

Philippians

"Because of my chains, most of the brothers in the Lord have been encouraged to speak the word of God more courageously. . ."



by Doyle Gilliam



THE BOOK OF PHILIPPIANS

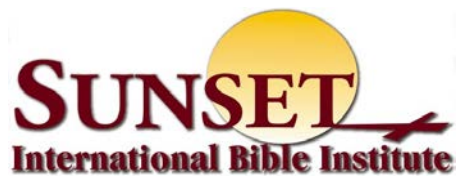


INTRODUCTORY NEW TESTAMENT STUDIES

Taught by
DOYLE GILLIAM

Arranged for study by
Virgil Yocham
© 1993

Cover design by Beth Miller



External Studies
3728 34th Street
Lubbock, Texas 79410
(806) 788-3280/1 or (800) 687-2121

DISCLAIMER

The textbook used in this course was selected because we consider it one of the best and well adapted to this course of study. The commentary on “*Philippians, Colossians & Philemon*” by: Anthony L. Ash contains a wealth of knowledge which will increase your understanding of the letter to the Philippian Christians. Although written by a Christian brother, as with all books written by men, there may be some things with which you and I would not agree. The principle, “use what is good and discard what is not good” applies to all textbooks used with our courses. Please be wise enough to discard any and all teaching that is not biblical.

Instructions and Requirements for Level II Students (Non-Transferable)

Each lesson is built around the instruction on either the VHS tape, DVD, CD, or audio cassette tape. Listen to the lecture on the tape as you follow along in the course Study Guide book.

Reading: You must read the book of Philippians through three (3) times during this course of study. **(This will be 10% of your final grade.)** It is suggested that you purchase the textbook, *“Philippians, Colossians & Philemon”* by Anthony L. Ash to read along with the taped lessons.

Tests: There is a Self Exam at the end of each lesson. Preview each lesson by reading these questions first. There will be two tests to complete for this course. One test is to be done at the end of lesson six (6) and the other will be done at the end of the study, after completion of lesson twelve (12). Each test will cover only the previous six lessons studied. **You must receive a grade of 70% or above on these two tests to successfully pass this course. (Worth 80% of your grade)**

Memory Work: Memory verses are to be done as you go through the study. You are asked to either write your verses out in the presence of the administrator, correct them with a different colored pen and turn them in with the mid-term or final test or quote them to the administrator during the course of study. He will keep track of the verses completed and report them to us. Please be diligent in doing your memory work. All memory work must be completed to pass this course. You have 16 memory verses. **(Memory verses will be 10% of your final grade)**

Due by the Mid-Term test: (7 verses)

Philippians 1:20-21; 3:8-12.

Due by the Final Test: (9 verses)

Philippians 2:5-8; 4:6-8, 11-12.

All assignments **must be completed and turned in** at the time of the final exam to pass this course.

Grade schedule

Reading	10%
Memory work	10%
Two Exams	<u>80%</u>
TOTAL	100%

Instructions and Requirements for Level III Students (Transferable)

Each lesson is built around the instruction on either the VHS tape, DVD, CD, or audio cassette tape. Listen to the lecture on the tape as you follow along in the course Study Guide book.

Reading: Read the book of Philippians **six (6) times** during the course of this study. At least one reading must be in a modern speech Bible. Each time you read the book do so at one sitting. You are also required to read the commentary on Philippians in the book, “*Philippians, Colossians & Philemon*” by Anthony L. Ash. A three (3) page evaluation of the commentary is to be sent in with the final exam. **(These two reading assignments and paper will be worth 10% of your grade.)**

Memory Verses: You will have thirty-two (32) verses to memorize in your study of the Philippians. These are to be done as you go through the study and the appropriate passages done at the appropriate time. Either quote these to your Test Administrator or write them out and have someone correct them with a different colored ink. Please indicate which Bible version you are using for your memory verses if you send them in to be graded by us. **(Worth 10% of final grade)**

Due with your **Mid-term Test**: (15 verses)

Philippians 1:9-11; 2:5-11; 3:10-11, 12-14.

Due with your **Final Test**: (17 verses)

Philippians 3:20-21; 4:4-9, 11-19.

Writing: A five-page commentary on Philippians 2:5-11 is to be written and sent in with your final test. Be sure you deal thoroughly with verses 6 & 7. **(This will be 10% of your final grade.)**

Tests: There are two (2) exams for this course. The Mid-term exam will be at the end of lesson six (6) and the Final exam will be at the completion of the course. You must receive a passing grade of at least 70% to receive credit for this course. **(70% of your final grade)**

Assignments:

- All assignments **must** be completed and handed in on time. Late work will cause points to be deducted from your final grade.
- The course requirements listed above will be given the following percentages in making up your final grade

Grade Value Percentage

Readings and evaluation paper	10%
Memory verses	10%
Writing assignment	10%
Two major tests	<u>70%</u>
	100%

Contents

LESSON 1: INTRODUCTION TO PHILIPPIANS	1
LESSON 2: INTRODUCTION AND SALUTATION (Philippians 1:1-2)	7
LESSON 3: THANKSGIVING AND PRAYER (Philippians 1:3-11)	14
LESSON 4: PAUL'S CHAINS ADVANCE THE GOSPEL (Philippians 1:12-20)	21
LESSON 5: IMITATING CHRIST'S HUMILITY (Philippians 2:1-11)	28
LESSON 6: SHINING AS STARS (Philippians 2:12-18)	35
LESSON 7: TIMOTHY AND EPAPHRODITUS (Philippians 2:19-30)	42
LESSON 8: NO CONFIDENCE IN THE FLESH (Philippians 3:1-11)	48
LESSON 9: ON TOWARD THE GOAL (Philippians 3:12-21)	55
LESSON 10: CHARACTER OF HEAVENLY CITIZENSHIP (Philippians 4:1-7)	62
LESSON 11: THANKS FOR THE GIFTS (Philippians 4:10-23)	69
LESSON 12: REVIEW AND SUMMARY (The Book of Philippians)	75
BIBLIOGRAPHY	80

LESSON ONE

INTRODUCTION TO PHILIPPIANS

INTRODUCTION:

The objective of this lesson is to present background material that will help us understand the message of the epistle to the Philippians. We will look briefly at the city of Philippi in history and the establishment of the church there as recorded in Acts 16. We will also have an overview of the epistle of Paul to the Philippians and note the following:

1. The occasion of the writing of this letter.
 2. Paul's purpose in writing.
 3. Some of the characteristics of the church in Philippi as revealed in the letter to the church in Philippi other Scriptures.
-

LESSON TEXT: Study the texts in the notes.

LESSON AIM: To introduce ourselves to the overall environment of the Philippian letter and the church to which it was written.

LESSON OBJECTIVES: You will . . .

1. Learn what prompted Paul to write this letter to the Christians in Philippi.
 2. Search out the actual events which transpired leading the gospel to be taken to Macedonia.
 3. Discover many of the characteristics of the church in Philippi.
-

THE CITY OF PHILIPPI

A. Originally Called Krenides ("Little Fountains")

1. It was renamed Philippi about 356 B.C. by King Philip of Macedon, the father of Alexander the Great. Its gold was mined and used by Philip to partially finance his military expansion.
2. It was the scene of the historic battle between Brutus and Cassius, assassins of Julius Caesar, and Anthony and Octavian in 42 B.C.
3. Soon afterward it was made a Roman colony, a Rome in miniature. (A little Rome)
 - a. Its citizens enjoyed all the rights of Romans citizens.
 - b. Many were former Roman soldiers.
 - c. When Octavian defeated Anthony and Cleopatra at the Battle of Actium in 31 B.C., many soldiers of Anthony were dispossessed of their lands in Italy and moved to Philippi.

4. Philippians were very proud of their Roman colony status. We see this emphasis in both Acts and Philippians.
 - a. Acts 16:20-21 – “*They brought them before the magistrates and said, ‘These men are Jews, and are throwing our city into an uproar by advocating customs unlawful for us Romans to accept or practice.’*”
 - b. Philippians 1:27 – “*Whatever happens, conduct yourselves (literally “behave as citizens”) in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ.*”
 - c. Philippians 3:20 – “*But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ.*”
5. Philippi’s modern day notoriety.
 - a. Not known in the modern world because of its historical connection with the Roman Empire.
 - b. It is known today because a short letter was written to the Lord’s church there by an apostle of Christ over a century later.

B. The Church Established in Philippi

1. The second missionary journey – the new team of Paul, Silas, and Timothy. See Acts 15:36-41; 15:1-3.
2. Paul’s vision of the Macedonian (Acts 16:6-10).
 - a. The decision to preach in Macedonia. Paul saw a vision in the night in which he saw a man of Macedonia saying, “*Come over into Macedonia and help us.*”
 - b. Luke, the writer of the book of Acts, joins the team. This is so indicated by the pronoun “we” (16:10).
3. The conversion of Lydia (Acts 16:11-15).
 - a. Worshipers of God sought out by Paul and company.
 - b. Prayer and preaching to the women at the river side. Evidently there was no Synagogue in the city.
 - c. Conversion of Lydia and her household. They received the word of God and were baptized.
4. The fortune-telling slave girl (Acts 16:16-18).
 - a. Had a spirit of divination.
 - b. She followed Paul and Silas throughout the city.
 - c. Testified that, “*These are men who declare unto you the way of salvation.*” This displeased Paul.
 - d. Paul casts out the spirit from the girl – this caused trouble.
5. Paul and Silas beaten and imprisoned (Acts 16:19-24).
6. Conversion of the jailor and his family (Acts 16:25-34).
 - a. The earthquake and the startled jailor.
 - b. The question and answer.
7. Leaving Philippi in peace (Acts 16:35-40).

NOTE: Luke’s statement: “Then they left.” Indicates that Luke stayed in Philippi. When Paul returned to Macedonia some 5 or 6 years later, Luke again accompanies him and writes in the first person again. See Acts 20:1-6.

PAUL'S LETTER TO THE CHURCH AT PHILIPPI

A. The Occasion of the Letter

1. Paul's desire to express appreciation for their gift (4:10-19). *"I have received full payment and even more; I am amply supplied, now that I have received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent. They are a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God"* (v. 18).
2. The return of Epaphroditus to Philippi (2:25-30). *"But I think it is necessary to send back to you Epaphroditus, my brother, fellow-worker and fellow-soldier, who is also your messenger, whom you sent to take care of my needs"* (v. 25). *"Welcome him in the Lord with great joy and honor men like him"* (v. 29).

B. Paul's Purpose in Writing

1. **To give written expression to his gratitude.** He not only thanked God for their gift (4:10-20), but he also thanked God for the Philippians (1:3-8). *"I thank my God every time I remember you"* (1:3).
2. **To provide spiritual guidance and instruction which the congregation needed.**
 - a. Conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ (1:27-30).
 - b. Be like-minded, looking to the interests of others (2:2-3).
 - c. Have the attitude of Christ (2:5-11).
 - d. Hold out the word of life (2:14-16).
 - e. Rejoice in the Lord (3:1; 4:4).
3. **To fill their hearts and minds with gladness.** The words "joy," "rejoice" are found in verb and noun form 16 times in this letter.
 - a. *"I always pray with joy . . ."* (1:4).
 - b. *"And because of this I rejoice"* (1:18).
 - c. *"I will continue with all of you for your progress and joy in the faith,"* (1:25).
 - d. *"Your joy in Christ Jesus will overflow on account of me"* (1:26).
 - e. *"Then make my joy complete by being like-minded"* (2:2).
 - f. *"I am glad and rejoice with all of you"* (2:16).
 - g. *"So you too should be glad and rejoice with me"* (2:18).
 - h. *"Welcome him in the Lord with great joy"* (2:19).
 - i. *"Finally, my brothers, rejoice in the Lord"* (3:1).
 - j. *"You whom I love and long for, my joy and crown"* (4:1).
 - k. *"Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!"* (4:4).
 - l. *"I rejoice greatly in the Lord that at last you have renewed your concern for me"* (4:10).
4. **To ask the Philippians to give Epaphroditus a cordial "welcome home"** (2:25-30). *"Welcome him in the Lord with great joy and honor men like him, because he almost died for the work of Christ, risking his life to make up for the help you could not give me"* (v. 29).
5. **To issue two main warnings** – chapter 3.

- a. Against **legalism** (3:1-16). A warning against having “confidence in the flesh” with an illustration from Paul’s own life.
 - b. Against **lawlessness** (3:17-21). A warning against “enemies of the cross” whose destiny is destruction, whose god is their stomach, whose glory is their shame and whose mind is on earthly things.
6. **To report on his circumstances** (1:12-26).

C. Character of the Church

1. A close relationship to Paul. The Philippian church was perhaps closer to Paul than any other church – his “joy and crown” (4:1). *“It is right for me to feel this way about all of you, since I have you in my heart; for whether I am in chains or defending and confirming the gospel, all of you share in God’s grace with me. God can testify how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus”* (1:7-8).
2. Two main blemishes.
 - a. Disunity – exhortations to be united.
 - 1) *“. . . that you stand firm in one spirit, contending as one man for the faith of the gospel”* (1:27).
 - 2) *“Then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose”* (2:2).
 - 3) *“I plead with Euodia and I plead with Syntyche to agree with each other in the Lord”* (4:2).
 - b. Despondency – emphasis on joy, rejoice, a life of trust and contentment and apart from anxiety.
3. This was the least Jewish of the churches begun by Paul. It was a military, not a mercantile, city. There was no synagogue; no quotations from the Old Testament. There were some Jewish elements there concerning which Paul gave a strong warning: *“Watch out for those dogs, those men who do evil, those mutilators of the flesh. For it is we who are the circumcision, we who worship by the Spirit of God, who glory in Christ Jesus, and who put no confidence in the flesh”* (3:2-3).
4. Women were important. This was true in Macedonia generally where women held higher positions of honor and esteem than in most other parts of the Roman empire.
 - a. Lydia, the first convert along with her household (Acts 16). Apparently the young church met in her house (Acts 16:40).
 - b. Euodia and Syntyche – *“. . . women who have contended at my side in the cause of the gospel”* (Philippians 4:2-3).
5. It was an organized church with “overseers and deacons” (Philippians 1:1).
 - a. Elders or overseers were found in the early days of the church in Jerusalem – *“This they did, sending their gift to the elders by Barnabas and Saul”* (Acts 11:30).
 - b. Paul and Barnabas had appointed elders for the congregations established on their first missionary journey. *“Paul and Barnabas appointed elders for them in each church and, with prayer and fasting, committed them to the Lord in whom they had put their trust”* (Acts 14:23).

- c. Qualifications of elders or overseers as well as deacons are given in Paul's writings. See 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1.
- 6. The Philippian church was an obedient church. We find no flagrant violations of God's will or a spirit of rebellion to the lordship of Jesus. *"Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed – not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence . . ."* (2:12).
- 7. It was a generous church. Despite their own "extreme poverty." Philippi being one of the "Macedonian churches" *" . . . gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the saints. . ."* (2 Corinthians 8:1-5).
- 8. It was an evangelistic church.
 - a. *"In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now"* (1:4-5).
 - b. *"Moreover, as you Philippians know, in the early days of your acquaintance with the gospel, when I set out from Macedonia, not one church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving, except you only; for even when I was in Thessalonica, you sent me aid again and again when I was in need"* (4:15-16).
- 9. The church at Philippi was a persecuted church. *"Without being frightened in any way by those who oppose you. . . For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for him, since you are going through the same struggle you saw I had, and now hear that I still have"* (1:28-30).

CONCLUSION:

- A. In the second lesson we want to look at some of the characteristics of this letter to the Philippians.
- B. We also will study the salutation as found in Philippians 1:1-2.
- C. Modern man is seeking desperately for the secret of true happiness and contentment. This points up some good reasons for studying Philippians:
 - 1. It reveals the secret of true happiness.
 - 2. It reveals the man who learned the secret.
 - 3. It reveals the Christ who taught him the secret.

