murmurings [complaining] and disputings:

2:14 **murmurings and disputings.**

The word murmuring [Gk. *goggusmos*] means "to grumble," "to complain." The word disputing [*dialogismos*] means "to discuss internally in the mind for the purpose of external debate." The prohibition is to use the thoughts and iniquities of the heart to win a debate that is unnecessary and unprofitable.

Paul's counsel was to do all things without grumbling or complaining, and do what is requested without debate. While the counsel is wise it is also very difficult to follow. We need God's grace. There is a danger if we do not obey this gospel command of kingdom living.

- There is mental danger. More than one person has gone mad by concentrating on difficult situations. The human mind is not designed to dwell on distressing circumstances. We become tense and angry.
- There is relationship danger. Paul had in mind those who are always whining, always complaining, always imagining the worse are just no fun to be around.

- There is spiritual danger. This danger is reflected perfectly in the experience of the Exodus generation. This sad story is told in Exodus 16.

The background is this. In a marvelous way God delivered the Hebrews from centuries of human bondage in Egypt. And the way God delivered the people was miraculous. Sign after supernatural sign was displayed to increase faith among the Israelites and fear among the Egyptians.

In addition to the performing of wonderful miracles, God also stirred up the hearts of the Egyptians to give silver and gold to the Hebrews on their way out of the land. Israel was free at last, wealthy beyond belief, and in the desert on their way to a Land of Promise. You would think the people would be delirious with gratitude and hope. But they are not. The people are not happy with Moses, they are not happy with their geographical location, and they are not happy with diet. Forty-five days out of Egypt and the people are ready to return to bondage. Why? Because they started to murmur.

Finally, their murmuring expressed itself: Would to God we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the flesh pots and when we did eat bread to the full, for ye have brought us forth into this wilderness, to kill this whole assembly with hunger.

Observe what murmuring does to the mind.

- Murmuring distorts history. The Hebrews were not better off in slavery. They had been beaten and starved, and killed and worked to death. The good old days were not so good.
- Murmuring distorts the rational. No thinking person would say in seriousness that Moses and Aaron were mass murderers who plotted to bring the people into the desert to die.
- Murmuring is contagious. Like a communicable disease, murmuring spreads to others so that they are caught up in the evil of the moment (16:2).
- While murmuring finds its immediate target of opportunity in human relationship (16:2), this sin is ultimately against the Lord (16:8).
- Murmuring does not stop with one issue. People who engage in this sin simply leave one issue for another. The Exodus generation was like that. After God provided for their stomachs (Ex. 16:12) they complained about water (17:2). Instead of prayer, the people became grumblers to the dishonor of God.

Is it any wonder that Paul warns people not to murmur? Paul warned the people at Philippi, he also warned the people in Corinth (1 Cor. 10:10). Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer.

People who murmur stop listening to the voice of God. Psalm 106:25. *“But murmured in their tents, and hearkened not unto the voice of the Lord.”*

People who murmur are in mortal danger. It is a sign of a converted heart not to want to sin in this area. Part of the gospel promise is that murmuring shall stop. Isaiah 29:24 says, *“They also that erred in spirit shall come to understand, and they that murmured shall learn doctrine.”*

There are two practical steps to take to stop the sin of murmuring.

- Know that it is the will of God for His people not to be characterized by this sin.
- Remember the spiritual rewards for those who do not murmur. Such saints will be blameless [without fault]; harmless [innocent]; the sons of God [truly converted]; without rebuke [censure, admonish]; a testimony of redeeming grace to a wicked generation; able to give to others the truth of God's word; a source of joy; a worthy investment of time taught teaching.

15 That ye may be blameless and harmless [sincere], the sons of God, without rebuke [blemish], in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world;

16 Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain.

17 Yea, and if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy, and rejoice with you all.

18 For the same cause also do ye joy, and rejoice with me.

19 But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timotheus shortly unto you, that I also may be of good comfort, when I know your state [welfare].

20 For I have no man likeminded, who will naturally care for your state.

21 For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's.

22 But ye know the proof of him, that, as a son with the father, he hath served with me in the gospel.

23 Him therefore I hope to send presently, so soon as I shall see how it will go with me.

24 But I trust in the Lord that I also myself shall come shortly.

2:17-24 The setting for this section took place in Rome where the apostle Paul was imprisoned. His life was in the balance. There was a chance that he would be under condemnation for crimes against the state. Paul preached allegiance to Jesus Christ as King of kings and Lord of lords

Paul preached that salvation by grace through faith and not by keeping the Law of Moses. Therefore, he had many enemies. Some were political, some were religious but all were united with a common hatred. When Paul writes in 2:17, "*Yea, and if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of you faith,*" he is not overstating the case. He is not being pessimistic. Paul is acknowledging a real possibility. "*I joy and rejoice with you all,*" he says (2:17) and he means it. Paul is full of hope that the Lord will yet allow his release from prison and return him to the field of gospel preaching (2:24).

As Paul waits the verdict of execution or acquittal, the apostle realizes that the people of Philippi care about him deeply. Therefore, he decides to send word as soon as a decision of his status is reached. The messenger will be someone that is well known to the people of Philippi. He is someone whom Paul loves like a son and who has proven himself. The messenger's name is Timothy. In some ways, Timothy is one of the great, unsung heroes of the New Testament church. Several things are known about him.

Young Timothy

- Timothy is first introduced to us in Acts 16 as the son of a Jewish mother and a Greek father. His name means "*dear to God.*"
- His mother was a strong believer and so was his grandmother, Lois (2 Tim. 1:5).
- Timothy was part of the second generation of Christians with the wonderful privileges of being brought up in the Lord from childhood.
- 4. At an early age Timothy knew the scriptures which were able to make him wise unto salvation.
- In the providence of the Lord, the life of Timothy became bonded with the life of Paul.
- Paul decided that Timothy should travel with him in his missionary journeys (Acts 16:3).
- A cycle of behavior was established. Paul would preach the gospel, souls would be saved, and Timothy would be left to instruct them only to rejoin Paul later.
- We find Timothy at Berea (Acts 17:12-14) teaching the converts then joining the apostle in Corinth (Acts 17:15; 18:5).
- We find Timothy being sent to Macedonia (Acts 19:22) and rejoining Paul in Asia (Acts 20:1-4).

- As he traveled and worked with Paul, the life of Timothy was characterized by several things. People recognized his good reputation (Acts 16:2), his zeal (Phil. 2:19-22; 1 Tim. 6:12), his power (1 Tim. 4:14; 2 Tim. 1:6), and his moments of being timid (1 Tim. 1:18).
- Despite an area of weakness, Paul loved Timothy and worked well with him which teaches that youth and maturity do not have to be in conflict with each other.
- When Paul looked for a trusted messenger to go to Philippi and to return with news of their spiritual status, his choice was Timothy.

If we read a little between the lines, the choice of Timothy was something of a rebuke for other people that surrounded Paul. Notice the sharp language of 2:20-21. There is no easy way to say it, but Paul was disappointed in others that he had counted on. For whatever reason, when the opportunity came to minister, Paul was left without willing workers except Timothy, *“For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ.”*

25 Yet I supposed it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother, and companion in labour, and fellow soldier, but your messenger, and he that ministered to my wants.

26 For he longed after you all, and was full of heaviness, because that ye had heard that he had been sick.

27 For indeed he was sick nigh [close] unto death: but God had mercy on him; and not on him only, but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow.

28 I sent him therefore the more carefully, that, when ye see him again, ye may rejoice, and that I may be the less sorrowful.

29 Receive him therefore in the Lord with all gladness; and hold such in reputation:

30 Because for the work of Christ he was nigh unto death, not regarding his life, to supply your lack of service toward me.

2:25-30 In this passage Epaphroditus is introduced. Several facts can be noted.

- His name means *“devoted to Aprodite [Venus]”* which suggests a strong religious pagan background.
- In the providence of God, Epaphroditus became a Christian. Paul calls him *“my brother”* as a term of endearment.