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON ONE:

1. On what missionary journey was the church in Philippi started? _____
2. What two things occasioned the letter to the Philippians?
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
3. What six reasons are given to express the purpose of Paul's writing?
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
 - 4) _____
 - 5) _____
 - 6) _____
4. What were the two main blemishes of the Philippian church which concerned Paul?
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
5. List six of the nine characteristics of the Philippian church.

1) _____	4) _____
2) _____	5) _____
3) _____	6) _____

LESSON TWO

INTRODUCTION AND SALUTATION

INTRODUCTION:

In this second lesson we will be continuing our introductory material on the letter of Paul to the Philippians. We have looked briefly at the city of Philippi historically and of the establishment of the church there as recorded in Acts 16. We also noted in our first lesson three other points of background study:

1. The occasion of the writing of Philippians
2. Paul's purpose in writing
3. Some of the characteristics of the church in Philippi

In this lesson we will look at some of the characteristics of the epistle and then study the salutation as found in Philippians 1:1-2.

LESSON TEXT: Philippians 1:1-2

LESSON AIM: To get a clearer understanding of the letter by looking at some of its characteristics and then to study the salutation.

LESSON OBJECTIVES: You will . . .

1. Learn several things which characterize the letter and thus become familiar with the overall intent of the letter.
 2. Learn who are the authors/writers and recipients of the letter.
-

SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF THE EPISTLE

A. Philippians Is a Letter of Peace

(Peaceful character) Philippians is more peaceful than Galatians and more personal than Ephesians. There is no evidence of problems with false teachers at Philippi.

B. Philippians Is a Letter of Intimacy

The intimate character of Philippians. It contains much intimate personal matter like 2 Corinthians but for different reason! The personal pronouns "I", "me", "my" are found about 120 times in Philippians.

C. Philippians Is a Christ-centered Letter

Christ is preeminent throughout. He is mentioned nearly 50 times in 104 verses.

1. Christ our life – chapter 1
2. Christ our example – chapter 2
3. Christ our object – chapter 3
4. Christ our strength – chapter 4

D. Philippians Is a Letter of Love

1. They were remembered. *“I thank my God every time I remember you”* (1:3).
2. They were held in Paul’s heart. *“It is right for me to feel this way about all of you, since I have you in my heart; for whether I am in chains or defending and confirming the gospel, all of you share in God’s grace with me. God can testify how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus”* (1:7-8).
3. They are loved and longed for. *“Therefore, my brothers, you whom I love and long for, my joy and my crown”* (4:1).

E. Philippians Is a Letter of Joy

The theme of the letter: “I rejoice; do you rejoice.”

1. Paul rejoiced despite his circumstances.
 - a. Even though in prison. *“Now I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel”* (1:12).
 - b. Even in poverty and want. *“I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well-fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do everything through him who gives me strength”* (4:11-13).

Did a Roman sentry guard his cell? It only reminded him of that “peace of God” that “ . . . will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus” (4:6-7).

2. The theme of the epistle and Paul’s life: **rejoicing in the Lord always.**
 - a. The command: *“Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!”* (4:4).
 - b. The assurance: *“And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus”* (4:19).
 - c. The reward: *“But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body”* (3:20-21).
 - 1) Rejoicing in evangelism and in facing death – chapter 1.
 - 2) Rejoicing in lowly service and in brotherhood – chapter 2.
 - 3) Rejoicing in imperfections and heavenly citizenship – chapter 3.
 - 4) Rejoicing in anxiety and privations – chapter 4.

NOTE: The Key Verse of Philippians. *“Join with others in following my example, brothers, and take note of those who live according to the pattern we gave you”* (3:14). How we need Christianity as Paul understood, taught and lived it!

THE SALUTATION (Philippians 1:1-2)

A. The Ancient Writing Style. The style of writing letters in biblical times: author (authors) to people being addressed, greeting.

1. “*Artaxerxes, king of kings, to Ezra the priest, a teacher of the Law of the God of heaven: Greetings*” (Ezra 7:12).
2. “*Claudius Lysias, to His Excellency, Governor Felix: Greetings*” (Acts 23:26-27).

B. The Writers by Name – “Paul and Timothy”

1. **Timothy – a co-worker with Paul.** He is associated with Paul because of his special connection with the Philippians. He had been a member of the missionary team that evangelized Philippi (Acts 16).
 - a. He had been converted apparently on the first missionary journey of Paul and Barnabas (Acts 13-14). See 1 Timothy 1:2 – “*To Timothy my true son in the faith.*”
 - b. On Paul’s second journey he joined the team of Paul and Silas (Acts 16:1-3).
 - c. Timothy was a faithful co-worker with Paul and was often sent by Paul to teach and encourage churches.
 “*For this reason I am sending to you Timothy, my son whom I love, who is faithful in the Lord*” (1 Corinthians 4:17).
 “*We sent Timothy, who is our brother and God’s fellow worker in spreading the gospel of Christ, to strengthen and encourage you in your faith*” (1 Thessalonians 3:2).
 - d. His devotion to the Philippians is demonstrated in chapter 2:20-22 – “*I have no one else like him, who takes a genuine interest in your welfare, for everyone looks out for his own interests, not those of Jesus Christ. But you know that Timothy has proved himself, because as a son with his father he has served with me in the work of the gospel.*”
 - e. It was to Timothy that Paul would write his last letter and beseech him to “*do your best to come to me quickly*” (2 Timothy 4:9).
 - f. He was indeed Paul’s “fellow worker” (Romans 16:21) and was honored by being associated with Paul in writing this letter and other New Testament epistles.
2. **But the real author of this letter is Paul as guided by the Holy Spirit.**
 - a. He writes in the first person singular throughout the letter.
 - b. He mentions Timothy in the third person when he is mentioned again (2:19-24). “*I hope in the Lord to send Timothy to you soon . . .*” (v. 19).
3. Brief note on Paul:
 - a. He had been a persecuting Pharisee who was consumed with a passion to destroy the church.
 - b. He had been converted to Christ in Damascus after meeting the Lord Jesus on the way and being given instructions that he would be told what to do in Damascus.
 - c. He began preaching the faith he had once tried to destroy and went on preaching tours to evangelize the Roman world.

- d. On the second recorded missionary journey he and his co-workers had preached and established this congregation at Philippi.
- e. After many years of friendship and fellowship in the Lord, Paul wrote to them this letter, a letter we are now studying after over 1900 years.

C. The Writers by Profession. “*Servants of Christ Jesus*”

1. Note that Paul does not call himself an apostle as he does in most of his letters. There is no need to stress his apostolic authority in Philippi. His authority is not questioned there, and the relationship was tender and trusting.
2. The word for “servants” is translated from the Greek word *DOULOI* and means **bond-servants or slaves**.
 - a. “*You are not your own; you were bought at a price*” (1 Corinthians 6:19-20).
 - b. “*But thanks be to God that, though you used to be slaves to sin, you wholeheartedly obeyed the form of teaching to which you were committed. You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness*” (Romans 6:17-18).
3. But the term “servant” is also a **term of dignity**. In the Old Testament people who were chosen and used by God were called “servants of the Lord.”
 - a. “*Moses the servant of the LORD*” (Joshua 1:1).
 - b. “*Joshua the servant of the LORD*” (Judges 2:8).
 - c. “*David his servant*” (Psalms 78:70).
 - d. “*David my servant*” (Psalms 89:3).
 - e. “*My servants the prophets*” (Jeremiah 7:25).
 - f. “*Your servants the prophets*” (Daniel 9:6).
 - g. “*. . . his servants the prophets*” (Amos 3:7).
4. It is, therefore, a great honor to be a servant of God, and Paul would gladly speak of himself and Timothy as “*servants of Christ Jesus*.”
5. This attitude of servanthood Jesus demonstrated and taught.

“*You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to be great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many*” (Matthew 20:25-28).

D. The Recipients of the Letter – Saints

“*To all the saints in Christ Jesus at Philippi*” (v. 1).

1. The word “saint” does not refer to sinless individuals nor to special people who have been elevated to sainthood after this life. Most of the New Testament epistles of Paul are addressed to the saints. Examples:
 - a. “*To all in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints*” (Romans 1:7).
 - b. “*To the church of God in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be holy . . .*” (1 Corinthians 1:2).
 - c. “*To the saints in Ephesus, the faithful in Christ Jesus*” (Ephesians 1:1).

- d. “*To the holy and faithful brothers in Christ at Colosse*” (Colossians 1:2).
As these letters indicate, the “saints” were far from sinlessness or perfection.
2. The word refers to being “set apart” for God and for His holy use.
 - a. In the Old Testament objects such as the altar, the ark of the covenant, the lampstand, and the tabernacle itself were sanctified, consecrated and set apart for a holy use.
 - b. The nation of Israel was separated by God from all other nations and set apart as His holy, covenant people.
 - 1) “*Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all the nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation*” (Exodus 19:5-6).
 - 2) “*For you are a people holy to the LORD your God. The LORD your God has chosen you out of all the peoples on the face of the earth to be his people, his treasured possession*” (Deuteronomy 7:6).
 - c. Jesus sanctified Himself (John 17:19). He consecrated Himself, separating Himself to the special task of providing salvation for all by His atoning death.
3. Christians are now sanctified, set apart for God with special obligations as His chosen people.
 - a. “*But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light*” (1 Peter 2:9).
 - b. “*But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do, for it is written: ‘Be holy, because I am holy’*” (1 Peter 1:15-16).
4. We should also note that they were saints “in Christ Jesus.” Christians have been baptized into Christ (Galatians 3:27), and they live and are “rooted and are built up in Him” (Colossians 2:6-7). They “rejoice in the Lord,” have “joy in Christ Jesus,” “stand firm” in Him and can do all things through Him.

E. Co-recipients of the Letter. “*Together with the overseers and deacons.*”

1. The overseers are the same as the elders (Acts 20:17, 28). They are also called shepherds or pastors (Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:1-4).
2. There was a plurality of these elders, overseers or pastors in the Philippian church. In each case where they are mentioned in the New Testament this is always the pattern—overseers (bishops) plural, overseeing a congregation, singular.
3. Deacons were special servants in the congregation. We can learn something of their work in Acts 6:1-6 and of their qualifications in 1 Timothy 3:8-13.

F. Paul and Timothy’s Greeting

- 2). “*Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ*” (v. 2).

1. Grace is the free, spontaneous, unmerited love of God bringing redemption in Christ. “*And are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus*” (Romans 3:24).
2. Peace is the fruit of such activity in forgiven sinners. “*Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ*” (Romans 5:1).
3. The order must always be—grace then peace. There can be no peace with God before the sinner has been forgiven through God’s grace.
4. The best we can wish for others is that God’s grace and peace be theirs.

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON TWO:

1. List five things which particularly characterize the Philippian letter.
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
 - 4) _____
 - 5) _____

2. Give a simple four point outline of Philippians. One point for each chapter.
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
 - 4) _____

3. Write out the key verse of Philippians according to Doyle Gilliam.

4. What is the theme of the epistle and Paul's life? _____

5. Fill in the blanks below:
 - 1) Rejoicing in _____ and in facing _____ (chapter 1).
 - 2) Rejoicing in _____ and in _____ (chapter 2).
 - 3) Rejoicing in _____ and in _____ (chapter 3).
 - 4) Rejoicing in _____ and _____ (chapter 4).

6. Who were the writers of the letter?

By name: _____

By profession: _____

7. Who are the recipients of the letter?

8. Write out the greeting given in verse 2.

LESSON THREE

THANKSGIVING AND PRAYER

INTRODUCTION:

We welcome you to the third lesson in our study of Paul's epistle to the Philippians. In this study today we will be looking at Paul's thanksgiving and prayer as found in Philippians 1:3-11. Paul was constantly in prayer and thanksgiving for the Philippians, and he had a great deal of confidence in God's work in their lives. And these are the things that he will talk about in his prayer for them as found in verses 9 through 11.

LESSON TEXT: Philippians 1:3-11 and related scriptures.

LESSON AIM: To comprehend Paul's deep feelings for the Philippian church and to understand his fervent prayer for their continued growth.

LESSON OBJECTIVES: You will . . .

1. Learn several things about Paul's prayer life, especially his intercession for others.
 2. Find at least three ways in which the Philippian church had fellowship with Paul in the gospel.
 3. Discover that Paul prays for an ever increasing love and the fruit which that will bring to their lives.
-

PAUL'S THANKSGIVING FOR THE PHILIPPIANS (1:3-8)

A. The Testimony of Paul's Memory

"I thank my God every time I remember you" (v. 3).

1. Paul's common practice. Paul often thanked God for the faith, love and endurance of Christians to whom he wrote.
 - a. *"We always thank God for all of you, mentioning you in our prayers. We continually remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labor prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thessalonians 1:2-3).*
 - b. *"How can we thank God enough for you in return for all the joy we have in the presence of our God because of you?" (1 Thessalonians 3:9).*
 - c. *"First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is being reported all over the world" (Romans 1:8).*
2. In spite of difficult beginning. Though Paul and Silas had "previously suffered and been insulted in Philippi" (1 Thessalonians 2:2), Paul still had

pleasant memories of the Philippians. Their reception of the gospel and their continued fellowship with Paul in the spreading of that gospel gave Paul unceasing joy.

B. The Testimony of Paul's Action

"In all my prayers for you I always pray with joy."

1. Paul's prayers for others were filled with thanksgiving:
 - a. *"For this reason, I, since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and your love for all the saints, have never stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers"* (Ephesians 1:15-16).
 - b. *"I thank God, whom I serve, as my forefathers did, with a clear conscience, as night and day I constantly remember you in my prayers"* (2 Timothy 1:3).
 - c. *"I always thank my God as I remember you in my prayers"* (Philemon 4).
2. Paul's prayers for the Philippians were needed.
 - a. There were imperfections in the church.
 - 1) They needed to be *"... like minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose"* (2:2).
 - 2) They needed to avoid *complaining or arguing*" (2:14).
 - 3) Two Christian ladies needed *"... to agree with each other in the Lord"* (4:2).
 - b. There were dangers as well.
 - 1) Promoters of the Law. *"Watch out for those dogs, those men who do evil, those mutilators of the flesh"* (Philippians 3:2).
 - 2) Immoral self promoters. *"For, as I have told you before and now say again even with tears, many live as enemies of the cross of Christ. Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is on earthly things"* (Philippians 3:18-19).
3. When Paul prayed for the saints at Philippi, he always did so with joy (v. 4).
 - a. The joy of Paul was **constant**. The world could not give it, and the world could not take it away. See John 16:22; Acts 16:25
 - b. The joy of Paul was **irrepressible**. It was not based on outward circumstances, and, therefore, he would have joy and contentment in every circumstance of life.

C. The Testimony of the Philippians' Fellowship

"Because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now" (v. 5).

1. There was financial and material support.
 - a. Lydia had furnished her home as a place for Paul and his companions to stay (Acts 16:15).
 - b. Her house was also a meeting place for the church (Acts 16:40).
 - c. The Philippian church had sent to his needs when he was in Thessalonica.

"Moreover, as you Philippians know, in the early days of your acquaintance with the gospel, when I set out from Macedonia, not one church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving except you

only; for even when I was in Thessalonica, you sent me aid again and again when I was in need” (Philippians 4:15-16).

- d. They had most recently sent aid with Epaphroditus “. . . whom you sent to take care of my needs” (Philippians 2:25).
2. Another way they could have had partnership with Paul in the gospel was through their prayers. This he requested from the Ephesians and Colossians:
 - a. *“Pray also for me, that whenever I open my mouth, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should” (Ephesians 6:19-20).*
 - b. *“And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains. Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should” (Colossians 4:3-4).*
3. A third way to have partnership with Paul in the gospel was through their own personal involvement in sharing the gospel.
 - a. *“Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, I will know that you stand firm in one spirit, contending as one man for the faith of the gospel” (Philippians 1:27).*
 - b. *“Do everything without complaining or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation, in which you shine like stars in the universe as you hold out the word of life . . .” (Philippians 2:14-16).*

D. The Testimony of Paul’s Confidence

“Being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it to completion until the day of Christ Jesus” (v. 6).