- Epaphroditus proved himself to be worthy of honor for Paul says that he is his companion in labor. Going on a missionary journey in the ancient world was a tremendous ordeal, for a person was subject to diseases, robberies, hostile crowds, and suspicion by government officials. Epaphroditus proved himself a soldier of the cross, a faithful messenger, and a willing personal servant.
- Epaphroditus also had a tender heart (2:26). Life has a way of hardening the heart but it does not have to happen. When Epaphroditus realized that the people of Philippi knew he was sick, he became distressed for them. He did not want the people to worry, but worry they would because the sickness of the man was severe. *"He was sick, nigh unto death,"* Paul writes. *"But God had mercy upon him."*

The sickness of Epaphroditus brings up the whole issue of the place of pain and suffering in the plan of God. The first question that usually comes to mind when sickness is severe is, "Why?" *"Why did God allow this to happen?"*

Consider Epaphroditus. Here is a man who obviously wants to help others. He risks not only his fortune but also his very life for the sake of the gospel. And what is his reward? He almost dies. *"Why?"*

As a companion in labor Epaphroditus has passed the test of faithfulness. As a fellow soldier Epaphroditus has passed the bravery test. As a messenger he has passed the truthfulness test. As a minister to Paul's needs, Epaphroditus passed the humility test. But in the spiritual realm it is still not enough. God wants to know more about this faithful servant. What will happen when the ultimate test comes?

Facing death is the ultimate test to faith. Times of severe sickness provides opportunity to grow in the graces of life, to establish priorities, to meditate and pray and to manifest the mercy of God. In this instance God did have mercy upon Epaphroditus and he recovered. In other instances the Lord provides dying grace. As he sent Epaphroditus back to the church, the apostle instructed the assembly to do two things (2:2). They were to receive Epaphroditus with all gladness and they were to hold him in reputation. This exhortation seems a little unusual at first until it is realized what Paul is saying (2:30). Because Epaphroditus risked his very life, he is worthy of special reception and special honor.

The Epistle of Paul to the Philippians

Philippians 2

Review

1. What is known about Lydia?

Answer.

2. Why is Acts 16 important to the story of the epistle to the Philippians?

Answer.

3. List the six-fold ministry of God the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer.

Answer.

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4. Why is murmuring condemned so severely in Scripture?

Answer.

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5. What are two practical steps to take against the sin of murmuring?

Answer.

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Personal Application and Reflection

1. Read Acts 16 and indicated you have done so with a check mark here ___
2. Is your service for the Lord characterized by seeking glory for yourself? Have you ever done something for the Lord without the work being recognized or honored? Did you feel slighted? Neglected? Used? Have you just told the truth?
3. Are you working out your salvation with fear and trembling or are you careless with what you watch, say, listen to and the sites you visit on the web while on line?
4. Do you seek you own will, your own plans, your own dreams or do you seek Christ's? What objective evidence is there to support your answer?
5. Are you known in your church, in your family or by your friends to be a murmurer?

Hiding God's Word in My Heart

Philippians 2:3 Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.

Introduction to Philippians 3

The background to this chapter involves a group of people known as the Judaizers. The people seemed to embrace many of the tenets of the Christian faith but did not recognize the all sufficiency of Christ to save. They really trusted in ceremonial rituals to supplement divine grace. They mingled works with grace.

In addition to this group with their perversion of the gospel there were the sensualist (3:18, 19) who justified immorality in the church. The apostle makes a dramatic distinction between true Christians, whom he calls "*my brethren*" and the "*rest*," which are those who support a gospel of works or a gospel of sensuality.

Paul does not want the believers at Philippi to surrender the principles and beliefs associated with redeeming grace. In a hostile spiritual environment where foundational truth is assaulted the Christian must respond in a wise and Christlike manner.

PHILIPPIANS 3

1 Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you, to me indeed is not grievous, but for you *it is safe*.

3:1

"Finally my brethren, rejoice." The Psalmist said, *"The joy of the Lord is my strength."* Nothing should be allowed to take away the inner stability, and the inner joy of being occupied with the Person of Christ. The oneness in Christ, the essential unity of the saint with the Saviour should not be allowed to be undermined by new doctrines. But Christian joy is no license for foolishness. The Christian is to be sober. He is to be aware of those of the concision. The believer is to *"exercise a militant unity in a world of unbelief and hostility"* (William Hendriksen).

2 Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision.

3:2 **Concision.** The word concision in the original refers to the cutting up of something or mutilating it. Paul declares the Judaizers in particular were trying to mutilate the gospel message and the Christian way of life. These people were shrewd, numerous, and determined. Therefore, the apostle does not mind writing the believers at Philippi to repeat previous warnings thereby providing spiritual safety for the saints. *"Beware,"* he says and repeats the warning twice more. *"Beware of the dogs. Beware of the evil workers. Beware of the concision."* By this warning Paul signals his alarm that the congregation is in real danger. By the usage of strong language, the apostle reveals the depths of his concern. This is not the first time that a man of God had used strong language. John the Baptist called people a generation of vipers. Jesus called the Pharisees hypocrites. The Lord referred to one ruler as a fox. The Christian community does have real enemies who manifest the characteristics of animals.

The Judaizers, by their theological position, were no better than dogs. The word for dogs does not refer to pets but to large, savage ugly brutes that would prowl the streets and feed on the garbage.

- These horrible scavengers were unclean and filthy (Prov. 26:11; 2 Pet. 2:22). Likewise the motives of the Judaizers were unclean for the glory of God was not at stake but their own ego.
- These scavengers would howl and snarl (Psa. 59:6). By loud and angry words the Judaizers would argue against the doctrine of sovereign redeeming grace.
- These scavengers were greedy and shameless (Isa. 56:11). They would devour the church.
- These scavengers are contemptible (2 Sam. 9:8; 16:9; 2 Kings 8:13).
- These scavengers are insolent, cunning, and vicious.

Worst of all these people with new doctrines are religious. They are workers in the church. They deliberately draw attention from Christ to their physical rituals which exalt human worth and personal attainment. By doing this they mutilate the gospel.

The gospel is mutilated because outward acts are emphasized instead of the inner consecration of the heart. Romans 8:28, 29 explains there is a true spiritual cutting or circumcision but it is the circumcision of the heart not the flesh. Those who circumcise only the body or engage in a ritual for salvation actually mutilate or cut away the gospel.

This is being done today in such doctrines as baptismal regeneration, decision regeneration, and ritual regeneration that is foundational to Catholic theology.

We must remember that the true Church of Christ has Abraham as a spiritual father (Gal. 3:9, 20; 6:16) and that God recognizes only the sheep of His Son's one flock (John 10:16).

The characteristics of this one flock are threefold.

- The sheep worship God in the Spirit (John 4:19-24).
- The sheep rejoice in Christ Jesus not in human advantages, good works, ceremonial rituals, or personal wealth.
- The sheep have no confidence in their own flesh.

3 For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.

4 Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more:

3:4 In establishing his right to criticize the advocates of Judaism, the apostle Paul presents his credentials. He does not want to boast. His heart is not in lifting himself up or making himself to appear superior to others. The whole thrust of Paul's argument will be that there is righteousness to be found only in Christ. But in order to emphasize his point Paul must insist that he knows what he is talking about. He must engage in a humble boasting to destroy the essential point of Judaism which teaches a placing of confidence in the flesh or human works for salvation.

5 Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, *of* the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee;

3:5 Paul marshals forth six arguments in support of his position.

- Paul was circumcised the eighth day, thereby, in infancy receiving the sign and seal of the covenant of blessing in his body.
- Paul was of the stock of Israel. He was not from the seed of Ishmael nor was he a convert to Judaism as Ruth. He was of the stock of Israel and,
- Of the tribe of Benjamin. Benjamin was the youngest son of Jacob. His mother was Rachael. The delivery of Benjamin was hard so that Rachel wanted to call her son Benoni before she died. But Jacob said that the child should be called Benjamin, son of my right hand (Gen. 35:18). The descendants of Benjamin were known for their military skills and personal bravery. Paul was very proud of the tribe of Israel to which he belonged and refers to it on three occasions (Acts 13:21; Rom. 11:1; Phil. 3:5). These people considered them to be Hebrews of the Hebrews.
- Paul also declares that when it came to obeying the Law, he was a Pharisee. The implication is that the very word "Pharisee" said it all. In the sense used here the word has almost a positive connotation. The Pharisees were known for keeping the Law in the strictest detail. There was the moral Law of Moses but there was also the oral law of tradition and the Pharisees said that they kept them both.

6 Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.

3:6

- If anyone questioned Paul's zeal in being a Hebrew and a Pharisee, he could point to the physical evidence in the persecution of the church. The suffering Paul inflicted upon the saints was the source of emotional terror, physical discomfort, and even death. There was a great deal of fear. Paul did not care. He would hurt anyone and everyone for the cause to which he was devoted, all the while maintaining the traditions and religion of Judaism.

- Paul could also point to the righteousness which comes by keeping the Law to show his zeal. He declared that he was blameless. This is not to suggest that Paul believed he had not sinned. What Paul means is that whenever the Law prescribed a sacrifice to be offered, it was offered. Whenever the Law required a holy day, it was kept. Paul was serious about his religion.

All of these things were gain or profitable to Paul personally. His record was impressive. If ever a person deserved to be saved according to covenant promises, racial heritage, ancestral identity, personal holiness, religious zeal or legal righteousness, it was Paul. And yet the apostle reached a humble conclusion. For all the things he had to boast about, he counted those things gained for himself to be a loss for Christ.

7 But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.

8 Yea doubtless, and I count all things *but* loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them *but* dung [refuse], that I may win Christ,

3:8 Having finished with his humble boasting Paul summarizes his attitude towards self-glorification.

First, those things he had gained for himself he now considers to be a loss for the cause of Christ. Indeed, the cause of Christ does suffer if a person can merit salvation. The importance of the work of Christ is severely diminished.

Second, so contemptible did Paul consider the works of the flesh that he called them by a very earthly term. Paul looked at what his parents gave him in the act of circumcision and by way of his noble birth and called it dung in comparison to Christ. Paul thought about his personal attainments through self efforts. He was recognized as a Pharisee, zealous beyond means and had obtained a legal righteousness. Yet none of these things brought him inner happiness, forgiveness of sin or peace with God.

Upon mature consideration Paul was convinced that man is not justified before God upon human merit but upon the basis of the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.

On the road to Damascus, Paul saw himself as he really was, a deluded, self-righteous sinner in need of a Saviour. On that dusty road Paul gave his heart and life to Jesus Christ. Suddenly, he was a new creature in Christ Jesus by faith. All of his values were reversed and all of his dispositions were replaced. Orthodoxy, zeal, an irreproachable conduct were all cast in a new way. The gospel light shone into the darkest corners of the heart and Paul found himself the chief of all sinners.

Had Paul arisen, determined to place his values in his human advantage, he would have lost Christ. But to the eternal glory of God, the worm on the desert road arose a new creation. The Personage of Christ broke in upon his soul. He saw and he heard the very Christ whose followers he had been trying to kill. He could do that no more.

Thirty years later Paul was still telling others how Jesus saves. To the church at Philippi, Paul writes of the love affair he has with the resurrected Lord. The Lord became Paul's Example, Friend, Life, Lover, Strength, Rock and Reward and most of all his Sovereign. Paul now says with the poet, *"Whom have I in heaven but Thee? And there is none on Earth that I desire besides Thee"* (Psa. 73:25).

9 And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:

3:9 Five truths can be said about this righteousness according to Dr. William Hendricksen.

- It is Christ's.
- Works performed by man does not merit it.
- It is appropriated by faith.
- It comes from God.
- It results in a striving after spiritual perfection.

First, the righteousness belongs to Christ. More and more Paul wants to be identified with the righteousness that comes not from his own good works but from the work of Christ. The word righteousness is basically a legal term describing relationships. There is the relationship of a man to his fellowman and there is the relationship of a man to God.

In all relationships there are conditions to be honored. In legal, spiritual terms, man has not honored the conditions of the covenants of works. Jesus Christ, as the God-man, did keep the terms of the covenant completely and is declared to be righteous. Paul wants to identify himself with the perfect righteousness of Christ, not the partial efforts of good works which makes man unrighteous for the Law is very rigid. It does not care for circumstances of life. It does not care for sincere intentions. The Law is blind to many things and demands justice. Once a person realizes that he can in no way be justified in the eyes of the Law he must remain forever unjust and unrighteous or find a way to be honest and fulfill the demand of the Law.

In sovereign grace God has found a way for man to be righteous. God determined to impute into man's account the righteousness of His Son (Rom 5:19). The new condition is not based upon works but faith.

"And be found in Him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the Law."

The wages of one's own righteousness is death (Rom. 6:23). Physical and spiritual death is deserved. But God's righteousness is given to the undeserving. God justifies the unjust. Christ died for the ungodly (Rom. 4:5; 5:6; Tit. 3:5).

The means of securing the righteousness of Christ is by faith. Faith is simply childlike trust in the word of God. God speaks and man believes. Faith is Abraham's believing God that his wife Sarah would have a son.

Faith is Noah picking up hammer and saw to built an Ark.

Faith is Moses standing before Pharaoh.

Faith is believing that Jesus Christ died and on the third day he arose. Such faith comes from God. It is not natural to man.

Most people are rationalist. They have no faith. Some who have tried to have faith have abandoned what little faith they had and now justify unbelief due to broken relationships, unanswered prayer, or doubts about the Bible. If you have faith, you need to give special thanks, for faith is a grace gift (Eph. 2:8-9).

10 That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;

3:10 The righteousness which Paul longs for manifests itself in a threefold striving after spiritual perfection,

- *"that I may know him,*
- *that I may know "the power of his resurrection,"*
- *and that I may know "the fellowship of His sufferings."*

11 If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.

3:11 The ultimate reason behind this holy striving is to take part in the resurrection of the dead which is another way for Paul to say, *"I want eternal life!"* That is the ultimate goal. The means to the goal is through Christ.

In Christ three things are involved: knowledge, fellowship, and suffering. Knowledge of Christ is intellectual and existential. There is head knowledge and there is heart knowledge. Both are important. The head knowledge without the heart leads to legalism and formality. Heart knowledge without the head leads to emotionalism and fanaticism. Biblical teaching and preaching must be accompanied by thanksgiving, the singing of psalms and the making of melody in the heart.

Such a balance of knowledge will lead to sweet fellowship through the aid of the Holy Spirit. While the fellowship of Christ is sweet, it does include suffering.

There is physical suffering. There is spiritual suffering. No Christian who is in Christ can avoid either. Beatings, stoning, hunger, thirst, cold, nakedness, misunderstandings and more will be part of conforming to the image of Christ.

12 Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect [complete]; but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.

3:12 **already attained.** The Pharisees were prone to give the impression of having reached perfection. Paul did not want to make a linkage with the Pharisees. He wanted to distance himself from any spirit and any sect that indicated perfection in the absolute sense.

It would be nice if the Lord wholly sanctified His people after salvation but He does not. The question arises as to why. Why does God allow so much corruption in His Abraham's, Isaac's, and David's? Several reasons are suggested.

- As salvation is of the Lord so is sanctification. The flesh cannot carry on the work that was started by Christ.
- The allowance of sin humbles the heart.
- The continuance of sin manifests the great mercy of God.

13 Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but *this* one thing *I do*, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before,

3:12 **apprehended.** Despite lingering imperfections, Paul wanted to keep following the Lord so that he might be apprehended of Christ. The word "*apprehend*" means "*to take eagerly,*" "*to seize,*" "*to possess.*" Paul remembered how on a road to Damascus he was suddenly and violently seized or apprehended by Christ. With the same intensity of soul, Paul desires to obtain salvation.