1. This verse teaches that God completes the work he began in His people. However:
 - a. It does not teach that he will do so without their cooperation and response of faith.
 - b. He did not begin the good work in them without their acceptance of the gospel as a response of faith.
 - c. He will not complete it without their cooperation and response of faith. The commands in the Bible to faithfulness are addressed to us not to God.
2. This verse does not teach the impossibility of apostasy nor does any other. Note the following admonitions to saved people:
 - a. *“Here is a trustworthy saying: If we died with him, we will also live with him; if we endure, we will also reign with him. If we disown him, he will disown us; if we are faithless, he will remain faithful, for he cannot disown himself” (2 Timothy 2:11-13).* God’s faithfulness does not guarantee ours! If we deny him, he will deny us.
 - b. *“But now he has reconciled you by Christ’s physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation—if you continue in your faith, established and firm, not moved from the hope held out in the gospel” (Colossians 1:22-23).*
3. One is guarded or kept “through faith” (1 Peter 1:5), but one can stop

believing—stop trusting and following Jesus. *“See to it, brothers, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God”* (Hebrews 3:12).

4. Paul did not have the same confidence in the Galatian Christians as he did in the Philippians. He should have if it all depended on God and not to any degree on man’s cooperation and continuance in faith. Note his concern for the Galatians who were children of God who had been set free (Galatians 3:26-27; 5:1).
 - a. *“I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you by the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel”* (Galatians 1:6).
 - b. *“It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery. . . You who are trying to be justified by law have been alienated from Christ; you have fallen away from grace”* (Galatians 5:1, 4).
 - c. *“I warn you as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God”* (Galatians 5:21).
5. The total context of Scripture will demonstrate that God initiates the action in the Christian and He completes it but He does so through the cooperation and response of faith in that Christian.
6. The ultimate good work which God does in the life of the Christian is that he “be conformed to the likeness of His Son.”
 - a. This is a process that begins at conversion and goes on throughout the Christian’s life (Romans 8:29).
 - b. *“And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord’s glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit”* (2 Corinthians 3:18).

E. The Testimony of Their Relationship. The relationship of Paul to the Philippians. *“It is right for me to feel this way about all of you . . .”* (1:7-8).

1. *“Since I have you in my heart”* (v. 7). Even though separated from them, Paul holds them in his thoughts, in loving remembrance. They were never out of his heart. Note a similar concept in his second letter to the Corinthians and in 1 Thessalonians.
 - a. *“I have said before that you have such a place in our hearts that we would live or die with you”* (2 Corinthians 7:3).
 - b. *“But brothers, when we were torn away from you for a short time (in person, not in thought), out of our intense longing we made every effort to see you”* (1 Thessalonians 2:17).
2. *“All of you share in God’s grace with me.”*
 - a. *“Whether I am in chains.”* Paul was a “prisoner for the Lord” (Ephesians 4:1) and his sufferings were for the church (Ephesians 3:13). His chains, in fact, encouraged other brothers to preach the word of God more courageously and fearlessly (Philippians 1:13-14).
 - b. *“Or defending and confirming the gospel.”*
 - 1) The gospel needed to be defended against those that would attack or deny its message. See v. 16: *“I am put here for the defense of the gospel.”*

- 2) *“But in your hearts acknowledge Christ as the holy Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope you have”* (1 Peter 3:15).
- c. Paul and the Philippians shared not only in the suffering and conflict in the furtherance of the gospel, but also in the grace of God. This would include Paul’s commission to preach the grace of God to others and their sharing with him in this work from the beginning.
3. *“God can testify how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus.”*
 - a. The affection Paul had for them was the “affection of Christ Jesus;” he loved them with the heart of Jesus.
 - b. God is called to witness that Paul’s affection for them is totally genuine.

PAUL’S PRAYER FOR THE PHILIPPIANS (1:9-11)

A. The Request for an Ever Increasing Love

“That your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight” (v. 9).

1. The Philippians, as the Macedonians in other congregations, had love already and had demonstrated it in their sacrificial giving to the needy (2 Corinthians 8:1-5).
2. They had love for God and for each other, but that love was to “abound more and more.” See 1 Thessalonians 3:12 – *“May the Lord make your love increase and overflow for each other and for everyone else, just as ours does for you.”* 1 Thessalonians 4:10 – *“And in fact, you do love all the brothers throughout Macedonia. Yet we urge you, brothers, to do so more and more.”*
3. But love must be guided by knowledge; it must be regulated by truth.
 - a. *“My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge”* (Hosea 4:6).
 - b. *“For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding”* (Colossians 1:9).
4. Both study of the word and prayer are necessary in order to have this “knowledge and depth of insight.” *“If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him”* (James 1:5).

B. The Fruit of an Ever Increasing Love

Results of this abounding love guided by knowledge and insight.

1. Wisdom and insight. *“So that you may be able to discern what is best.”* A mark of maturity is making right decisions about what is best for the individual’s spiritual growth—approving the things that are excellent.
 - a. *“Test everything. Hold on to the good. Avoid every kind of evil”* (1 Thessalonians 5:21-22).
 - b. *“But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil”* (Hebrews 5:14).

2. Purity and guiltlessness. *“And be pure and blameless until the day of Christ”* (v. 10).
 - a. Pure here has the idea of sincerity, without hypocrisy, sham or pretense.
 - b. “Blameless” can be without offense or not causing offense to others. 1 Corinthians 10:32 – *“Do not cause anyone to stumble, whether Jews, Greeks or the church of God.”*
3. The fruit of righteousness. *“Filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ”* (v. 11).
 - a. This would be the fruit of a transformed life made progressively holy by the Lord through His Spirit
 - 1) *“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control”* (Galatians 5:22-23).
 - 2) *“For the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth”* (Ephesians 5:9).
 - b. This fruit “comes through Jesus Christ.” John 15:4 – *Remain in me, and “I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.”*
4. Praising God. The real objective is “the glory and praise of God” (v. 11).
 - a. *“In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven”* (Matthew 5:16).
 - b. *“If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen”* (1 Peter 4:11).

*important
lessons
to
be
learned*



Some lessons we can learn from this section of Holy Scripture:

1. Paul often let his brothers and sisters know what he petitioned God for on their behalf that they might know what to pray for regarding themselves and others.
2. All our prayers should be filled with thanksgiving for spiritual things—God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, salvation, cleansing, guidance, hope of heaven, spiritual strength from other Christians.
3. One measure of maturity would be the amount of time spent in praying to God for material things and the amount of time spent in rejoicing and thanksgiving for the spiritual blessings we have in Christ.

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON THREE:

1. List three imperfections in the church at Philippi which necessitated Paul's prayers for them.
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____

2. List two dangers which existed for the Philippian church.
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____

3. Name three ways the church at Philippi could have had fellowship in the gospel with Paul.
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____

4. The confidence of the Philippian Christians lay in what truth according to 1:6?

5. For what two things does Paul pray for in the lives of the Christians at Philippi?
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____

6. List the four fruits of an ever increasing love.
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
 - 4) _____

LESSON FOUR

PAUL'S CHAINS ADVANCE THE GOSPEL

INTRODUCTION:

The church had been planted in Philippi in the midst of opposition. Now Paul was “a prisoner of Christ Jesus,” that is, on Christ’s behalf. The Philippian Christians, knowing of his confinement in prison, may have thought that Paul was discouraged. They may also have felt that his work was stifled and accomplishing little in view of his circumstances.

In this section of his letter, Paul talks about his imprisonment and affirms that his chains had advanced the gospel. Whatever the outcome of his trial, Christ would be glorified in his life or in his death. In the meantime he urged them to live a life of steadfastness amidst suffering.

LESSON TEXT: Philippians 1:12-30

LESSON AIM: To see Paul’s attitude toward his imprisonment and his encouragement to the Philippian Christians to remain steadfast and bold in their relationship to the Gospel.

LESSON OBJECTIVES: You will . . .

1. Find out that hardships and persecution often causes the gospel to be spread faster and farther.
 2. Learn of Paul’s confidence in God’s overruling providence in all circumstances of his life and preaching.
 3. See Paul’s attitude toward the death of the faithful servant of Christ.
 4. Discover the responsibility the Christian has toward the “faith of the Gospel.”
-

IMPRISONMENT AND PROGRESS (Philippians 1:12-18a)

A. Imprisonment Advances Preaching

“What has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel” (v. 12).

1. Imprisonment. “What has happened to me” refers to his arrest in Jerusalem, his trials, imprisonment in Caesarea and in Rome (See Acts 21-28).
2. Preaching. *Has really served to advance the gospel.*
 - a. This we call the “providence” of God. God works behind scenes and brings good out of evil and advances His cause even through persecution and opposition.

- 1) The story of Joseph in the Old Testament.
Acts 7:9-10: "Because the patriarchs were jealous of Joseph, they sold him as a slave into Egypt. But God was with him and rescued him from all his troubles. He gave Joseph wisdom and enabled him to gain the good will of Pharaoh, king of Egypt; so he made him ruler over Egypt and all his palace." See also Genesis 50:20: "You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives."
- 2) Jesus affirmed this principle in Luke 21:12-13.
- 3) Paul believed implicitly in the providential working of God in his life and in the lives of God's people. *2 Timothy 2:9. "For which I am suffering even to the point of being chained like a criminal. But God's word is not chained. Romans 8:28: And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose."*
3. Two ways in this context in which his chains advanced or furthered the gospel:
 - a. Gave Paul opportunity to preach. *"It has become clear throughout the whole palace guard and to everyone else that I am in chains for Christ."*
 - 1) The Praetorian guard were elite soldiers, specially chosen and having great influence and power.
 - 2) Many of them must have learned the gospel as they were chained to Paul and heard him teach others, dictate letters, and demonstrate joy and contentment in every circumstance.
 - 3) They knew he was in prison because of his loyalty to Christ not because he was a dangerous revolutionary or common criminal.
 - 4) Later Paul would write of saints "who belong to Caesar's household" (Philippians 4:22).
 - 5) The news about Paul and his chains because of Christ also spread "to everyone else" – that is, to people throughout the city of Rome.
 - b. Encouraged others to speak boldly. *"Because of my chains, most of the brothers in the Lord have been encouraged to speak the word of God more courageously and fearlessly"* (v. 14).

B. Preaching Christ with Different Motives (vs. 15-18a)

1. The wrong motives:
 - a. Rivalry and Strife.
 - 1) *"Some preach Christ out of envy and rivalry"* (v. 15).
 - 2) *"... out of selfish ambition, not sincerely."*
 - 3) *"... supposing they can stir up trouble for me while I am in chains"* (v. 17).
 - b. However, they did preach Christ and not a perverted gospel which could not save men (Galatians 1:8-9). They were not teaching "another Jesus" (2 Corinthians 11:4), and their message did not lead men astray.
 - c. Hence, Paul could rejoice. The right message was preached even though the motives of the preachers were false (v. 18.)
2. The right motives:

- a. “. . . *out of good will*” (v. 15).
 - b. “. . . *in love*” (v. 16).
 - c. “. . . *true motives*” (v. 18).
3. Every preacher and teacher of the word of God should examine himself concerning his motives in preaching Christ—for financial gain, popularity and praise of men, an “easy job” or out of sincere love for God and others and a deep conviction that the message of Christ must be preached for the glory of God and salvation of the lost.

TORN BETWEEN TWO DESIRES (Philippians 1:18b-26)

A. Confidence in God’s Overruling Providence in His Present Situation (vs. 18b-19)

1. Paul’s constant attitude of joy. “*I will continue to rejoice*” (v. 18).
 - a. Paul had confidence that, as God had furthered the gospel through his chains, He would bring out Paul’s vindication before His throne.
 - b. This would be the case regardless of the outcome of his trial before Caesar.
2. Paul’s confidence in God’s deliverance. “*What has happened to me will turn out for my deliverance*” (v. 19).
 - a. “Deliverance” also translated “salvation” does not refer to his certain deliverance from prison because the next verse shows the possibility of death as well as life.
 - b. It could refer to his eternal or final salvation:
 - 1) 2 Timothy 4:18: “*The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack and will bring me safely to his heavenly kingdom.*”
 - 2) Romans 13:11: “*The hour has come for you to wake from your slumber because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed.*”
 - c. In the context, however, it more likely refers to his deliverance or final vindication before the judgment seat of Christ even if he receives an adverse judgment from Caesar.
3. Two factors involved in Paul’s deliverance:
 - a. **Intercession Of Brethren.** “*Through your prayers*” (v. 19).
 - 1) Paul often assured his converts to Christ that he always prayed for them.
 - Colossians 1:9-10: “*For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding. And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way: Bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God.*”
 - 2) And Paul often asked these converts to pray for him.
 - Colossians 4:3: “*And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains.*”

- 3) In a passage similar to this one in Philippians Paul wrote to the Corinthians:
“He has delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us. On him we have set our hope that he will continue to deliver us, as you help with your prayers. Then many will give thanks on our behalf for the gracious favor granted us in answer to the prayers of many” (2 Corinthians 1:10-11).
 - 4) Paul did not believe that he could do anything and that others could do nothing. He believed that his prayers for them brought about spiritual results, and he believed that Christians’ prayers for him were upholding, strengthening and causing God’s providential grace to work more effectively in his life.
- b. **Intercession of the Holy Spirit.** *“And the help given by the Spirit of Jesus Christ”* (v. 19).
- 1) Romans 8:26-27: *“In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weaknesses. We do not know how we ought to pray, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God’s will.”*
 - 2) Ephesians 3:16: *“I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being.”*

NOTE: The prayers of the Philippians and the intercessory work and strengthening power of the Holy Spirit would help bring about the deliverance Paul anticipated.

B. Confronted by Two Possibilities – by Life or Death (v. 20)

1. Paul seeks courage in trials. *“I eagerly expect and hope that I will in no way be ashamed, but will have sufficient courage . . .”* (v. 20).
 - a. Paul is not concerned about personal shame and humiliation. That has been his lot for years as a follower of Christ.
 - b. But, if in his defense he has the sufficient courage and is not ashamed in his testimony, honor will be brought to Christ through him. And that is his only concern.
2. Paul seeks to exalt Christ. In that way *“Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death”* (v. 20).
 - a. The alternatives are: release and death.
 - b. In either case Christ will be exalted and glorified.
3. Paul’s total commitment. *“For to me to live is Christ and to die is gain”* (v. 21). Galatians 2:20: *“I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me.”*
 - a. Christ was the aim, the purpose, the goal, the sum of his life, and death would only mean gaining more of him.
 - b. Death cannot be gain, however, for one who has not made Christ his life.
 - c. If to live is wealth, fame or prestige, then death is only loss!

C. Torn Between Two Desires (v. 22). Two possibilities:

1. Option One: **To continue living in the body.** *“If I am to go on living in the body.”* This would result in:
 - a. Fruitful labor for Paul. *“This will mean fruitful labor for me”* (v. 22).
 - b. Beneficial blessings for them. *“It is more necessary for you that I remain in the body”* (v. 24).
 - 1) Their progress and joy. *“I will continue with all of you for your progress and joy in the faith”* (v. 25).
 - 2) Their joy would overflow to others. *“So that through my being with you again your joy in Christ Jesus will overflow on account of me”* (v. 26).

NOTE: This is one option: remain alive for the spiritual benefit of the Philippians and others. This was in harmony with great concern for all the churches and their spiritual progress.