14 I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

3:14 As Paul forgets those things that are behind so he began to reach forth unto those things that were before him. The world watched as he flew down the track of life. The world watched as he pressed toward the mark, the finish line. He strained with all of his might for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

15 Let us therefore, as many as be perfect [mature], be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you.

3:15 The word translated "*perfect*" has the idea of maturity, not sinlessness. As people mature physically with the passing of time so there is a spiritual maturity. Young Christians are often possessed with more heat than light. Time passes and a certain amount of wisdom or maturity is gained.

There is more tolerance for the opinions of others. There is more allowance for sin.

There is more compassion for those caught up in personal addiction.

There is more grace manifested. Those who understand the Christian message realize that the prospect of being "*perfect*" is the Christian's great hope. We can long for that day when the Last Trumpet shall sound and we shall be changed. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, we shall be changed. This body shall take on immortality.

The resurrected body will be without the capacity for sin, without the desire or drive to sin, without the opportunity to sin. This holy longing to be without sin is itself a sign of maturity. It means the Christian is moving toward ultimate perfection. The child of God has his eyes on the prize. The goal is not reached by rigid law observance but by being in Christ. With the song writer, the Christian can sing a song of hope.

“I'm pressing on the upward way,
New heights I'm gaining every day,
Still praying as I onward bound,
Lord, plant my feet on higher ground.

Lord, life me up and let me stand,
By faith, on heaven's tableland.
A higher plane than I have found;
Lord, plant my feet on higher ground.”

J. Oatman

16 Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing.

3:16 **let us walk.** The believer seeks to live out the ethics of the Christian life by embracing grand principles that include the following.

- The Christian is in Christ. He is not his own. He has been bought with a price. Therefore, he is to glorify God by life and by lip.
- The Christian is not yet perfect and must walk in humility.
- The Christian has no inherent righteousness. He has no legal righteousness. He has only the righteousness which is of God through the faith of Christ imputed to his account (3:9).
- The Christian must never surrender the fact that Christ died for sin. Therefore, the Christian can never forget the past and must press on toward the prize.

In as far as the grand and holy principles are understood, the exhortation comes in 3:16, "*let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing.*"

17 Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample.

18 (For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, *that they are* the enemies of the cross of Christ:

19 Whose end *is* destruction, whose God *is* their belly [emotions], and *whose* glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.)

3:17-19 **enemies of the cross.** Religious people can be real enemies of the Cross. But can the world be identified? The answer is yes. Four Facts are declared about those in the world.

- Their belly is their god. The reference is to those who try to satisfy their sensual appetites. A lifestyle which is based upon accumulation instead of giving, comfort instead of the Cross, haughtiness in place of humility, and power in place of service is a sensual lifestyle. Any one who promotes this manner of life does not serve the Lord Jesus Christ, but their own bellies (Rom. 16:18).
- They glory in their shame.
- They mind earthly things. Matthew Henry writes, "Christ came by His cross to crucify the world to us and us to the world..."
- Whose end is destruction. Death and hell await those who are enemies of the Cross of Christ.

20 For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ:

3:20 Paul reminds the believers of several spiritual realities.

- The believer's manner of life is in heaven.
- The believer must look for the second coming of Christ.
- When Jesus comes He shall change our bodies that it might be fashioned like unto His glorious body.

21 Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.

3:21 **He is able.**

It was the apostle's confidence that Jesus will be able to do all these things even as He is able to subdue all things unto Himself. In the spiritual struggle against the world, the flesh, and the devil, the Christian has a battle cry to rally around. He is able!

Jesus is able to endure the Cross despite the shame. He is able to rise again even as He said He would. He is able to provide for His own. Jesus is able to keep those whom the Father has entrusted into His hand. He is able to one-day change the vile body. He is able to rule over the affairs of men. He is able!

“’Tis the grandest theme
through the ages rung;
’Tis the grandest theme
for a mortal tongue;
’Tis the grandest theme
that the world e’er sung,
“Our God is able to deliver thee.”

He is able to deliver thee,
He is able to deliver thee;
Though by sin oppressed,
go to Him for rest;
’Our God is able to deliver thee.’”

William A. Ogden

In the concluding verses of chapter 3 there is a happy blending of divine sovereignty with human responsibility. While the soul must fight a spiritual warfare against real enemies of the Cross, the believer waits for the second coming of Christ and that glorious resurrection day.

The Epistle of Paul to the Philippians

Philippians 3

Review

1. What does the word “conscience” mean?

Answer.

2. How can God justify the guilty? (3:9)

Answer.

3. Describe the nature of sheep.

Answer.

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4. Why does God allow sin to continue to be present in the hearts of believers?

Answer.

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5. Provide four grand principles the Christian is to walk by.

Answer.

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Personal Application and Reflection

1. In evaluating your own professing Christian life would you be more like a sheep or a dog? Have you ever thought of yourself as a “*watchdog*” in the body of Christ? If so, have you repented of this sinful impulse?
2. Have you been justified in the sight of God? How do you know?
3. How mature do you think you are as a Christian? Which state defines you?
 - New born baby
 - Infant
 - Toddler
 - Youth
 - Teenager
 - Adult
 - Mature adult
4. Have you seen any “*enemies of the Cross*” in your congregation? How did you identify them?
5. Are you looking for the Savior (3:20) or is your mind and imagination filled with looking for signs of the times and the anti-Christ, if the truth were told?

Hiding God’s Word in My Heart

Philippians 3:7 But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. 8 Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, 9 And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: 10 That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; 11 If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.

PHILIPPIANS 4

1 Therefore, my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, *my* dearly beloved.

4:1 The word "*therefore*" points the believer back to the humility of Christ (2:1-8), the glory of Christ (2:9-11), the necessity of following after Christ (3:14-15), and the importance of being different (3:17-21). Therefore, in light of all these things be like a soldier assigned to guard a strategic spot. Stand fast! Never give up! Never give up! Never give up!

2 I beseech Euodias, and beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord.

4:2 No sooner does Paul write these words of exhortation than his memory is flooded with a report he has heard concerning two women in the church. One was name Euodias. The other was named Syntyche. Euodias means "*prosperous*." Syntyche means, "*fortunate*." There was a sharp division between these two ladies though why is not certain. Perhaps Euodias was prosperous in business as her name suggests and Syntyche became jealous. Perhaps it was a struggle of wills between the young and the older lady. Whatever the source of the conflict and whatever the issue might have been the situation was serious enough to have reached the ears of Paul while he was a prisoner in Rome. With apostolic authority Paul writes but with pastoral tenderness. He pleads with the two ladies by name to be of the same mind in the Lord. Is this possible? YES! How?

- Peace would come when each woman stopped insisting upon her "*rights*."
- Peace would come when each woman sought the best interest of the other.
- Peace would come when each lady stopped rallying support for her personal cause.
- Peace would come by each woman asking for wisdom (James 1:5).
- Peace would come when each woman became accountable to spiritual authority.

3 And I intreat thee also, true yokefellow, help those women, which laboured with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and *with* other my fellow labourers, whose names *are* in the book of life.

4:3 The accountability factor is emphasized a little more clearly in the original. The words "*true yokefellow*" may better be translated as a proper noun, which would be Syzygus (Yoke-Fellow) in the Greek. Paul asks Syzygus in particular to please help these two ladies. Syzygus was a man of influence in the church at Philippi. He was highly esteemed by his people. Syzygus was one of those rare individuals who had extraordinary tact. He would be well suited by temperament and by training to help bring stability to emotionally charged women. It is Paul's opinion that these women deserved to be helped. They are noble women manifested in the fact that they once labored with Paul in the work of the gospel. They once co-operated with Clement and the other saints. Their names are written in the book of Life. We can be confident that these two women were reconciled to each other.

4 Rejoice in the Lord always: *and* again I say, Rejoice.

4:4 After giving instructions to resolve the point of controversy between Euodias and Syntyche, the apostle tells the congregation to "*Rejoice in the Lord always.*" The last thing people want to think about when they are tense and angry is joy. Therefore, Paul repeats what he has to say, "*And again I say, rejoice.*"

Is it possible? Is such a command practical? With the memory of past sins vexing the soul, when our loved ones are suffering, when persecution is present, when death by beheading is possible, is it reasonable to instruct the church to rejoice in the Lord? The answer is, YES! It is reasonable for such a spiritual command to be given.

Furthermore, Paul has a right to speak for he is the prisoner of Jesus Christ. What the apostle teaches in part is that circumstances alone do not dictate the condition of the heart and mind. Dr. William Hendriksen notes that, "*A Christian can be joyful within when without all is dark and dreary.*"

- For the apostle this meant meditating on the fact that he was saved by the blood of the Lamb. Paul had found a goal in Christ which was to magnify the Lord (1:19, 20).
- Paul would also meditate on the second coming of Christ (2:5-11; 3:20, 21; 4:5).
- He would meditate on the truth that Jesus is willing to supply all of our needs (4:11-13, 19, 20).
- He would meditate on the salvation of precious souls (1:6; 2:17, 18).
- He would meditate on the fellowship found in the gospel labors (1:5; 2:19-30; 4:1, 10).
- He would meditate on the fact that even death is gain (4:6).

5 Let your moderation [self-control] be known unto all men. The Lord *is* at hand.

4:5-6 As the inner life is transformed, the outer life is to be manifested in such a way that all people may know that one is a Christian. This verse can be translated, "*Let your big heartedness be known to every body.*" The concept is the same. The Christian is to be known for kindness, gentleness, sweet reasonableness, consideration, and generosity. This has practical application. For one thing, the Christian must be willing to bear an injustice. Dr. Hendriksen says that, "*The Christian is the man who reasons that it is far better to suffer wrong than to inflict wrong (1 Cor. 6:8).*" This is easier said than done but if and when it is done, obedience to the will of the Lord is accomplished. It was Matthew Henry who was robbed one day. He went home and wrote in his dairy that he was thanking to God for sparing his life and for the fact that it was he who was robbed and not the one doing the robbing.

6 Be careful [anxious] for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.

4:6 **Be careful.** The overreaching reason why Christians must be at peace with each other, cultivate a spirit of joy, and display a disposition of generosity is because the Lord is at hand. Because the Lord is at hand the Christian can put away unnecessary anxious care. It is interesting that the verb translated here "*be anxious*" can have a favorable meaning of expressing "*kindly concern*." It is used this way in Philippians 2:20. More often, though, the word suggests undue concern about a matter, to be filled with anxiety, to worry. God has already commanded Christians not to worry about many things such as food, drink, clothing, how long one may live, the future, and words that are to be spoken in self defense (Matt. 6:25-28, 34; 10:19; Luke 10:41; 12:11). The cure for undue worry is prayer. Therefore, in everything by prayer and personal requests, mingled with thanksgiving, the believer is to speak to the Lord.

4:6 **by prayer.** Prayer is humble submission to the will of God. God honoring prayer is that which is accompanied by thanksgiving for past favors, present blessings, and firm assurance of the future. Paul was a man who prayed as he preached. In his writing we find him constantly giving thanks (Rom. 1:21; 14:6; 2 Cor. 1:11; 4:15; 9:11, 12; Eph. 5:20; Col. 3:15). Paul was also a man who prayed specifically and so he teaches to ask for specific things. Let your petitions be made known. We have not because we ask not. Specific requests allows for specific answers so that the heart may be encouraged when God specifically answers.

7 And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

4:7 When Christians pray there is experienced something of the peace of God which passeth all understanding. The peace of God may be distinguished from the peace with God which involves salvation (Rom. 5:1). The Bible teaches that man is at war with God prior to conversion. The warfare may be covert or overt but a state of hostility exists between the natural man and his Creator. Only when the spiritual weapons of warfare are laid down and the terms of surrender are accepted is there peace with God. The terms of surrender are unconditional.

- The heart must bow before the Cross of Calvary.
- The heart must confess self a sinner.
- The heart must cry out for grace.
- The heart must give up unbelief and surrender his selfishness.
- The heart must renounce love for sin.

When all this is done there comes a sweet, wonderful sense of peace with God. Enemies have become friends. The peace of God is that sense of serenity that comes from knowing that God is in ultimate control of our lives. Sometimes people who have a lot of money have peace of mind. Sometimes people who have good health have peace of mind. Sometimes people who have job security have peace of mind. Such peace is understandable. But the peace in our passage cannot be explained because it is not contingent upon external factors. It is a quiet confidence in the living Lord. And it is not dependent upon the present aspect of things. It is this peace which shall keep the hearts and minds of believers. The word "KEEP" means to garrison. It is a military word and speaks of soldier's guarding the gate. The two gates to be guarded are the emotions and the thoughts.

The peace of God will keep guard over these things. This is a promise. How? Through the instrument of prayer. There is a vital link between peace and prayer. Without prayer there can be no peace. And there is no substitute for prayer in this matter. History records that the greatest saints who have had grace under pressure were people of prayer. Martin Luther was a man of prayer. It is reported that he prayed about three hours each day. J. Oswald Chambers who wrote the classic, *My Utmost for the Highest*, determined in his early ministry to spend one hour each Thursday in concentrated prayer. It was said of the apostles that they gave themselves to prayer. The Holy Spirit came in power while the church prayed.

8 Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things *are* honest [honorable], whatsoever things *are* just, whatsoever things *are* pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things *are* of good report; if *there be* any virtue, and if *there be* any praise, think on these things.

4:8 In this verse the apostle turns his attention to another topic as he brings his letter to a conclusion. As he exhorted believers to stop fighting, rejoice in the Lord, be kindhearted to one another, and to pray often, so Paul wanted the saints to guard their thought life. The Bible says that as a man thinketh in his heart so is he. The murderer thinks about murder. John Wayne Gacy who was executed in 1993, killed 33 young boys and men. For fourteen years he sat on death row awaiting execution. The parents of one of the victims said he would like to ask Gacy, Why? Why did you have to kill? The answer is that he allowed his mind to think on murder. David thought about adultery and committed the unspeakable. Jacob plotted and schemed to steal from Esau and found himself successful.

9 Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you.

4:8-9 So powerful is the thought process that it drives the person to action. Therefore, by a conscious act of the will, the Christian is instructed to take control of this area of life and be responsible. Personal responsibility means selecting certain things to meditate and dwell upon.

- **Whatsoever things are true.** Of particular concern to Paul would be moral and spiritual truth. Moral and spiritual truth is found primarily in the *Bible*. Therefore, the Christian should give much thought to reading and meditating on the Word of God.
- **Whatsoever things are honest.** The word in the original has the idea of being honorable or having dignity. John Calvin has stated that proper motives, manners, and moral, are important. Christians should seek ways to bring dignity to the position of being a Christian.
- **Whatsoever things are just.** As Christians we are possessed with a sense of right and wrong. We believe in justice. Because of the opportunities that came to us in life we need to think about how we can be fair and just in a given situation.

- **Whatsoever things are pure.** The word in the original has to do with moral purity. It is a struggle to be modest, chaste, clean, and pure in one's personal and thought life. Job made a covenant with his eyes. The Pharisees used to wear blinders to help them focus on where they were going and also to avoid seeing pretty women—until they crashed into buildings.
- **Whatsoever things are lovely.** The word here conveys the idea of being friendly, amiable, pleasing. The Bible teaches that the person who would have friends must show himself friendly.
- **Whatsoever things are of good report,** which means whatsoever things are well spoken of and are reputable.

The primary focus of these words is on Jesus Christ. Certainly the Lord was characterized by each of these concepts. Paul wanted to be like the Lord. The apostle had not always done this. Once Paul dwelt upon things that were untrue, impure, unlovely, non-virtuous, and non-praise worthy. Paul was a passionate man. And where did it lead him? His thought life led him to travel the Damascus Road in search of Christians to persecute. Then he met Jesus. His thought life changed and Paul began to enjoy thoughts of purity.