- a. 2 Corinthians 11:28-29: *“Besides everything else, I face daily the pressure of my concern for all the churches. Who is weak, and I do not feel weak? Who is led into sin and I do not inwardly burn?”*
 - b. 2 Corinthians 12:15: *“So I will very gladly spend for you everything I have and expend myself as well.”*
2. Option Two: **Depart physical life.** *“I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far”* (v. 3).
 - a. “Departing” is in contrast to “to go on living in the body” (v. 22). Departure then was from the body and meant being with Christ. *“We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord”* (2 Corinthians 5:8).
 - b. “Which is better by far” – literally “much rather better” meaning “by far the best.”
 - c. Contrast this statement of faith and confident certainty with that of Socrates as he drank the hemlock: “The time has come for us to part—for me to die and for you to live—but which of us is going to a better thing is uncertain.”
 3. His choice for the “far better” would be postponed for their progress and joy in the faith (v. 25). And their joy in Christ Jesus would overflow through his being with them again (v. 26).

LIVING IN A MANNER WORTHY OF THE GOSPEL (Philippians 1:27-30)

A. Responsibility Toward the Gospel. “Whatever happens” (v. 27).

1. Not determined by Paul’s presence. *“Whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence”* (v. 27). There was the uncertainty in Paul’s situation, but their responsibility was precisely the same whether Paul was there or absent.
2. Proper conduct reflecting their citizenship. *“Conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ.”*
 - a. “Conduct yourselves” is from an expression meaning “live as citizens.”
 - 1) The people of Philippi had prided themselves on their Roman citizenship (Acts 16).
 - 2) But Paul talks about a higher citizenship. *“But our citizenship is*

in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ" (Philippians 3:20).

- 3) *"In a manner worthy of the gospel."* (cf. Romans 16:2; Ephesians 4:1; Colossians 1:10.)
- b. Christians are partakers of a high calling, and the response should not be one of listlessness and indifference but of whole-hearted fervency and dedication.

B. Standing and Contending for the Faith of the Gospel

"That you stand firm in one spirit, contending as one man for the faith of the gospel" (v. 27).

1. The requirement: **Steadfastness and unity**. These are emphasized in this letter and throughout the New Testament.
 - a. Philippians 4:1: *"That is how you should stand firm in the Lord, dear friends."*
 - b. 1 Corinthians 15:58: *"Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you."*
 - c. Ephesians 4:3: *"Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace."*
2. The object: **The faith of the gospel**. The body of revealed truth given to the church.
 - a. Galatians 1:23: *"The man who formerly persecuted us is now preaching the faith he once tried to destroy."*
 - b. Jude 3: *"Contend for the faith that God has once for all entrusted to the saints."*
3. The danger: **Threat of opposition**. *"Without being frightened in any way by those who oppose you."*
 - a. Opposition to be expected. Paul taught that Christians should expect opposition from an unbelieving world. 1 Thessalonians 3:3-4: *"So that no one would be unsettled by these trials. You know quite well we were destined for them. In fact, when we were with you, we kept telling you that we would be persecuted. And it turned out that way, as you well know."*
 - b. They were not to be frightened or intimidated by such opposition.
 - c. Such opposition and their faithful endurance were signs:
 - 1) That those who oppose will be destroyed.
 - 2) That you will be saved—and that by God. See 2 Thessalonians 1:4-10.
4. The rewards: **Two gifts from Christ**. *"For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ . . ."*
 - a. To believe on Him.
 - b. To suffer for Him.
 Acts 14:22: *"We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God."*
 2 Timothy 3:12: *"In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted."*
5. The encouragement: **To persevere**. Knowing they were going through the same struggle Paul had when in Philippi—which he still had (v. 30).

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON FOUR:

1. In what two ways in this context did Paul's chains advance the gospel?
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____

2. What were the "wrong motives" of some who preached the gospel in Rome and how did Paul view this?

3. Paul believed in God's over-ruling providence in his life. What were two factors did he think would be involved in his deliverance from prison?
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____

4. Paul presents two possibilities concerning his life in verse 22. What were these?
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____

5. Out of these two possibilities Paul expressed a desire and a choice. What were these?
 - 1) His desire: _____
 - 2) His choice: _____

6. What was the responsibility of the Philippian Christians toward the gospel as to their lives? (v, 27)

7. Concerning standing and contending for the faith of the Gospel complete the sentences below.
 - 1) The requirement: _____
 - 2) The object: _____
 - 3) The danger: _____
 - 4) The rewards: _____
 - 5) The encouragement: _____

LESSON FIVE

IMITATING CHRIST'S HUMILITY

INTRODUCTION:

The church at Philippi was a great New Testament church. Paul thanked God every time he remembered them. They had fellowship with him in the gospel, and they were generous, loving and sacrificial. They were his “joy and crown.” There is no serious false teaching which they have tolerated nor gross immoral conduct among them.

However, no church is free from the danger of discord, rivalry and strife. This is especially true in a growing church that is militant and evangelistic. There can be personality clashes among active Christians who have deep convictions and zeal for God.

We do not find in the Philippian church the same serious division which Paul had to rebuke at Corinth, but whatever friction and discord existed merited an exhortation to unity and humility. This we will study in this passage.

LESSON TEXT: Philippians 2:1-11

LESSON AIM: To understand the place of humility in church unity looking at the perfection of Christ's example of humility.

LESSON OBJECTIVES: You will . . .

1. Learn four spiritual realities that produce and maintain unity in the body of Christ.
 2. Discover at least three things in our text which reflect the attitude of humility.
 3. Investigate the supreme example of Christ in relation to humility as shown in his incarnation.
-

EXHORTATION TO HUMILITY AND UNITY (Philippians 2:1-4)

A. Four Spiritual Realities That Produce and Maintain Unity (2:1-2)

1. Encouragement in Christ. *“If you have any encouragement from being united to Christ . . .”*
 - a. Jesus brought men into fellowship with Him in His body, and those in fellowship with Him should be united with each other.
John 10:16: “. . . and there shall be one flock and one shepherd.
 - b. Jesus prayed that His followers would be united.
John 17:20-21: *“I pray also for those who will believe in me through*

their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you . . .

- c. The encouragement we get from being united to Christ should be an incentive to unity and harmony.
2. Comfort from Christ's love. *"If any comfort from his love . . ."*
 - a. The NIV text indicates that the comfort comes from "His love" for us.
 - b. Christ's love for us is a strong incentive for pleasing Him and doing His will in all matters including this one of unity.
 - 1) It is compelling. *"For Christ's love compels us . . ."* (2 Corinthians 5:14).
 - 2) It is imperative. *"This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. . . since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another."* (1 John 4:10-11).
 - 3) It is reciprocal. *"We love because he first loved us"* (1 John 4:19).
3. Fellowship with the Spirit. *"If any fellowship with the Spirit . . ."*
 - a. It is through the Spirit that men have been brought into this one body. *"For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body . . ."* (1 Corinthians 12:13). *"For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit"* (Ephesians 2:18).
 - b. The church is God's temple, indwelt by the Holy Spirit.
 - 1) *"Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you?"* (1 Corinthians 3:16).
 - 2) *"And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by His Spirit"* (Ephesians 2:22).
 - 3) *"May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all"* (2 Corinthians 13:14).
 - c. The joint participation in the Spirit is again a strong incentive to harmony and unity. *"Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace"* (Ephesians 4:3).
4. Christ-like tenderness and compassion. *"If any tenderness and compassion . . ."*
 - a. Jesus was motivated or moved by tenderness and compassion in His dealings with lost, wayward people. *"When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd"* (Matthew 9:36).
 - b. Christians are to clothe themselves with compassion. *"Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience"* (Colossians 3:12-13).
 - c. An attitude of "tenderness and compassion" would help to solve many problems of friction and disharmony among God's people.

NOTE: Instead of some superficial advice – "sink your differences and live in peace" – Paul would appeal to these lofty motives.

B. Three Qualities to Make Paul's Joy Complete

"Make my joy complete . . ." (v. 2).

Paul always prayed “with joy” when he thought of the Philippian saints and their participation with him in the gospel (1:4), and he called them his “joy and crown.” Yet that joy was not complete because of this disunity among them. Paul encourages:

1. Unity of thinking. “*Being like-minded.*”
 - a. Required in view of the **pressures from without.** “*Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, I will know that you stand firm in one spirit, contending as one man for the faith of the gospel*” (Philippians 1:27).
 - b. Required for the **internal harmony of the body.** “*Finally, all of you, live in harmony with one another; be sympathetic, love as brothers, be compassionate and humble*” (1 Peter 3:8).
2. Unity of love. “*Having the same love.*” This involves a cherishing of mutual affections. “*Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for your brothers, love one another deeply, with all your hearts*” (1 Peter 1:22).
3. Unity of spirit and purpose. “*Being one in spirit and purpose.*” This involves a harmony of the minds as all think with one purpose. “*May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you a spirit of unity among yourselves as you follow Christ Jesus, so that with one heart and mouth you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*” (Romans 15:5-6).

C. Three Characteristics of Humility (vs. 3-4)

1. The lack of selfish ambition and vain conceit (v. 3). “*Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit.*”
 - a. This spirit of selfish ambition Jesus encountered even among His followers. James and John wanted to sit at His right hand in His glory. The other apostles were indignant, probably because they wanted the same positions for themselves! Even on the night of Jesus’ betrayal while they met with Him in the upper room, “. . . a dispute arose among them as to which of them was considered to be the greatest” (Luke 22:24; Mark 10:35-45).
 - b. Jesus taught that a different spirit from selfish ambition must be in those who follow Him. “*The kings of the earth lord it over them; and those who exercise authority over them are given the title Benefactor. But you are not to be like that. Instead, the greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves*” (Luke 22:25-26).
 - c. The early church had problems from this attitude of selfish ambition and vain deceit. There was Diotrefes, “*who loves to be first*” (3 John 9).
 - d. Some of the preachers who stirred up trouble for Paul while he was in chains were motivated by “selfish ambition” (Philippians 1:17). Surely one of the destructive attitudes in the church today throughout the world is that of striving for power and position, the determination to be “number one.”

2. The attitude of esteeming others. *“In humility consider others better than yourselves.”*
 - a. To have inner unity and harmony, selfish ambition and vain conceit had to be replaced by humility and consideration of others. *“Clothe yourselves with humility toward one another . . .”* (1 Peter 5:5-6). *“Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love”* (Ephesians 4:2).
 - b. *“Consider others better than yourselves.”* This is not easy to do, but we must remember:
 - 1) One is not necessarily considered better in every respect.
 - 2) We know our own inner weaknesses and failings, but we cannot know the hearts of other people. *“Honor one another above yourselves . . .”* (Romans 12:10).
 - c. There would surely be little discord and disunity where this was practiced by all!
3. The attitude of mutual uplifting. *“Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others”* (v. 4).
 - a. This was Paul’s attitude regarding lost people who needed the gospel. *“Though I am free and belong to no man, I make myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible”* (1 Corinthians 9:19). *“To the weak I become weak to win the weak. I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some”* (1 Corinthians 9:22).
 - b. This was also Paul’s attitude toward his fellow Christians. *“Nobody should seek his own good, but the good of others”* (1 Corinthians 10:24). *“Even as I try to please everybody in every way. For I am not seeking my own good but the good of many, so that they may be saved”* (1 Corinthians 10:33).
 - c. Then, significantly, he adds, *“Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ”* (1 Corinthians 11:1). And this is what Paul does in Philippians 2. He turns to the example of Christ as the greatest possible incentive to unity and humility.

THE SUPREME EXAMPLE OF CHRIST (2:5-11)

A. His Example in Attitude

“Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus” (v. 5).

1. In any kind of disposition or practice the greatest example is always that of Christ.
 - a. In a discussion of the strong and the weak: *“Each of us should please his neighbor for his good, to build him up. For even Christ did not please himself . . .”* (Romans 15:2-3).
 - b. In a context of suffering Peter wrote: *“To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps”* (1 Peter 2:21).
 - c. After demonstrating humility and service to others, Jesus said: *“I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you”* (John 13:15).

2. So in this context of humility and looking to the interests of others no better example could be found.

B. His Example in Humility And Service

1. His eternal nature. *"Who being in very nature God."*
 - a. The words "very nature" are from the Greek *MORPHE* which refers not to outward shape or form but to the inner, abiding essence or being. Jesus in His eternal, abiding nature is God.
 - 1) John 1:1: *"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."*
 - 2) John 8:58: *"Before Abraham was born, I am."*
 - 3) John 20:28: *"Thomas said to him, 'My Lord and my God!'"*
 - 4) Hebrews 1:3: *"The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word."*
 - b. Jesus is not a created being. He is God in His eternal nature and has never been less than God.
2. His unselfish nature. *"Did not consider equality with God something to be grasped . . ."*
 - a. Rather than hold to His equality with God which He had by nature, He did not refuse to leave that glory and honor and the worship of angels.
 - 1) *"For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich"* (2 Corinthians 8:9).
 - 2) *"I have brought you on earth glory by completing the work you gave me to do. And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began"* (John 17:4-5).
3. His incarnate nature – servant. *"But made himself nothing taking the very nature of a servant."*
 - a. Making Himself nothing (emptying Himself) was the leaving of His glory and the outward manifestations of deity. When He was on earth, He was not seen in His essential glory, but as a Galilean peasant.
 - b. But He never stopped being God and even "in the days of His flesh" He accepted worship and praise as God (John 9:38; 20:28).
 - c. But His "nature of a servant" was an inner, essential nature of serving rather than being served. *"Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many"* (Matthew 20:28). *"But I am among you as one who serves"* (Luke 22:27).
4. His incarnate substance – human flesh. *"Being made in human likeness. . ."*
 - a. His humanity was real, so real that He could be tired, thirsty, be tempted, shed blood and die on a cross. *"The Word became flesh and lived for a while among us"* (John 1:14). *"Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death – that is, the devil"* (Hebrews 2:14). *But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law"* (Galatians 4:4).
5. His personal character – obedience. *"He humbled himself and became obedient to death, even death on a cross."*

- a. The decision made in eternity to be obedient to the Father was faithfully followed from childhood throughout His personal ministry – even to His shameful death on the cross. *“For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me”* (John 6:38). *“Then I said, ‘Here I am—it is written about me in the scroll—I have come to do your will, O God’”* (Hebrews 10:7).
- b. Death on a cross was the most shameful ignoble, death man could endure. *“Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written, ‘Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree’”* (Galatians 3:13).
- c. Such a death was offensive to both Jews and Gentiles, but it was God’s one way of saving men. *“But we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God”* (1 Corinthians 1:23-24).

C. The Exaltation of Christ (2:9-11)

1. His exalted position – the highest place. *“Therefore God exalted him to the highest place.”*
 - a. This was the principle that Jesus often taught. *“For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted”* (Matthew 23:12; Luke 14:11; Luke 18:14).
 - b. He was exalted after His death and resurrection to the right hand of God *“... far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come”* (Ephesians 1:20-21). See also 1 Peter 3:22; Matthew 28:18; Daniel 7:13-14.
2. His exalted name – above all other names. *“And gave him a name that is above every name.”*
 - a. Some believe the name above every name is “Jesus” – others that it is “Lord” or that “Jesus Christ is Lord” (v. 11).
 - b. One’s “name” in the Bible stands for his character, position, place and nature. See Hebrews 1:4: *“So he became as much superior to the angels as the name he has inherited is superior to theirs.”*
 - c. It is not so much the mention of “Jesus” or “Lord” that will cause every tongue to confess and every knee to bow but the recognition of His character, position, place and nature.
 - d. All creation will so recognize Jesus Christ the Lord: *“Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is in them, singing; ‘To Him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power, for ever and ever!’”* (Revelation 5:13-14).
 - e. All of this will be “to the glory of God.” Man’s salvation and Christ’s exaltation are ever “to the praise of His glory.”

CONCLUSION:

Having the same attitude that was in Christ is the key to unity, harmony and peace among the people of God. Therefore, “let us fix our eyes on Jesus . . .”

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON FIVE:

1. List four spiritual realities from 2:1-2 which produce and maintain unity.
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
 - 4) _____
2. Three other qualities which produce unity and make Paul's joy complete are:
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
3. There are three characteristics of humility given in verses 3-4. Please list these below.
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
4. What are the two supreme examples of Christ in verses 5-11 which are examples for us to follow?
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
5. Concerning Christ's humility and service write out the portion of Scripture which reflect the following statements.
 - 1) His eternal nature: _____
 - 2) His unselfish nature: _____
 - 3) His incarnate nature – servant: _____
 - 4) His incarnate substance: _____
 - 5) His personal character – obedience: _____
6. Jesus' exaltation by the Father is reflected in what two areas?
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____

LESSON SIX

SHINING AS STARS

INTRODUCTION:

This section begins with “therefore” or “so then.” It points back to the humility and obedience of Christ in the preceding section. It would also include a reference to His exaltation after His submission to the will of God. Paul now gives further exhortations to the Philippians which involve their relationships with God, with each other and with the pagan world among whom they shine like stars in the universe.

LESSON TEXT: Philippians 2:12-18

LESSON AIM: To see that constant growth and progress in Christian living brings extensive influence and results in many seeing and hearing the Gospel.

LESSON OBJECTIVES: You will . . .

1. Understand the importance and necessity of continued obedience in the life of the Christian for salvation.
 2. See that the Christian is not left alone in working out his salvation, but that God supplies the power by working in the Christian His will.
 3. Discover that the Christian life serves as a reflector which radiates the greatness of God to the whole world.
 4. Learn of the great concern Paul has for his Philippian brethren’s continued faithfulness and on-going progress in the gospel.
-

A SALVATION TO BE WORKED OUT

A. Their Past Obedience. *“As you have always obeyed . . .”*

1. Their obedience patterned after Christ’s obedience.
 - a. The extent of His obedience (v. 8). *“ . . .and became obedient to death – even death on a cross.”*
 - b. The significance of His obedience (Hebrews 5:8). *“Although he was a son, he learned obedience from what he suffered.”*
 - c. The willingness of His obedience (John 4:34). *“ My food, said Jesus, is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work . . . For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me”* (John 6:38:).
2. The character of obedience. It is not optional:
 - a. There is an initial obedience. The gospel that brings one into Christ and forgiveness of sins: *“He said to them, ‘Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation. Whoever believes and is baptized*

will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned” (Mark 16:15-16). See Acts 2:38.

- 1) Paul, as Saul of Tarsus, had obeyed this same gospel. On the road to Damascus the Lord had given him instructions to go into Damascus where he would be told what he must do (Acts 9:6). There God’s man, Ananias, commanded him, “*Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away calling on his name*” (Acts 22:16).
- 2) Later Paul reminded the Roman Christians of their previous obedience. “*But thanks be to God that, though you used to be slaves to sin, you wholeheartedly obeyed the form of teaching to which you were committed. You have been set free from sin, and have become slaves of righteousness*” (Romans 6:17-18). See also 1 Peter 4:17; 2 Thessalonians 1:8-9.
- b. The life of obedience. Children of God are called to a life of obedience: “*Everyone has heard about your obedience, so I am full of joy over you*” (Romans 16:19). “*We have confidence in the Lord that you are doing and will continue to do the things we command*” (2 Thessalonians 3:4). “*If you love me, you will do what I command*” (John 14:15). “*This is love for God: to obey his commands. And his commands are not burdensome*” (1 John 5:3).
- c. The obedience of faith. Obedience is not contrary to faith but is actually a demonstration of faith: “*We have received grace and apostleship to call people from among all the Gentiles to the obedience that comes from faith*” (Romans 1:5). See also Romans 16:26; Galatians 3:26-27. Hebrews 11 shows that “by faith” men of God obeyed the will of God.

B. Their Present Obedience. “*Continue to work out your salvation.*”

1. Bringing salvation to completion. Some see this exhortation as applying to the church’s responsibility to work out its problems of inner disunity. But even if this is involved, the problems would only be solved as the individuals worked out or brought to completion their salvation in Christ.
2. Accepting salvation as God’s gift. Salvation is not something a person can earn or merit. “*For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast*” (Ephesians 2:8-9). “*He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit*” (Titus 3:5).
3. Realizing the implications and obligations involved. The tragedy is that many of us are not really moving forward. We continue to have the same faults and weaknesses and are slaves of the same temptations.
 - a. The Bible emphasis on “you are. . . that you may:”
 - 1) “*But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praise of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light*” (1 Peter 2:9).
 - 2) “*Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on earthly things*” (Colossians 3:1-2).

- b. This is the working out of what God has worked in. It is to bring to completion—carry out the goal of this salvation. *“Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk so that by it you may grow up in your salvation”* (1 Peter 2:2). See also: 2 Peter 3:18; 2 Peter 1:5-8.
 - 4. The correct concept while working. *“With fear and trembling.”*
 - a. There is an unwholesome, morbid and slavish fear and dread of God. This is not the spirit God wants us to have. *“For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear. . .”* (Romans 8:15). See also: 1 John 4:18; 2 Timothy 1:7.
 - b. But there is a wholesome fear—a deep respect and awe in the presence of the eternal God. It is self-distrust, tenderness of conscience, a vigilance against temptation. It is an attitude that shrinks from what would hurt or offend the Savior.
 - 1) Isaiah’s vision of the Lord Almighty in His holiness and majesty caused him to cry out: *“Woe to me! I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the Lord Almighty”* (Isaiah 6:1ff).
 - 2) *“This is the one I esteem: he who is humble and contrite in spirit, and tremble at my word”* (Isaiah 66:2). See also: Hebrews 12:28-29 and Luke 18:13.
 - c. The expression in our text—“with fear and trembling” shows the seriousness of this exhortation. It was not to be taken lightly.

C. God’s Work in Their Obedience

“For it is God who works in you to will and to do what pleases him.”

- 1. God takes the initiative. It is important to see in this context as well as in the total context of Holy Scripture that God takes the initiative and provides the necessary power. It is also important to realize that man is given responsibilities.
- 2. Gives assurance and confidence. The fact that God is working in us gives us assurance and confidence in working out our salvation.
 - a. *“Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us”* (Ephesians 3:20).
 - b. *“Being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus”* (Philippians 1:6).
 - c. *“I can do everything through him who gives me strength”* (Philippians 4:13).
 - d. *“Apart from me you can do nothing”* (John 15:5).
- 3. Both the motivation and the ability to do come from God. *“To will and to do what pleases him.”*
 - a. God is pleased when His rebellious children repent and turn from wicked ways (Ezekiel 18:23). *“Do I take any pleasure in the death of the wicked? declares the Sovereign Lord. Rather, am I not pleased when they turn from their ways and live?”* Ezekiel 33:11: *“I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that they turn from their ways and live. Turn! Turn from your evil ways! Why will you die, O house of Israel?”*

- b. We have both instruction and motivation for living “in order to please God” (1 Thessalonians 4:1). When His people walk in the light, confess their sins and grow in grace and knowledge, God is pleased.

THE CHRISTIAN’S INFLUENCE AND EFFECTIVENESS (2:14-18)

A. The Action of Christian Living

“Do everything without complaining or arguing” (v. 14).

1. Examples that illustrate this action. Israel in the wilderness was often guilty of complaining or murmuring.
 - a. They murmured about food. *“If only we had died by the Lord’s hand in Egypt! There we sat around pots of meat and ate all the food we wanted, but you have brought us out into this desert to starve this entire assembly to death”* (Exodus 16:3).
 - b. They complained about conditions. *“Now the people complained about their hardships in the hearing of the Lord”* (Numbers 11:1).
 - c. God heard their murmuring. *“How long will this wicked community grumble against me? I have heard the complaints of these grumbling Israelites”* (Numbers 14:27).
2. Warnings against the action of grumbling or complaining.
 - a. *“And do not grumble, as some of them did—and were killed by the destroying angel”* (1 Corinthians 10:10).
 - b. *“Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling”* (1 Peter 4:9).
3. Encouragement to serve with contentment. Paul is a great example of a person who did not grumble or complain but one who learned and practiced contentment.
 - a. Paul’s confident attitude in hardships and sufferings (Philippians 4:11-13).
 - b. Paul’s encouragement to trust in Christ. He also taught the Philippians (and us!) that we can live a life of trust, free from anxiety and complaining (Philippians 4:6-7).
4. The danger of disrupted relationships. “Arguing” refers to disputing, debating, doubting and wavering among them. This too must be avoided. *“If you keep on biting and devouring each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other”* (Galatians 5:15).

B. The Character of Christian Living

“So that you may become blameless and pure” (v. 15).

1. Lives that are **blameless**. Moral integrity manifests itself in the sight of others. Paul’s conduct before the Thessalonians. *“You are witnesses, and so is God, of how holy, righteous and blameless we were among you who believed”* (1 Thessalonians 2:10). He prays that they will also be blameless at the coming of the Lord Jesus (1 Thessalonians 5:23).
2. Lives of **purity**. Pure means “unmixed, unadulterated, sincere, without guile.” Moral integrity as respects the heart. *“But I want you to be wise about what is good, and innocent about what is evil”* (Romans 16:19). *“I am sending you out like sheep among wolves. Therefore be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves”* (Matthew 10:16).

C. The Consequence of Christian Living

“Children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation.”

1. **Israel’s perverted character.** Israel was characterized by God as “a warped and crooked generation” (Deuteronomy 32:5). Not only had they departed from God’s way, but they had caused God’s name to be blasphemed among the Gentiles due to their disobedience. See Romans 2:24.
2. **The pagan world’s depraved character.** In Paul’s time the pagan world was a dominion of darkness and depravity. See Romans 1:18-32; Ephesians 4:18-19; 1 Peter 4:3-4.
3. **The Christian’s character in contrast.** The responsibility of those called out of such darkness: be “children of God without fault.” This refers to what they are in the sight of God. *“For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light”* (Ephesians 5:8). *“But just as he who called you is holy, be holy in all you do; for it is written: ‘Be holy, because I am holy!’”* (1 Peter 1:15-16).

D. The Expanse of Christian Living. *“Shining like stars in the universe”* (v. 15).

1. Christians live for the sake of others. Possible background – Genesis 1:14-19 where the word for stars is used in the Septuagint for sun, moon, and stars created by God on the fourth day. They did not shine for themselves, but to provide light for the world.
2. Jesus claimed to be the light of the world, and He came into a world of darkness to bring light (John 8:12; John 3:19).
3. His disciples are also called the light of the world. *“You are the light of the world . . . Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your father in heaven”* (Matthew 5:13-16).
4. The word to be spoken by Christians. *“As you hold out the word of life.”*
 - a. The blameless life makes the Christian life attractive to others but the spoken word is also necessary. *“For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable through the living and enduring word of God”* (1 Peter 1:23). *“In their effort to keep us from speaking to the Gentiles so that they may be saved”* (1 Thessalonians 2:15).
 - b. It is “the word of life” because it brings life in Christ to those who respond to it. It is also called “this message of salvation” (Acts 13:26).

PAUL’S CONFIDENT BOASTING

A. The Character of Paul’s Labor in Philippi

“In order that I may boast on the day of Christ that I did not run or labor for nothing” (v. 16).

1. The fruit of Paul’s labor. Paul anticipated boasting or glorying in the day of judgment because of the transformed people who were saved through the gospel he preached. *“For what is our hope, or joy, or the crown in which we will glory in the presence of our Lord Jesus when he comes? Is it not you?”* (1 Thessalonians 2:19).

2. The quality of the fruit. In “the day of Christ” the Lord would assess the quality of his service by the quality of the lives of his converts.
3. The possibility of fruitless labor. “*That I did not run or labor for nothing.*” This would be the case if the converts returned to the law or to the world and apostatized from God. “*I fear for you, that somehow I have wasted my efforts on you*” (Galatians 4:11). See also 1 Thessalonians 3:5 and 1 Corinthians 3:10-15.
 - a. Paul laid a foundation by preaching the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - b. On this foundation various types of converts were built into the structure. Some were like gold, silver and costly stones; others were like wood, hay or straw.
 - c. On the judgment day Paul’s work – his converts would be tested. If they were accepted, he would receive a reward. They were “his work in the Lord” (1 Corinthians 9:1).
 - d. If they were like wood, hay or straw that are burned by the fire, they would be rejected and lost, but Paul would still be saved. The loss of his converts would not cause him to be lost, but it would mean that his work with them had been in vain.
 - e. This passage does not teach that an individual Christian’s works may include rebellion to the will of God, sexual immorality, etc.–that these works would be lost, but that he would still be saved. That violates the context of this Scripture and the total context of God’s word.

B. The Cost/expense of Paul’s Labor in Philippi

“*Poured out like a drink offering on the sacrifice and service coming from your faith*” (v. 17).

1. Some think this is based on a first century practice where libations or drink offerings were poured on the sacrifices offered to a god.
2. It may rather be related to the drink offerings of oil or wine which were offered in the Old Testament sacrificial system. See Exodus 29:40, 41; Numbers 15:1-10; Numbers 28.
3. The Philippians’ lives were a sacrifice to God. “*Offer yourselves as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—which is your spiritual worship*” (Romans 12:1). “*And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased*” (Hebrews 13:16).
4. Paul’s life, then, was like a drink offering on their sacrifice and service. “*For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time has come for my departure*” (2 Timothy 4:6).
5. If this be the outcome, it would cause him joy, and they, in turn, should rejoice with him (vs. 17-18).

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON SIX:

1. The exhortation to “work out your salvation” is seen in three areas. What are these three areas?
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____

2. God’s work in obedience is seen in the fact that:
 - 1) God takes the _____.
 - 2) God gives _____ and _____.
 - 3) God gives _____ and _____ to do.

3. What is the correct concept while working? _____


4. The Christian’s influence and effectiveness (2:14-18) is seen in what four areas?
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
 - 4) _____

5. Paul’s confident boasting of the church in Philippi depended on what two things?
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____

LESSON SEVEN

TIMOTHY AND EPAPHRODITUS

INTRODUCTION:

aul has mentioned in the previous section the possibility of his martyrdom—his being poured out like a drink offering on the sacrifice and service of their faith. In this section Paul writes more about his plans which include the possibility of his release and return to see the saints in Philippi.

But even before his coming he anticipates sending Timothy, one of the preachers who helped him evangelize in Philippi, who would, in turn, bring him news about the Philippians.

But he writes of an even more immediate coming of one of their own number, Epaphroditus. He is obviously the bearer of this letter.

Our lesson concerns these two co-workers of Paul, both of whom have the mind of Christ and have demonstrated the attitude of looking to the interests of others as their Master had done.

LESSON TEXT: Philippians 2:19-30

LESSON AIM: To understand that ministers/servants of Christ are unique in their attitude of concern for their brethren and to see this illustrated in the lives of Timothy and Epaphroditus.

LESSON OBJECTIVES: You will . . .

1. Learn of the background of Timothy and see the relationship between him and Paul.
 2. See Timothy's unique concern for all the brethren and the commendation given him by the apostle Paul.
 3. Examine Epaphroditus' ministry as it related to Paul and the Philippian church.
-

TIMOTHY, THE LIKE-MINDED BROTHER (2:19-24)

A. Timothy – Paul's Son in the Faith

1. Timothy's conversion. On the missionary journey of Paul and Barnabas as recorded in Acts 13-14. Paul calls him, "*Timothy, my son whom I love*" (1 Corinthians 4:17). He also calls him "*my true son in the faith*" (1 Timothy 1:2).

2. Timothy's family. His mother – a Jewish Christian, his father – a Greek, (Acts 16:1).
3. His spiritual heritage. Faith lived first in his grandmother Lois and in his mother Eunice (2 Timothy 1:5). They taught him the holy Scriptures from his infancy (2 Timothy 3:15).
4. With Paul and Silas when they preached and established the church at Philippi (Acts 16:11ff).
5. With Paul at Thessalonica and Berea (Acts 17).
6. Joined Paul in Corinth (Acts 18:5). He was with him later in Ephesus on Paul's third journey (Acts 19:21-22).
7. With Paul when he wrote epistles from prison (Colossians 1:1; Philippians 1:1).
8. Associated with Paul in the writing of five New Testament letters: 1 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians, 2 Corinthians, Philippians, and Colossians.
9. Sends greetings to the saints in Rome in the Roman letter (16:21). Received two letters from Paul including his last one. Mentioned at least 24 times in Paul's writings.