Between Pastor and People

4:10–23

The relationship between the pastor of a congregation and the people is complex. When based upon biblical principles, there can exist a wonderful harmony of spiritual communion. The ideal state between a pastor and his people is provided in this section.

10 But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at the last your care of me hath flourished again; wherein ye were also careful, but ye lacked opportunity.

4:10 Pastors should show proper gratitude to the Lord for their people and speak well of them (4:10). The people should be gracious towards the pastor and meet his financial needs when possible (4:10)

11 Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, *therewith* to be content.

12 I know both how to be abased [made low], and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.

13 I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

14 Notwithstanding ye have well done, that ye did communicate [help] with my affliction [troubles].

4:11-14 The pastor should not be greedy (4:11) but satisfied with the will of God (4:12) while relying upon the strength and power of the Lord (4:13). The people should be sensitive to the needs of the pastor and help him especially in time of affliction (4:14).

15 Now ye Philippians know also, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only.

16 For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity.

17 Not because I desire a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound to your account.

18 But I have all, and abound: I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things *which were sent* from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing to God.

4:15-18 Pastors should have the spiritual care of the people in their heart and not for commercial gain (4:17). The people should be such that it is said of them they are as a sweet smell, a spiritual sacrifice acceptable and well pleasing to God (4:18).

19 But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

4:19 Pastors should comfort the people by reminding them of divine faithfulness in meeting their needs (4:19).

People should believe what their pastors teach and thank the Lord for them as gifts of divine grace (Eph. 4:11). When the church sings "*Praise God from whom all blessings flow*" let the congregation have in mind their pastor, not money.

20 Now unto God and our Father *be* glory for ever and ever. Amen.

4:20 Pastors should bless the people with a doxology of praise to the Father, Son and Holy Ghost (4:20).

The people should respond by saying, "*Amen.*"

21 Salute every saint in Christ Jesus. The brethren which are with me greet you.

4:21 The pastor should exhort the people to love one another and greet one another (Phil 4:21). The people should greet one another with a holy kiss, a discrete hug or at least a heartfelt handshake in the Lord.

22 All the saints salute you, chiefly they that are of Caesar's household.

23 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

“Blest be the tie that binds
Our hearts in Christian love;
The fellowship of kindred minds
Is like to that above.

Before our Father’s throne
We pour our ardent prayers;
Our fears, our hopes, our aims are one
Our comforts and our cares.

We share each other’s woes,
Our mutual burdens bear;
And often for each other flows
The sympathizing tear.

When we asunder part,
It gives us inward pain;
But we shall still be joined in heart,
And hope to meet again.

This glorious hope revives
Our courage by the way;
While each in expectation lives,
And longs to see the day.

From sorrow, toil and pain,
And sin, we shall be free,
And perfect love and friendship reign
Through all eternity.”

John Fawcett

The Story Behind the Song

Dr. John Fawcett was the pastor of a small church at Wainsgate, and was called from there to a larger church in London in 1772. He accepted the call and preached his farewell sermon. The wagons were loaded with his books and furniture, and all was ready for the departure, when his parishioners gathered around him, and with tears in their eyes begged of him to stay. His wife said, “*Oh John, John, I cannot bear this.*” “*Neither can I,*” exclaimed the good pastor, “*and we will not go. Unload the wagons and put everything as it was before.*” His decision was hailed with great joy by his people, and he wrote the words of this hymn in commemoration of the event.

The Epistle of Paul to the Philippians

Philippians 4

Review

1. When does peace come to people in conflict with one another?

Answer.

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2. What did Paul meditate on?

Answer.

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3. List the terms of unconditional surrender to Christ.

Answer.

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4. What should the believer mediate upon?

Answer.

The believer should think on the following.

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-
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-
-

5. What does Dr. Hendricksen say about the Christian and injustices?

Answer.

Personal Application and Reflection

1. Are you a Christian of prayer? How much time a week do you spend in prayer? Do you have a special time set side to meet with the Lord? Why?
2. Do you believe that personality conflicts in the church are “normal” or are they intrinsically evil? Explain.
3. Do you view your pastor as a gift of God’s grace as per Ephesians 4:11? Do you pray for him and obey him in gospel terms? Why?
4. What do you meditate on? What movies, websites, conversations, magazines and books capture your attention?
5. Do you suffer injustices with a gracious spirit in the will of the Lord? If not why not? How can you avoid the temptation to defend yourself?

Hiding God’s Word in My Heart

Philippians 4:4 Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice. 5 Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand. 6 Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. 7 And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. 8 Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.

Student's Supplemental Material

Doctrine of Elders

1. The concept of the Elders ruling among the people of God can be traced in the Bible to Moses. The Elders of Israel are associated with Moses in his dealings with the people (Ex. 3:16; 4:29; 17:5; 18:12; Num. 11:16).
 - *Exodus 3:16 Go, and gather the elders of Israel together, and say unto them, The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, appeared unto me, saying, I have surely visited you, and seen that which is done to you in Egypt:*
2. With the passing of time the Elders in the OT administered local government (Judges. 8:14; Josh. 20:4; Ruth 4:2) and dealt with the concerns of national affairs (2 Sam. 3:17; 5:3; 1 Kings 21:8)
 - *Ruth 4:2 And he [Boaz] took ten men of the elders of the city, and said, Sit ye down here. And they sat down.*
 - *2 Samuel 5:3 So all the elders of Israel came to the king of Hebron; and king David made a league with them in Hebron before the LORD: and they anointed David king over Israel.*
3. The right to the title of Elder was based either on age or the esteem in which an individual was held. Age and experience often go together.
4. The Elders of Israel were responsible for and very zealous in conveying the *Word of God* to the people (Ex. 3:16-18) as well as representing the people before God (Ex. 17:5; 24:1; Num. 11:16).
 - *Ex 3:18 And they shall hearken to thy voice: and thou shalt come, thou and the elders of Israel, unto the king of Egypt, and ye shall say unto him, The LORD God of the Hebrews hath met with us: and now let us go, we beseech thee, three days' journey into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice to the LORD our God.*
 - *Numbers 11:16 And the LORD said unto Moses, Gather unto me seventy men of the elders of Israel, whom thou knowest to be the elders of the people, and officers over them; and bring them unto the tabernacle of the congregation, that they may stand there with thee.*
5. On great occasions such as the Passover, the Elders would make the initial arrangements for worship (Ex. 12:21).
6. *Exodus 12:21 Then Moses called for all the elders of Israel, and said unto them, Draw out and take you a lamb according to your families, and kill the Passover.*

7. In their zeal for God the Elders did not always act according to knowledge. They united with the scribes and the chief priests in putting Christ to death (Matt. 16:21; 27:1) and they also hurt the apostles (Acts 6:12).
 - *Matthew 16:21 “From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day.”*
8. As the New Testament church grew as an organization with leadership needs, Elders or presbyters emerged to take their place along with the apostles, prophets, and teachers. The importance of the Elders was soon recognized.
9. At Jerusalem the Elders in association with James assisted in administering the government of the local church thereby acting after the custom of the synagogue (Acts 11:30; 21:18).
 - *Acts 11:30 “Which also they did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.”*
10. In association with the apostles the Elders also shared in the wider government of the whole church.
 - *Acts 15:2 When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question.*
 - *Acts 15:6 “And the apostles and elders came together for to consider of this matter.”*
 - *Acts 16:4 “And as they went through the cities, they delivered them the decrees for to keep, that were ordained of the apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem.”*
11. God knew that after the apostles were dead, the church would still need strong leadership in the apostolic tradition. The close relationship between the office of Elder and the office of apostle is reflected in the fact that an apostle can be a presbyter (1 Pet. 5:1) though not all presbyters can be an apostle.
12. With the establishment of new churches Paul and Barnabas would appoint presbyters or Elders. In each church the Elders were always plural in number.
 - *Titus 1:5 For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee:*
 - *Acts 14:23 And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed.*

13. Those men who hold the title and office of Elder must meet specific biblical qualifications set forth in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9. A combined list of the spiritual qualifications can be made. An Elder must be:

- *1 Timothy 3:1 This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work. 2 A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach; 3 Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous; 4 One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; 5 (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?) 6 Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil. 7 Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.*
- *Titus 1:5 For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee: 6 If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly. 7 For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not self-willed, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre; 8 But a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate; 9 Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.*

Twenty Qualifications for an Elder

1 Timothy 3:1-7 * Titus 1:5-9

- Above reproach
- The husband of only one wife
- Temperate
- Prudent
- Respectable
- Hospitable
- Able to teach
- Not given to wine
- Not self willed
- Not quick tempered
- Not pugnacious
- Not contentious
- Gentle
- Not a lover of money
- One who manages his own household well
- One who has a good reputation outside the church
- One who loves what is good
- One who is just

- Devout
- One who is not a new convert

14. As the qualifications of an Elder are clearly defined by the Scriptures so are the duties. In summary form it is the duty of an Elder to:

❖ **Labor diligently in the Word of God in order to teach the people of God.** This is the primary duty of the teaching Elder.