B. Timothy – Paul's Ambassador to the Churches

"I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon. . ."

1. Timothy often sent when Paul was unable to go. *"We sent Timothy, who is our brother and God's fellow worker in preaching the gospel of Christ, to strengthen and encourage you in your faith, so that no one would be unsettled by these trials"* (1 Thessalonians 3:1-3). *"For this reason I am sending to you Timothy, my son whom I love, who is faithful in the Lord"* (1 Corinthians 4:17). *"If Timothy comes, see to it that he has nothing to fear while he is with you, for he is carrying on the work of the Lord"* (1 Corinthians 16:10-11). *"He sent two of his helpers, Timothy and Erastus"* (Acts 19:22).

NOTE: From this sending of Timothy we learn: Timothy could be sent anywhere, and he was always willing to go. A message was absolutely safe with Timothy. He represented Paul accurately. He served with genuine interest in others even as Paul did.

2. Paul would be cheered when he received news from Timothy about the Philippians.
 - a. He must have anticipated good news about their progress from disunity and despondency to like-mindedness and unity. This would make his joy complete.
 - b. Paul showed similar concern for the church in Thessalonica. *"For now we really live, since you are standing firm in the Lord"* (1 Thessalonians 3:8).
 - c. Paul's deep concern about a serious situation at Corinth hindered his preaching the Gospel (2 Corinthians 2:12-13).
3. How "soon" he would send Timothy to Philippi is revealed in verse 23 – *"I hope, therefore, to send him as soon as I see how things go with me."*

C. Unique in His Concern and Service

"I have no one else like him."

1. Timothy's concern reflected Paul's concern. *"Who takes a genuine interest in your welfare."* Timothy has learned to share the same interest in others which he had seen demonstrated so often in Paul.
 - a. All things to all men (1 Corinthians 9:19, 22).
 - b. Sought the good of many (1 Corinthians 10:32-33).
 - c. Concern for all the churches (2 Corinthians 11:28-29). This attitude of caring for the interests of others is involved in being members of the body of Christ.
 - d. Equal concern for each other (1 Corinthians 12:25-26).
2. Others did not share this concern. *"For everyone looks out for his own interest, not those of Jesus Christ"* (v. 21).
 - a. This is a surprising statement in view of what Paul wrote in chapter 1:14 – *"Because of my chains, most of the brothers in the Lord have been encouraged to speak the word of God more courageously and fearlessly."*
 - b. But we should remember even in that context that *"... some preach Christ out of envy and rivalry, some out of selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing they can stir up trouble for me while I am in chains"* (1:15, 17).
 - c. We should also note: 2 Timothy 4:16: *"At my first defense, no one came to my support, but everyone deserted me."*
 - d. We may wonder: Where were Luke, Titus, Aristarchus, Tychicus, Epaphras, Mark and others?
 - e. Perhaps they were away at the time on other missions for Paul or were involved in evangelistic work elsewhere.
 - f. It is possible that others who were qualified spiritually were unable to travel because of other factors.
 - g. But in the end there was the one man who was available and so in tune with Paul's deep love and concern for others, and that was Timothy.

D. A Tried and Proven Servant

"But you know that Timothy has proved himself. . ."

1. Paul's attitude toward him (cf. verse 21).
2. What the Philippians knew. *"... as a son with his father he has served with me in the work of the gospel."*
 - a. Timothy served as a slave as Jesus had done (Philippians 2:7; Matthew 20:28).
 - b. But Timothy was not a slave of Paul but of Jesus Christ. *"He has served with me in the work of the gospel."*

E. Paul's Future Plans to Visit the Philippians

"And I am confident in the Lord that I myself will come soon" (v. 24).

1. As Paul hoped "in the Lord" (v. 19), he was "confident in the Lord" that in accordance with His will he would be able to see them again.
2. But it was always "in the Lord" and if it be the Lord's will.

- a. “But as he left, he promised, ‘I will come back if it is God’s will!’” (Acts 18:21).
- b. “Instead, you ought to say, ‘If it is the Lord’s will, we will live and do this or that’” (James 4:15).

EPAPHRODITUS – THE GIFT AND GIFT-BRINGER (2:25-30)

A. The Return of a Special Gift, Epaphroditus

“But I think it is necessary to send back to you Epaphroditus. . .”

1. Epaphroditus – means “lovely” or “charming”.
 - a. From the goddess Epaphrodite.
 - b. Many Christians had names that originally were from Greek gods.
2. A shortened form of Epaphroditus is found in Epaphras (Colossians 4:12; Colossians 1:8; Philemon 23). Not the same person.
3. Three terms used by Paul to describe Epaphroditus.
 - a. “*My brother*” – Paul loves to use the term brother or brothers for his fellow Christians. He does so 22 times in 1 and 2 Thessalonians.
 - b. “*Fellow worker*” – Paul, rather than exalting himself above others, recognizes them as rendering to God the same type of service he is rendering. (See Romans 16:3; Romans 16:21; 1 Thessalonians 3:2; Philemon 1; 2 Corinthians 8:23).
 - c. “*Fellow soldier*” – Epaphroditus was a comrade-in-arms in the struggle against the forces of evil. In using such a term, Paul reinforces the idea of a spiritual warfare and of Epaphroditus’ role in it. Note: Philemon 2; 2 Timothy 2:3-4; 4:7.
4. Epaphroditus is a messenger for the church. “. . .*your messenger whom you sent to take care of my needs*” (v. 25).
 - a. The word for messenger” is from the Greek word *APOSTOLON* from which we get our word “apostle.”
 - b. The twelve apostles of Jesus and Paul had a unique relationship and function as those especially chosen and commissioned by Christ, and they along with prophets made known the New Testament revelation. See Ephesians 2:20; 3:4-6.
 - c. But the word apostle means “one who is sent,” and there were people selected and sent by churches with certain responsibilities.
 - 1) Barnabas and Saul (Acts 14:14).
 - 2) Brothers who were representatives (2 Corinthians 8:23.) They were apostles of the church, selected and sent by them to bear their contributions to the poor among the saints in Judea.
 - 3) Epaphroditus (Philippians 2:25).
5. We should note that Epaphroditus not only brought gifts to Paul for the Philippian brothers, but he was a gift as well since he was to stay and “take care of his needs.”

B. The Illness of Epaphroditus (vs. 26-27)

1. The order of the events.
 - a. Epaphroditus became ill either on the way or after he arrived in Rome.
 - b. The Philippians learned about his illness and were grieved about this.

- c. Epaphroditus learned that they knew of his illness and this caused him to be “distressed.” This is a strong word and is used about Jesus when He went into Gethsemane and “began to be sorrowful and troubled” (Matthew 26:37).
- 2. God had mercy on him and brought about his recovery (Philippians 2:27). *“But God had mercy upon him, and not on him only but also on me, to spare me sorrow upon sorrow.”*
 - a. Paul had the gift of healing and yet understood that Epaphroditus might die.
 - b. Healing was not a part of the atonement. This is confirmed by other New Testament passages:
 - 1) Timothy (1 Timothy 5:23).
 - 2) Trophimus (2 Timothy 4:20).
 - 3) Paul (2 Corinthians 12:7-9). (His thorn in the flesh).
 - c. Whether the recovery was instant or gradual and by what means, we are not told. However, Paul recognized it as something God brought about.

C. The Charge to the Philippians. “Welcome Him.”

- 1. Some of the Philippian Christians may have had some reservations about Epaphroditus returning to Philippi. Paul assures them that he agrees with his return and urges them to welcome him with honor.
- 2. Note the letter to the Romans urging them to receive Phoebe (Romans 16:2). *“I ask you to receive her in the Lord in a way worthy of the saints, and to give her any help she may need from you, for she has been a great help to many people, including me.”*
- 3. *“Welcome him in the Lord with great joy.”* Their grief in knowing of his illness would turn to joy when they saw him personally and knew that he was indeed well.
- 4. *“Honor men like him.”* Note: *“I was glad when Stephanas, Fortunatus and Achaicus arrived, because they have supplied what was lacking from you. For they refreshed my spirit and yours also. Such men deserve recognition”* (1 Corinthians 16:17-18).
- 5. This is in harmony with the principle Jesus taught (Mark 10:42-44).
- 6. *“He almost died for the work of Christ, risking his life. . .”* Paul had faced that kind of risk constantly as he had gone about preaching the gospel of Christ (Acts 20:22-24).
- 7. *“To make up for the help you could not give me.”* The desire to help had always been there. *“Indeed, you have been concerned, but you had no opportunity to show it”* (Philippians 4:10).

D. Summary on Epaphroditus:

- 1. His return from Rome to Philippi (v. 25).
- 2. Reasons for his return (vs. 26-28).
 - a. His own ardent desire (vs. 26-27).
 - b. That you may be glad (v. 28).
 - c. That I may have less anxiety (v. 28b).
- 3. Manner of receiving him at Philippi (vs. 29-30).

CONCLUSION:

Besides the example of Jesus we have in this context of Philippians three other examples of the self-renouncing attitude “that Christ Jesus had” (v. 5).

1. Paul – willing to be poured out like a drink offering on the sacrifices and service coming from their faith (v. 17).
2. Timothy – took a genuine interest in them, not seeking his own things but the things of Jesus Christ (vs. 20-21).
3. Epaphroditus – risked his life in order to serve others in need.
“Join with others in following my example, brothers, and take note of those who live according to the pattern we gave” (Philippians 3:17).

TIMOTHY & EPAPHRODITUS – PREACHERS – “. . . men who take a genuine interest in your welfare!”

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON SEVEN:

1. List four things about Timothy which would characterize his relationship with Paul and the churches.
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
 - 4) _____
2. What three terms did Paul use to describe his relationship with Epaphroditus?
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
3. In what way was Epaphroditus both a gift and a gift-giver?

4. What was Paul’s charge to the Philippian church concerning Epaphroditus?

LESSON EIGHT

NO CONFIDENCE IN THE FLESH

INTRODUCTION:



Life is like a mail-box; it receives some things that are valuable, even priceless, but other things fit only for the waste basket. Every life should have its waste basket where useless things can be thrown away.

Paul, in this section of Philippians, looks upon his life as one with great privileges and attainments. But after coming in contact with Christ, he made another assessment of his life and found that the things in which he had trusted were more than useless; they are actually “rubbish” and served as a barrier to his being what God wanted him to be. The same can be true with us today, and we need to pay close attention to this message from Paul.

LESSON TEXT: Philippians 3:1-11

LESSON AIM: To gain an understanding of the utter uselessness of human attainments and the exceeding value and necessity of spiritual attainments.

LESSON OBJECTIVES: You will . . .

1. Discover in Paul’s background several reasons for him to glory in the flesh above many others.
 2. See that all religious people are not as they seem to be, but that some would bind legalistic laws and tradition distorting salvation by faith.
 3. Examine Paul’s assessment of all fleshly attainments in relation to eternity.
 4. Marvel at Paul’s magnificent obsession of knowing Christ.
-

THE ADMONITION TO REJOICE IN THE LORD (3:1)

A. Keynote of the Epistle. “*Rejoice in the Lord*” (3:1). See also: 1:4; 2:18; 2:29; 4:4.

B. A Prized Possession of Paul. This joy was possessed by Paul and demonstrated in many different circumstances.

1. “*About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them*” (Acts 16:25).
2. “*Sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; poor, yet making many rich; having nothing, and yet possessing everything*” (2 Corinthians 6:10).

- C. Not Based on Outward Circumstances.** This joy as taught and practiced by Jesus and Paul was not based on outward circumstances but on an inward relationship with God.
- D. The Necessity of Repetition (v.1).** *“It is no trouble for me to write the same things to you again, and it is a safeguard for you.”*
1. This may refer to his exhortation to rejoice. They could have become despondent and discouraged, so Paul would urge them toward joyful trust in God.
 2. But this repetition could refer to the warning about adversaries—those who oppose the gospel whether they be pagans or Judaizers. In the immediate context he warns about Judaizers.
 3. Regardless, repetition of vital truths and warnings about those who would lead Christians astray is always a “safeguard.” See 2 Peter 1:12; Jude 5.

THE WARNING: BEWARE OF THE JUDAIZERS (3:2-3)

- A. The Danger of Contamination of the Judaizers.** *“Watch out”* (v. 2).
1. Their evil character. *“Those dogs.”*
 - a. The term “dog” is used consistently in the Bible as a term of reproach and shame. It was considered unclean.
 - 1) A “male prostitute” (Deuteronomy 23:18).
 - 2) General usage (1 Samuel 24:14; Matthew 15:26; 7:6; Luke 16:21; Revelation 22:15).
 - b. The dogs of Paul’s time roamed the streets, sometimes in packs, hunting in the garbage heaps, snarling and snapping at those who came near.
 - c. Gentiles were looked upon as “unclean” and called “dogs” by Jews.
 - d. Paul uses the term as appropriate for the Judaizers, men who followed him wherever he went, snapping at his heels, raising up trouble through undermining his authority and trying to force Gentile converts to be circumcised and keep the Law of Moses.
 - e. Paul writes against them forcefully in 2 Corinthians and Galatians.
 2. Their evil action. *“Those men who do evil.”*
 - a. In rejecting the authority of Paul and in denying the gospel of the grace of God for salvation apart from the Law, they were indeed “deceitful workmen” (2 Corinthians 11:13).
 - b. The effect of their teaching was to keep men from God, to shut the kingdom of heaven in men’s faces. *“You shut the kingdom of heaven in men’s faces. You yourselves do not enter, nor will you let those enter who are trying to”* (Matthew 23:13, 15).
 3. Their unholy practice. *“Those mutilators of the flesh.”*
 - a. Circumcision was first commanded of God in Genesis 17 to the family of Abraham. It was a sign of the covenant between God and Abraham with his descendants.
 - b. But it was to be more than a sign in the flesh. There was to accompany it a circumcision of the heart, an attitude of submission and dedication to God. (See Deuteronomy 10:16; Jeremiah 4:4).

- c. In the New Testament it is considered as a matter of indifference. It does not effect one's salvation nor is it evil within itself (Galatians 5:6; 6:15; 1 Corinthians 7:19).
- d. But the Judaizers were trying to bind circumcision and the Law of Moses upon Gentile converts. *"Then some of the believers who belonged to the party of the Pharisees stood up and said, 'The Gentiles must be circumcised and required to obey the law of Moses'"* (Acts 15:5).
- e. Paul argued that to receive circumcision as necessary for salvation was a rejection of Jesus and His atoning sacrifice and the gospel of grace. To the Galatian Christians he sternly warned: *"Mark my words! I, Paul, tell you if you let yourselves be circumcised, Christ will be of no value to you at all. . . You who are trying to be justified by law have been alienated from Christ; you have fallen away from grace"* (Galatians 5:2, 4).
- f. Circumcision in the flesh, divorced from faith in God and in the Messiah, Jesus Christ, was nothing more than mutilation—such as was practiced by pagans. So Paul writes, "Beware of the concision" ("these mutilators of the flesh") (Leviticus 19:28; 1 Kings 18:28; Acts 7:51).

B. The People and Nature of True Circumcision

"For it is we who are the circumcision. . ." (v. 3).

1. The true circumcision is not the one in the flesh but that of the heart (Romans 2:28-29; Colossians 2:11-12).
2. The true circumcision in the context of Philippians 3 are:
 - a. Not those who cling to the old Law. *"We who worship by the Spirit of God."* Worship is not just an outward formality or ritualism but is from the heart and springs from deep gratitude and appreciation for what we are and have in Christ. *"God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth"* (John 4:24). The worship is motivated, inspired and controlled by the Spirit of God.
 - b. Those who by faith cling to Christ. *"Who glory in Christ Jesus."* There is no effort to glory or boast in oneself, in one's own righteousness or attainments. The true circumcision glory in Christ and in His atoning death on the cross (1 Corinthians 1:28-31; Galatians 6:14).
 - c. Those who do not rely on worldly accomplishments. *"Who put no confidence in the flesh."*
 - 1) The "flesh" in this context would refer to any achievement, attainment, privilege or accomplishment we might trust in order to have the right relationship with God.
 - 2) This might come from ancestry, race, religious privileges and attainments of the past.
 - 3) Paul will demonstrate that if anyone has "reasons for such confidence in the flesh," he has even more.