- *Acts 6:4 But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.*
- *2 Timothy 2:15 Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*
- *John 21:15 So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs. 16 He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep. 17 He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep. 18 Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not.*

❖ **Pray**

- *Acts 6:4 But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.*
- *Acts 20:36 And when he had thus spoken, he kneeled down, and prayed with them all.*
- *Acts 21:5 And when we had accomplished those days, we departed and went our way; and they all brought us on our way, with wives and children, till we were out of the city: and we kneeled down on the shore, and prayed.*
- *Acts 22:17 And it came to pass, that, when I was come again to Jerusalem, even while I prayed in the temple, I was in a trance;*
- *Acts 28:8 And it came to pass, that the father of Publius lay sick of a fever and of a bloody flux: to whom Paul entered in, and prayed, and laid his hands on him, and healed him.*

❖ **Reprove, rebuke, and advise**

- *2 Timothy 4:2 Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.*
- ❖ **Provide general oversight of the body of Christ. The word "bishop" which means "overseer" is used in the NT as another title for Elder.**
- *Acts 20:17 And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church.*
- *Acts 20:28 Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.*
- *Titus 1:5 For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee: 6 If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly. 7 For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not self-willed, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre; 8 But a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate; 9 Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.*
- ❖ **Anoint the sick with oil**
- *James 5:14 Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord:*
- **Establish doctrinal and church policy in all matters including financial consideration**
- *Acts 15:2 When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question.*
- *Acts 15:4 And when they were come to Jerusalem, they were received of the church, and of the apostles and elders, and they declared all things that God had done with them.*
- *Acts 15:6 And the apostles and elders came together for to consider of this matter.*
- *Acts 15:22 Then pleased it the apostles and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas; namely, Judas surnamed Barsabas, and Silas, chief men among the brethren: 23 And they wrote letters by them after this manner; The apostles and elders and brethren send greeting unto the brethren which are of the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia:*
- *Acts 4:37 Having land, sold it, and brought the money, and laid it at the apostles' feet.*

15. In the book of the *Revelation*, the twenty and four Elders appear frequently in the vision to represent all authority and how worship should take place before God (Rev. 4:10; 5:8-10; 19:4).
16. Divine protection for Elders is found in 1 Timothy 5:1. The church is specifically warned not to believe an accusation against an Elder unless there are two or three witnesses (1 Tim. 5:19).
17. Pastoral Elders are to receive adequate financial remuneration.
- *Galatians 6:6 Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in good things.*
 - *1 Corinthians 9:9 For it is written in the Law of Moses, Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn. Doth God take care for oxen? 10 Or saith he it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, this is written: that he that ploweth should plow in hope; and that he that thresheth in hope should be partaker of his hope. 11 If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things?*
 - *1 Timothy 5:17 Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine. 18 For the scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The labourer is worthy of his reward.*
18. Elders who rule well are worthy of double honor for Elders shall receive the greater judgment.
- *1 Timothy 5:17 Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine.*
 - *James 3:1 My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation.*

Doctrine of Deacon

1. From Philippians 1:1 it may be concluded that deacons (*servant*) were one of the two main orders of ministry in the Apostolic Church.
2. The general concept of Deacon as a servant of the Church is well established in both the Bible and Church history.
3. The Greek word *diakonos* is found about 30 times in Scripture and is used in a variety of ways. The word is used of:
 - Domestic servants (John 2:5,9)
 - Civil rulers (Rom. 13:4)
 - Christ (Rom. 15:8 cp. Gal. 2:17)
 - Christians (John 12:26; Eph. 6:21; Col. 1:7; 4:7)
 - Christians in relation to one another (Matt. 20:26; 23:11; Mark 9:35; 10:43)
 - Ministers of the gospel (1 Cor. 3:5; 2 Cor. 3:6; 6:4; 11:23; Eph. 3:7; Col. 1:23,25; 1 Thess. 3:2; 1 Tim. 4:6)
 - Women who serve in the Church (Rom. 16:1) and men as well (Phil. 1:1; 1 Tim. 3:18)
 - False servants of Satan (2 Cor. 11:15)
 - Angels (Matt. 22:13)
4. When the office of deacon was established in the *New Testament* Church, it may have paralleled the function of the Jewish synagogue assistant, an official who took care of the administrative needs of the assembly. The Deacons also assisted the priests in conducting the order of religious services.
5. It is often been taught that the origin of the office of deacon is described in Acts 6:1-6. However, nowhere in this passage is the word deacon used. What is stated is that a problem existed and was brought to the attention of the Apostles.
6. The young Christian Church in Jerusalem was experiencing growing pains.
7. It had become increasingly difficult for the Apostles to distribute charitable gifts to its needy members without neglecting their ministry of prayer and preaching.
8. The widows of Greek or Gentile background complained to the apostles that they were not getting their just share of food and money.
9. To meet this critical need, the congregation was instructed by the Apostles to select seven men (Acts 6:1-6).
10. The selection was made. But again, notice that nothing is mentioned in this passage about Church rule or of an ongoing ministry.
11. Nor is there anything in this portion of *Scripture* about an official office.

12. What is stated is that seven Greek men who were known to be spiritual individuals were to see that the material needs of the Greek ladies were not neglected.
13. Meanwhile the Apostles would give themselves to the Word of God.
14. The names of the seven men are given as Stephen, Philip Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas.
15. Two of these men, Stephen and Philip, later are found as evangelist.
16. Stephen is described as a man *"full of faith and power"* who *"did great wonders and signs among the people"* (Acts 6:8).
17. So convincing were his words and miracles that *"they were not able to resist the wisdom and Spirit by which he spoke"* (Acts 6:10).
18. While some responded in faith, Stephen's zeal for Christ stirred up powerful enemies (Acts 6:11-13).
19. Undaunted by false witnesses, Stephen glorified the Lord even as he was put to death for his convictions (Acts 7:59-60).
20. Phillip was also an evangelist who *"preached the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ"* (Acts 8:9-13).
21. After preaching to eager crowds in Samaria, Phillip witnessed to a solitary Ethiopian in the desert and baptized him (Acts 8:26-38).
22. If the origin of the office of deacon is not precisely pinpointed in Acts 6, certainly the service rendered is in keeping with the duties of a Deacon.
23. The men in Acts 6 are described as *"men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom"* (Acts 6:3).
24. And, they were formally installed or commissioned in a service of prayer and the laying on of hands by the Apostles (Acts 6:6) a practice still regarded today as the scriptural precedent for the ordination of Church officials.
25. As a result of the selection of these seven men harmony was restored in the congregation and the Church continued to grow in number and spirit (Acts 6:5,7).
26. The list of qualifications for Deacons given in (1 Timothy 3) shows that this servant of the Church was to be equipped for a spiritual ministry to serve with the bishop or pastor: *"Likewise Deacons must be reverent, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy for money, holding the mystery of the faith with a pure conscience. But let these first be proved then let them serve as Deacons being found blameless"* (1 Tim. 3:8-10).

27. The deacon was expected to have an exemplary home life (3:11,12), to be a proven leader, and to possess high character.
28. Paul wrote that the reward for faithfulness in the office of deacon is that they "*obtain for themselves a good standing and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus*" (1 Tim. 3:13).
29. The selfless deacon may feel a close fellowship with the Lord, who walked the earth as "*One who serves*" (Luke 22:27). According to Jesus, the true heroes in the kingdom of God are those who assume the role of diakonos, a servant (Matt. 20:26).

Doctrine of Grace

1. The first mention of grace in the Bible is found in Genesis 6:8 where we read *"Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord."*
2. As used in the Old Testament grace is often used in the sense of special favor being held based upon a high estimation of someone by another person. Joseph found favor in the eyes of the keeper of the prison and Ruth found grace in the eyes of Boaz.
 - *Genesis 39:4 And Joseph found grace in his sight, and he served him: and he made him overseer over his house, and all that he had he put into his hand.*
 - *Ruth 2:10 Then she fell on her face, and bowed herself to the ground, and said unto him, Why have I found grace in thine eyes, that thou shouldest take knowledge of me, seeing I am a stranger?*
3. In the divine economy grace is what God is freely able to do and indeed what He does do for those for whom Christ has died. Mercy, the compassion of God, and love, the motive of God, unite when expressed to manifest grace that is undeserved favor.
4. The grace of God rules out human merit for salvation. Grace bestows the merits of Christ to the undeserving so that in the sight of God the sinner is complete and lacks nothing.
 - *Romans 3:24 Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:*
 - *Romans 5:1 Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:*
 - *Ephesians 2:8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast.*
5. Grace perfects forever the salvation of the elect in the sight of God for grace alone reflects the glory of God.
 - *Colossians 2:9 For in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. 10 And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power:*
6. While grace removes any obligation to gain merit with God by legal duties grace does not encourage sin. God forbid that such a thought would be associated with free grace.
 - *Romans 4:14 For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect:*

- *Romans 6:14 For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace. 15 What then? Shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid.*
 - *Romans 8:1 There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.*
7. While by nature every person is born “in Adam” by grace select individuals can be born again and placed into a state of saving grace, baptized into Christ, dead unto sin but alive unto God.
- *Romans 6:1 What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? 2 God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? 3 Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? 4 Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. 5 For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: 6 Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. 7 For he that is dead is freed from sin. 8 Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: 9 Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. 10 For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.*
 - *Romans 5:2 By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.*
8. Saving grace is a free gift of God.
- *Romans 5:15 But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many.*
9. Grace can abound or be diminished. There is the reign or ruling principle of grace under the *New Testament* economy.
- *Romans 5:20 Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound:*
10. Grace can be abused.
- *Romans 6:1 What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?*
11. Every soul that shall ever be saved shall be saved on the basis of grace though the number is small.

- *Romans 11:5 Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace.*

12 .Paul never ceased to marvel that he was the object of God's redeeming grace

- *Romans 12:3 For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.*
- *Romans 12:6 Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith;*
- *Romans 15:15 Nevertheless, brethren, I have written the more boldly unto you in some sort, as putting you in mind, because of the grace that is given to me of God,*
- *1 Corinthians 15:10 But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.*
- *Galatians 1:15 But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace,*

13 Not only is the Christian saved by grace he is sustained by the same.

- *Titus 3:7 That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.*

14 Grace should be asked for on behalf of others.

- *1 Corinthians 1:3 Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.*
- *2 Corinthians 1:2 Grace be to you and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.*

15. In times of personal suffering God's grace is sufficient to sustain the soul.

- *2 Corinthians 12:9 And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.*

16. It is possible to fall from the sphere of grace if dependency is made upon salvation by good works or if there is excessive sin in the life.

- *Galatians 5:4 Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.*

- *Jude 4 For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.*

17. Praise should be offered to God for His great grace.

- *Ephesians 1:6 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.*
- *Colossians 3:16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.*

18. Gracious words should characterize the speech of a Christian.

- *Colossians 4:6 Let your speech be alway with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.*

19. There is a throne of grace before which the Christian is to pray.

- *Hebrews 4:16 Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.*

20. More grace is given to the humble.

- *James 4:6 But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.*

21. Christians are to grow in the sphere of grace.

- *2 Peter 3:18 But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.*

The Salvation of the Soul

1. There are definite signs that the soul has been saved.
2. The heart that has been saved enjoys a natural spiritual fellowship with God, with Christ, and with fellow believers.
 - *1 John 1:3 That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. 4 And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full.*
3. The heart that has been converted will have a new sensitivity to sin.
 - *1 John 1:5 This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. 6 If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: 7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. 8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.*
4. The converted heart has a fundamental orientation to gospel obedience to the commandments of the *Scripture*.
 - *1 John 2:3 And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. 4 He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. 5 But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him.*
5. The converted heart will want to forsake the world and its values.
 - *1 John 2:15 Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.*
6. The converted heart desires to see Jesus Christ coming.
 - *2 Timothy 4:8 Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.*
 - *1 John 3:2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. 3 And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.*

7. The converted heart wants to forsake sin.
 - *1 John 3:5 And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin. 6 Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him.*
8. The converted heart has a love for other believers.
 - *1 John 3:14 We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death.*
9. The converted heart will know the experience of answered prayer.
 - *1 John 3:22 And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.*
 - *1 John 5:14 And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: 15 And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.*
10. The converted heart will have an inner witness of the Holy Spirit.
 - *Romans 8:15 For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. 16 The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:*
 - *1 John 4:13 Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.*
11. The converted heart will have a new ability to discern between spiritual truth and error.
 - *John 10:3 To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. 4 And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. 5 And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers.*
 - *John 10:27 My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:*
 - *1 John 4:1 Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. 2 Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: 3 And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world. 4 Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world. 5 They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them. 6 We are of God: he that*

knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.

12. The converted heart embraces the basic doctrines of the faith.

- *1 John 5:1 Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him.*

13. The converted heart will experience a measure of persecution.

- *John 15:18 If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. 19 If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. 20 Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also.*
- *Philippians 1:28 And in nothing terrified by your adversaries: which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God.*

Women in the Church

1. There is much common ground between men and women theologically. Women are equal to men in the sight of God who made them male and female.
2. Women are intelligent and gifted so that they have great capacity to teach (other women), disciple new converts, offer instruction to the young, enter into public debate, and speak in the gathered assemblies by prayer and prophesying (1 Cor. 11).
3. Despite the obvious gifts that women have there are great points of controversy within the church. The old question is still being debated as to whether or not women should be ordained to the ministry.
4. If women are to be ordained to the ministry then they would be authorized to baptize, preach, serve communion, and perform funerals and weddings.
5. In many denominations women are demanding the right to do these very things and are offended when restricted.
6. The issue can be very simple. The sovereign God of the universe has a right to organize His church as He wills without apology and without explanation.
7. It is a matter of biblical record that the Lord called 12 men to be His apostles. The apostolic authority was passed on to the elders. Elders are to appoint other elders (Titus 1:5) according to established guidelines.
8. These biblical and historical boundaries should not be removed. The role of women in the church is vital, strategic, honorable and limited so that ultimate leadership is invested in elders.
9. It is a sign of Christian grace to function in a subordinate position. The greatest trouble in the church has always been when people move outside the sphere of life for which they were designed. In the day of final judgment God will honor those who humbly honor Him.
10. The issue is not ability but preference.
11. Historically, the early church recognized this divine preference.
 - The Didache established church order. True prophets are distinguished from the false. The issue of leadership by women is absent.
 - The Apostolic Tradition is a document from the third century. It claims first century apostolic authority and places restrictions upon women from being ordained.
 - The *Didascalia* is a church order manual that comes from the middle of the third century. It too places restrictions on widows in detail reflecting (1 Tim. 5).

- The Statutes of the Apostles is a church manual from the early part of the fourth century and excludes women from Eucharistic ministry.
- The *Octateuch* of Clement and *Testament of Our Lord* dates back to the fifth century. In this document women are entrusted with teaching, discipline, and discipleship of other women.