FLESHLY ATTAINMENTS THAT GIVE NO CONFIDENCE (vs. 4-6)

This section is closely related in thought to Paul's boasting in 2 Corinthians 11:16ff. He says there that "I am speaking as a fool," but circumstances forced him to affirm he had more grounds of boasting than did his opponents who sought to undermine his authority.

A. The Credentials of Paul According to His Flesh

1. The correct **RITUALS**. "*Circumcised on the eighth day.*"
 - a. This was according to God's original plan for circumcision. "*For the generation to come every male who is among you who is eight days old must be circumcised. . .*" (Genesis 17:12).
 - b. He was not an Ishmaelite who circumcised at the age of thirteen according to the age of Ishmael at his circumcision (Genesis 17:25).
 - c. He was not a proselyte or convert to Judaism, receiving circumcision, after adulthood.
2. The correct **NATION**. "*Of the people of Israel.*"
 - a. Israel was the name given to Jacob after his wrestling with God. It signified dignity, having power with God (Genesis 32:28).
 - b. Some of those privileges of "the people of Israel" are listed in Romans 9:4-5.
3. The correct **TRIBE**. "*Of the tribe of Benjamin.*"
 - a. Benjamin was the son of Rachel, Jacob's favorite wife.
 - b. He was the only one of the sons of Jacob who was born in the promised land.
 - c. The first king of Israel, Saul, was a Benjamite.
 - d. When the kingdom divided after Solomon's death, Benjamin alone remained loyal to Judah and to the house of David.
 - e. Mordecai, who brought about the great deliverance for the Jews in the book of Esther, was from the tribe of Benjamin.
4. The correct **ANCESTRY**. "*A Hebrew of Hebrews.*"
 - a. This has special reference to his speaking the Hebrew language or the closely related Aramaic.
 - b. Many Jews, scattered throughout the Roman Empire, had forgotten their language and had adopted the Greek language and other aspects of that culture.
 - c. Paul could still speak Hebrew (or Aramaic) and did so in addressing the Jews in Jerusalem (Acts 21:40; 22:2). This obviously was handed down to him by his parents and his Jewish teachers.

B. The Attainments of Paul in the Flesh

1. Of the most **exclusive sect**. "*In regard to the law, a Pharisee.*"
 - a. The Pharisees were a strict sect of the Jews that developed between the Testaments late in the second century B.C.
 - b. They were the "separated ones" who opposed the pressure of pagan culture on the Jewish people.
 - c. Though their basic motivation had been good, they developed into a super critical sect, enforcing their own traditions upon men.

- d. They are often rebuked by Jesus because of their self-righteousness, outward observance of the Law but inward neglect of God's word. See Matthew 23.
 - e. But they were considered orthodox in belief and were recognized as the leaders of the common people. To be a Pharisee meant being of the strictest sect and implied zeal and fervency for God. Paul often spoke of his background as a Pharisee and affirmed that "*according to the strictest sect of our religion, I lived as a Pharisee*" (Acts 26:5).
2. Of the most **zealous nature**. "*As for zeal, persecuting the church.*"
- a. Zealous Jews were expected to be opposed to the enemies of God, and Christians were put in that category.
 - b. Paul, then known as Saul of Tarsus, "*violently persecuted the church of God and tried to destroy it.*" (Galatians 1:13).
 - c. He not only consented to the death of Stephen, the first Christian martyr, but gave his vote that many others also should be killed (Acts 26:9-11).
 - d. He described himself well when he wrote about Israelites who "*are zealous for God, but their zeal is not based on knowledge.*" (Romans 10:2).
3. Of the most **faultless practice**. "*As for legalistic righteousness, faultless.*"
- a. Though no one could keep the Law perfectly, outward performance could be blameless as assessed by others. The parents of John the Baptizer "... *were upright in the sight of God, observing all the Lord's commandments and regulations blamelessly*" (Luke 1:6). The rich young ruler responded to Jesus' pointing to God's commandments, "*All these I have kept since I was a boy*" (Mark 10:20).
 - b. Paul could also insist to the Jewish Sanhedrin, "*My brothers, I have fulfilled my duty to God in all good conscience to this day*" (Acts 23:1).
 - c. No one did a better job conforming to Jewish law than Paul, but Paul now knew that this legalistic righteousness was not the same as righteousness by faith.

PAUL'S ASSESSMENT OF HIS FLESHLY STATUS (vs. 7-11)

- A. True Estimate of Fleshly Attainments.** All of these privileges and all these attainments are considered loss for Christ (v. 7).
- 1. The privileges and attainments were real, but they did not bring divine approval.
 - 2. The idea of gain and loss in measuring eternal values was taught by Jesus (Matthew 16:26).
 - 3. All these advantages and privileges were counted as a "loss." The wheat cargo on the storm-tossed ship taking Paul to Rome became a loss rather than a gain, and had to be thrown overboard. Otherwise, there would have been great loss not only of the ship but of human lives (Acts 27).
 - 4. "*I consider them rubbish*" (v. 8). The word translated "rubbish" could also be translated as "garbage," "dung," "muck," "filth fit for the garbage heap."

5. Paul did not see his past privileges and attainments as merely neutral and useless but as something as repulsive as rubbish or muck if they caused him to trust in them or depend upon them for justification before God.
6. Once he asked Christ, “what shall I do?” (Acts 22:10), the rest of his life was trusting in Him and obeying what the Lord assigned him to do.

B. True Attainment Is Knowing Christ

1. Paul’s magnificent **obsession**. *“The surpassing greatness of knowing Christ. . .”*
 - a. Not simply knowing facts about Christ. It was knowing Him better and better as Lord, Savior, Friend and Guide.
 - b. *“Now this is eternal life: that men may know you, the only true God and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent”* (John 17:3).
2. Paul’s magnificent **possession**. *“The righteousness that comes from God and is by faith.”*
 - a. Not self righteousness. Not “. . . a righteousness of my own that comes from the Law.” This observance of the law could not bring a person into the presence of the Holy God.
 - b. But God’s righteousness (Galatians 2:16; Hebrews 10:19-20).
3. Paul’s magnificent **expression**. Knowing Christ and the power of His resurrection (Ephesians 1:19-20; 3:20).
4. Paul’s magnificent **association**. *“The fellowship of sharing in his suffering. For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for him”* (Philippians 1:29).
5. Paul’s magnificent **impression**. *“Becoming like him in his death.”*
 - a. One is baptized into His death at the time of his conversion (Romans 6:3-4).
 - b. There is a continual death to self as this commitment is renewed daily: *“I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me”* (Galatians 2:20).
 - c. The ultimate purpose of God is that His chosen people be *“conformed to the likeness of his Son. . .”* (Romans 8:29).
6. Paul’s magnificent **attainment**. Attaining to the resurrection from the dead.
 - a. Paul knew, of course, that all the dead would be raised (John 5:28-29).
 - b. But this is a resurrection “to life,” the resurrection of the just and would bring him into the eternal presence of God.

CONCLUSION:

- A. This lesson tells us that we can have no confidence in the flesh.
- B. It teaches us that all privileges and attainments are to be counted as loss, as rubbish compared to the gaining of Christ and the righteousness that is in Him.
- C. After 25 years Paul could still say, *“I considered them rubbish.”* Christ had continually grown in value to him, and he was increasingly pleased with his bargain.

“...and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith.” (Philippians 3:9 NIV)

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON EIGHT:

1. What is the “keynote” of the Philippian letter? _____
2. Of what particular group of people are the Philippians warned in 3:2-3?

3. What three particular phrases does Paul use to describe their ungodly character in v. 2?
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
4. How does Paul describe those who are the true circumcision in the context of Philippians 3?
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
5. Paul presents his superior credentials as being correct in what four areas?
 - 1) The correct _____
 - 2) The correct _____
 - 3) The correct _____
 - 4) The correct _____
6. Paul describes his superior attainments in the flesh in what three ways?
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
7. List below six things which reveal Paul’s true attainments.
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
 - 4) _____
 - 5) _____
 - 6) _____

LESSON NINE

ON TOWARD THE GOAL

INTRODUCTION:



Paul has written about the danger from the Judaizers and their seeking to bind upon others the Law of Moses including circumcision. By contrast he argued, *“For it is we who are the circumcision who worship by the Spirit of God, who glory in Christ Jesus, and who put no confidence in the flesh”* (verse 3).

Paul himself had more reasons than anyone to have confidence in the flesh—to trust in his privileges and attainments as guaranteeing his right relationship with God. But Paul moved all of the gains on the other side of the ledger. He considered them “loss for the sake of Christ” and even rubbish, standing between him and salvation in Christ.

But in his surrender to Christ and his determination to know Him, the power of His resurrection and fellowship of His sufferings, he confessed that he had not yet reached his goal. In this lesson we want to note the following points:

1. The need of pressing onward toward the goal.
2. The obligation to live up to what we have attained.
3. Living after the pattern of Paul and others who serve as examples.
4. A tearful warning about “enemies of the cross of Christ.”
5. The heavenly citizenship.

LESSON TEXT: Philippians 3:12-21

LESSON AIM: To understand Paul’s intense effort in reaching heaven and his desire for the Philippian church that they too strive to reach the same goal.

LESSON OBJECTIVES: You will . . .

1. Study the attitude of Paul on continued effort and struggle in attaining the goal for which he was called.
 2. Learn the importance of living up to what we already have and going on.
 3. Discover the importance of having Paul and others as an example and pattern of Christian behavior.
 4. Learn the characteristics of those who are enemies of the cross of Christ.
-

PRESSING ONWARD TOWARD THE GOAL (vs. 12-14)

A. The Encouraging Confession. “*Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect*” (v. 12). The two-pronged goal:

1. “*Obtained all this*” – This refers in the context to his great desire to know Christ better, to experience more of the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings. He was indeed growing in all these areas, but he could not be content with where he was. There was much more growth that needed to take place.
2. “*Already been made perfect*” – Paul would not claim to be “perfect” in the sense of absolute sinlessness. Though men have often claimed to have reached such a state of perfection or sinlessness, the Bible denies that this will be possible in this life. “*If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us*” (1 John 1:8).

B. The Ever-Pressing Goal. “*But I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me.*”

1. Christ has taken hold of Paul from the time he was converted in Damascus.
2. Three reasons Jesus had taken hold of Paul.
 - a. To make him a chosen instrument used by God to bring salvation to the lost (Acts 9:15; 22:21; 26:16-18).
 - b. To bring about his eternal salvation and transformation into the image of Christ. The ultimate purpose of God’s calling Paul and others is that they “*be conformed to the likeness of his Son*” (Romans 8:29). See 2 Corinthians 3:18.
 - c. To transform Paul’s life. Paul would lovingly surrender to Him and to the transformation of his life. He would also press on toward bringing others into this same relationship (Colossians 1:28-29).

C. The Exclusive Involvement. “*But one thing I do*” (v. 13).

1. The “one thing” of Paul’s striving.
 - a. Men cannot live a dual life, serve two masters: “*No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other*” (Matthew 6:24).
 - b. Lot’s wife was one with divided affections. “*But Lot’s wife looked back and she became a pillar of salt*” (Genesis 19:26). Jesus would warn us of the same danger—a divided heart and divided allegiance (Luke 17:32; 9:62).
 - c. When “*Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made*” and she complained to Jesus about Mary not helping her, Jesus responded: “*Martha, Martha, you are worried and upset about many things, but only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken from her*” (Luke 10:38-42).
 - d. Paul’s “one thing” is summarized in Philippians 1:21 – “*For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.*” And Christ was glorified in his body whether by life or by death (1:20).
2. This involved “*forgetting what is behind. . .*”

- a. His special privileges and attainments (v. 4-6). They would only be a stumbling-block if he trusted in them in the race he was running.
 - b. He would also forget past failures, defeats, and mistreatment. They would only be used as stepping stones toward less reliance upon self and more reliance upon Christ.
 - c. He would forget past sins that had been forgiven by his Lord Jesus. He would always remember with deep gratitude and thanksgiving the marvelous cleansing he received (1 Timothy 1:12-15). But he knew that forgiveness was real and complete, and he would not let his present joy and peace be destroyed by memories of the past.
3. It involved effort to reach the goal. *“And straining toward what is ahead.”*
- a. The athlete, participating in the race, does not look behind or to the side. His entire focus is “toward what is ahead.”
 - b. Paul and other New Testament writers compared living the Christian life to running a race (1 Corinthians 9:24-25; Hebrews 12:1-2). *“Let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus. . .”*

D. The Everlasting Prize – That for Which God Called Us. *“I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God called me heavenward in Christ Jesus”* (v. 14).

- 1. From the point of view of the runner, he presses toward a goal. It is a goal toward which he strives, and it is a prize to be rewarded. In any case, it is the final gaining of Christ and all that involves that causes him to press on and on.
- 2. For that prize God has called us heavenward in Christ Jesus.
 - a. It is a call from heaven and it is a call to heaven (Hebrews 3:1; 1 Peter 5:10).
 - b. The prize is often called a crown, to be presented by the President of the games, the Lord Jesus Christ. *“Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness. . .”* (2 Timothy 4:7-8). *“And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that never fades away”* (1 Peter 5:4).

LIVING UP TO WHAT WE HAVE ATTAINED (vs. 15-16)

A. The Understanding of The Mature. *“All of us who are mature should take such a view of things.”*

- 1. The word “mature” is the same as the word “perfect” in verse 12.
- 2. It is used in the sense of being full-grown, mature, having grown out of a state of infancy or childhood. (See Hebrews 5:13-14; Colossians 4:12).

B. The Understanding of the Others. *“And if on some point you think differently, that, too, God will make clear to you.”*

- 1. The promised help of God. Basic integrity is so important in understanding God’s will. A person will be helped by God to understand that will (John 7:17).

2. God will providentially work to help honest, searching hearts who are choosing to do His will.

C. Living up to Our Understanding. *“Only let us live up to what we have already attained.”*

1. The Jews in Jesus’ day refused to accept truth they already knew. Therefore, it was not likely that they would learn more truth from Him.
2. Though we don’t know all or have all the knowledge we will have in the future, our responsibility is to live up to the truth to which we have attained. Then we shall always be growing in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

LIVING ACCORDING TO THE PATTERN OF PAUL AND OTHERS (v. 17)

A. Joint Participation in Obedience. *“Join with others in following my example, brothers. . .”*

1. Despite his imperfections, Paul was still an example of attitude and conduct, and he frequently urges Christians to follow him (Philippians 4:9; 2 Thessalonians 3:7).
2. Ultimate example is Christ. But whether expressed or not, we should always understand such passages in the light of: *“Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ”* (1 Corinthians 11:1).

B. The Pattern of Obedience. *“And take note of those who live according to the pattern we gave you.”*

1. There were other examples of those who have the mind of Christ, and they are to be examples too.
 - a. Timothy (Philippians 2:19-24). *“. . .who takes a genuine interest in your welfare. . .has served with me in the work of the gospel. . .”*
 - b. Epaphroditus (Philippians 2:25-30). *“. . .he almost died for the work of Christ, risking his life to make up for the help you could not give.”*
2. “Take note of” in 2 Thessalonians 3:14 means observe their actions and avoid them. Here it means—observe their actions and imitate them.

ENEMIES OF THE CROSS OF CHRIST (vs. 18-19)

A. Their Nature – Apostate Christians

1. Not simply “professed” Christians. Many will say that they were “professed Christians.” The word “professed” or “pretended” must always be used by some when dealing with passages that warn Christians about falling away from God or living a life of sexual immorality. They have come to these Scriptures with the pre-supposition of “once-saved always-saved” or the “impossibility of apostasy.” Therefore, the many Bible warnings must apply only to “professed” Christians, people who were never saved in the first place.
2. But what is said about these people can only be said about saved people in many of the warning passages:
 - a. *“It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery. Mark my*

words! I, Paul, tell you that if you let yourselves be circumcised, Christ will be of no value to you at all. . . You who are trying to be justified by law have been alienated from Christ; you have fallen away from grace” (Galatians 5:1-4).

- b. *“If they have escaped the corruption of the world by knowing our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and are again entangled in it and overcome, they are worse off at the end than the beginning. . .” (2 Peter 2:20-22).*
3. The same is true of dozens of other warning passages to God’s people in the New Testament.
4. These “enemies of the cross of Christ” are not the Judaizers who tried to undermine the message of the cross by false teaching. Rather they are apostate Christians who “live as enemies of the cross of Christ.”

B. Their Character: Sensual and Shameful

1. *“Their god is their stomach” (v. 19).*
 - a. In a statement of Paul in 1 Corinthians 6:13 -“Food for the stomach and the stomach for food” – he is discussing the problem of sexual immorality among the Corinthian Christians. Men worship their sensual appetites as their god!
 - b. Some abused the doctrine of the grace of God and caused Paul to ask: *“What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer?” (Romans 6:1-2).*
 - c. Some “*. . . godless men*” even changed *“the grace of God into a license for immorality” (Jude 4).*
 - d. The New Testament is full of warnings about following the lusts of the flesh—making one’s stomach his god.
2. *“Their glory is in their shame. . .”*
 - a. They were like some of apostate Israel in the days of Jeremiah: *“Are they ashamed of their loathsome conduct? No, they have no shame at all; they do not even know how to blush” (Jeremiah 6:15).*
 - b. Some of the Corinthian believers appeared to glory and be proud even though they were tolerating a flagrant case of sexual immorality (1 Corinthians 5:2).
3. *“Their mind is on earthly things.” (See 1 John 2:15-16; Colossians 3:1-2; Philippians 4:8).*

C. Their Destiny: Destruction

“Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. The one who sows to please his sinful nature from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life” (Galatians 6:7-8; cf. 2 Thessalonians 1:8-9).

D. Paul’s Concern: To Warn Them Again

1. His previous warning, *“As I have often told you before. . .” (v. 18).* There is the necessity of repeated warnings about men and women who “live as enemies of the cross of Christ.” Their lifestyles undermine the very purpose of the cross which was to put away sin!

2. Deep concern in a second warning. *“And now say again even with tears.”*
 - a. The modern view of God as a “heavenly Santa Claus” with about that much moral authority and the weakened view of the consequences of sin would not cause anyone to weep!
 - b. But Paul knew better and knew that men could be lost eternally. Such apostasy from God caused him to weep (Acts 20:19). *“I served the Lord with great humility and with tears. . .”* 2 Corinthians 2:4: *“For I wrote you out of great distress and anguish of heart and with my tears, not to grieve you but to let you know the depth of my love for you.”*
 - c. The weeping of Paul for others is as glorious as his joy.

HEAVENLY CITIZENSHIP (vs. 20-21)

- A. **Citizens of a Heavenly Kingdom.** *“But our citizenship is in heaven.”*
 1. In contrast to the enemies of the cross, Paul reminds the Philippian saints of their heavenly citizenship.
 2. As the Philippians were proud of being Roman citizens and were always to be aware of the implications of such a position, Christians are to remember always their heavenly citizenship and the implications of such a blessed position (Hebrews 12:23; Philippians 4:3; Luke 10:20).
- B. **Waiting for Our King.** *“And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ. . .”*
 1. Christians are eagerly awaiting the return of the Lord (1 Thessalonians 1:10; Titus 2:13).
 2. He *“... will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body”* (v. 21).
 - a. Our bodies are “lowly” because they are subject to sickness, pain, aging and death.
 - b. But they must be changed before entering into heaven (1 Corinthians 15:50-52; 1 John 3:2).
 3. The assurance—it will be done *“... by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control”* (v. 21). He who has created the universe and has it under his control will not fail to fulfill our hopes in Him.

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON NINE:

1. List the five things given in the introduction that are discussed in this lesson.
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
 - 4) _____
 - 5) _____

2. What three things or attitudes are necessary to attain the everlasting prize?
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____

3. The enemies of the cross are described by what three characteristics?
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____

4. The enemies of the cross are identified as what group of people?

4. The destiny of the enemies of the cross is _____

5. In contrast the obedient Christian is destined for what? (vs. 20-21) _____

LESSON TEN

CHARACTER OF HEAVENLY CITIZENSHIP

INTRODUCTION:



he church at Philippi had many favorable traits and must be reckoned, by any standards, as one of the great New Testament churches. The saints at Philippi had a special relationship with Paul and, every time he remembered them, he thanked God for them.

But these Christians were not without weaknesses and dangers. In the previous chapter Paul had warned about two dangers—one from the Judaizers with their legalism and confidence in their religious privileges and attainments. The other danger was from Gentile libertine-ism, men whose god was their stomach, whose glory was in their shame, whose mind was only earthly things and whose destiny was destruction.

In contrast to these “enemies of the cross of Christ,” these saints at Philippi were citizens of heaven, waiting for the “blessed hope” of Christ’s second coming (3:17-21).

We recall that the two main weaknesses of the Philippian church were disunity and despondency. Hence, the frequent admonitions to unity and to rejoicing in the Lord.

This citizenship in heaven demanded certain characteristics and obligations. Such characteristics of heavenly citizenship would enable them to overcome both their dangers and their weaknesses. In this lesson we will be examining in chapter 4:1-7 some of the characteristics of heavenly citizenship.

LESSON TEXT: Philippians 4:1-7

LESSON AIM: To examine four attributes which characterize those whose citizenship is in heaven.

LESSON OBJECTIVES: You will . . .

1. Learn that heavenly citizenship demands steadfastness in faith and in life.
 2. Understand the importance of unity and cooperation in the body of Christ.
 3. Discover that heavenly citizenship calls for rejoicing and peace in spite of outward circumstances and must be manifested before all.
 4. Grasp the critical necessity of proper thinking and doing of the heavenly citizen.
-

HEAVENLY CITIZENSHIP CALLS FOR STEADFASTNESS (4:1)

A. Steadfastness Endangered by Circumstances. *“Therefore. . .”*

1. This connects the warnings and admonitions and instructions Paul has written in chapter 3 with the exhortations in chapter 4.
2. These exhortations will, then, grow out of the example of Paul and others “who live according to the pattern we gave you.” (3:17). The “therefore” will relate especially to their citizenship in heaven in contrast to “*those who live as enemies of the cross of Christ*” (3:18-20). It is also closely related to their awaiting His coming and the transformation of their bodies by His mighty power (verse 21).

B. Steadfastness Encouraged by Love and Concern. *“My brothers, you whom I love and long for. . .”*

1. Note Paul’s affection for them. “*God can testify how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus*” (Philippians 1:8). “*But even if I am being poured out like a drink offering on the sacrifice and service of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with all of you*” (Philippians 2:17).
2. This deep affection and concern for those he converted to Jesus Christ serve as a great example for preachers and teachers of the word today (1 Thessalonians 2:8; 2 Corinthians 11:28-29).
3. If more preachers and teachers of God’s word had the heart of Paul in this regard, perhaps more Christians would be more aware of their heavenly citizenship.

C. Steadfastness Encouraged by Relationships. *“My joy and crown. . .”*

1. The “crown” here is from the Greek, *STEPHANOS* and means the victor’s crown or wreath rather than the kingly crown. It is used of people won to the Lord by Paul and their faithfulness of life and transformation of character would be like an ornament and honor to Paul in the day of Christ (Philippians 2:16; 1 Thessalonians 2:19-20).
2. There is no greater joy than to bring lost people to Christ and to know of their continued growth in the Lord (3 John 4).

D. Steadfastness Encouraged by Paul’s Exhortation. *“That is how you should stand firm in the Lord, dear friends.”*

1. This had been Paul’s previous admonition to them – stand firm regardless of what happened to him (Philippians 1:27).
2. Standing firm is so urgent because of the tendency to drift away from the Lord. “*We must pay more careful attention, therefore, to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away*” (Hebrews 2:1).
3. Christians are urged to stand firm:
 - a. In the faith (1 Corinthians 16:13).
 - b. In the freedom they have from Christ (Galatians 5:1).
 - c. In one spirit (Philippians 1:27).
 - d. In the Lord (Philippians 4:1).

“Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain” (1 Corinthians 15:58).

HEAVENLY CITIZENSHIP CALLS FOR UNITY AND COOPERATION (4:2-3)

A. Personal Relationships and Cooperation. *“I plead with Euodia and I plead with Syntyche to agree with each other in the Lord”* (v. 2).

1. Agree for Paul’s sake. These Christian women had “contended” at Paul’s side “in the cause of the gospel” (v. 3). They were obviously diligent, fervent women who were well-known in the Philippian church.
2. Agree for the Church’s sake. The reason for their differences is not stated, but it was serious enough for Paul to write about it in this letter to the whole church. It was part of the disunity problem in the Philippian congregation.
3. Agree for the Lord’s sake. Without any partiality or taking sides Paul exhorts them to “agree with each other in the Lord.”
4. Agree for unity’s sake. Help is summoned by Paul from someone whom Paul calls, “loyal yokefellow.” This could be translated as a proper name – Syzygus. He must have been a person of great patience and understanding and respect in order to handle such a delicate task.
5. Agree for love’s sake. This is obviously not a doctrinal issue but a personal matter between two dedicated servants of Christ. Such friction and disunity need to be dealt with and removed for the effectiveness of any local church.

B. Body Relationships and Cooperation. *“The rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life.”*

1. Paul has mentioned “Clement” as a fellow worker of his in gospel work.
2. Others are unnamed by Paul for some reason or other, but they are known by the Lord who keeps a register of His people.
 - a. *“Rejoice that your names are written in heaven”* (Luke 10:20).
 - b. *“Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb’s book of life”* (Revelation 21:27).

HEAVENLY CITIZENSHIP CALLS FOR REJOICING AND PEACE (4:4-7)

A. A Constant Joy in the Lord. *“Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!”*

1. The rejoicing is to be done “always”– that is, under all conditions and in every circumstance of life (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18; 2 Corinthians 6:10).
2. Joy is not based on outward circumstances as happiness is. Paul and Silas in prison illustrate this truth (Acts 16:25).
3. Paul has just written about his weeping over the enemies of the cross (3:18).
4. It is possible to have deep concern for lost people and for worldly, apostate Christians as Paul did, and yet to “rejoice always.” Paul who wrote, “Rejoice in the Lord always” also wrote about his concern for others, both lost and saved (Romans 9:1-4; 2 Corinthians 2:4).
5. Paul was deeply involved emotionally in the lives of his converts. He wept with them and he wept for them; he also encouraged to “rejoice in the Lord always.”

B. A Manifest and Gentle Joy in Christ. *“Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near”* (v. 5).

1. The word “gentleness” emphasizes consideration for others, courtesy and graciousness. It is the opposite of stubbornness and thoughtlessness.
2. It is especially important in dealing with situations among brothers and sisters in the Lord where enmity and hard feelings may develop. A spirit of gentleness would be necessary in helping Euodia and Syntyche settle their differences.
3. “Gentleness” or forbearance is an expression of love for others (1 Corinthians 13:4-5).
4. “The Lord is near” can refer to place or time.
 - a. He is always near to us. He never leaves us or forsakes us, and we can always be assured of His presence (2 Timothy 4:17; Matthew 28:28).
 - b. The coming of the Lord is always near for the Christian. Even if He chooses to delay His coming, it is always a possibility and will be a reality at the Christian’s death.

C. A Peaceful Joy in Christ. *“Do not be anxious about anything. . .”*

1. It is doubt and worry not sorrow and trouble that stifle joy and peace in the Christian.
2. Jesus would have His people free of worry and anxiety. Read carefully Matthew 6:25-34 and see the provision promised by the Lord.
3. Paul believed what he wrote and was at peace, anxious about nothing. He had *“learned to be content, whatever the circumstances”* (v. 11).
4. Worry is the killer of joy and stifles spiritual growth. It is actually a form of unbelief or distrust in the Lord and His promises (Hebrews 13:5-6; Romans 8:28).

D. A Trusting and Asking Joy in Christ. *“But in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God”* (v. 6).

1. The answer to a life of anxiety and worry is trustful prayer as Paul often emphasized:
 - a. Devote yourself to prayer (Colossians 4:2).
 - b. Pray continually (1 Thessalonians 5:17).
 - c. Pray in the Spirit (Ephesians 5:18).
2. Paul demonstrated this dependence upon God in prayer by praying continually in every conceivable situation in his life and in the lives of others. This can be seen by studying or reading through several of his letters, i.e., 1 and 2 Thessalonians, Ephesians and Colossians.
3. Petitions and requests should be accompanied by thanksgiving. Being thankful for past blessings helps to avoid anxiety and a spirit of complaining (1 Thessalonians 5:18; 1 Timothy 2:1; Colossians 3:15).
4. “A beautiful and fruitful union is formed when prayer and praise wed.” (R.C. Bell)

E. A Protective Joy in Christ. *“And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus”* (v. 7).

1. “The peace of God” is the result of this life of prayerful trust.

2. Man has “peace with God” when he responds to the gospel in obedient faith and is justified (Romans 5:1).
3. But the “peace of God” is something that results from Christian growth in trusting God and depending upon His promises (1 Peter 5:7; Ephesians 3:20).
4. As Paul was guarded by a Roman so the “. . . *peace of God will guard our hearts and our minds in Christ Jesus.*”

HEAVENLY CITIZENSHIP CALLS FOR PROPER THINKING AND DOING (4:8-9)

A. The Heart of the Heavenly Citizen. “*Finally, brothers. . . think about such things*” (v. 8).

1. The importance of wholesome thinking.
 - a. Every sin is caused by wrong thinking:
 - 1) Anger is the incentive, murder the result (Matthew 5:21-22; 1 John 3:15). “*Anyone who hates his brother is a murderer.*”
 - 2) Lust is the cause, adultery is the expression (Matthew 5:28).
 - 3) Covetousness is the desire, theft is the overt act (1 Timothy 6:9).
 - b. All righteous acts result from wholesome thinking. Whatever is:
 - 1) True – has moral qualities of uprightness and dependability (Ephesians 4:25).
 - 2) Noble – that which has dignity and majesty, the opposite of vulgarity.
 - 3) Right – whatever is righteous, thinking righteous thoughts, meditating on God’s righteous acts.
 - 4) Pure – Purity of thought and purpose, a precondition to purity in word and action (1 Timothy 5:22; Ephesians 5:3).
 - 5) Lovely – That which is attractive, agreeable, winsome.
 - 6) Admirable – deservedly enjoys a good reputation.
2. The content of right thinking – that which is excellent. “*If anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.*”
 - a. The urgent need of right thinking in a world that makes this difficult even for the sincere Christian (Proverbs 4:23; Mark 7:21-23).
 - b. “The mind is dyed the color of its waking thoughts.” Hence, the importance of right thinking needs to be emphasized continually. Our thinking will determine our character and our actions.

B. The Practice of the Heavenly Citizen. “*Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me or seen in me—put it into practice*” (v. 9).

1. Whether Paul states it each time or not, we know that such imitation is qualified by his statement in 1 Corinthians 11:1: “*Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.*”
2. Paul was not the kind of preacher who said, “Don’t do as I do; do as I say.” He had received by revelation the message of God, and he felt a keen responsibility to pass that message on faithfully to others by his words and by his life. This responsibility he would pass on to Timothy and others who teach the word (1 Timothy 4:16; Philippians 3:17).

CONCLUSION:

- A. The result—*“And the God of peace will be with you.”*
 - 1. God is often called the “God of peace” (Romans 15:33; 16:20; 2 Corinthians 13:11; 1 Thessalonians 5:23).
 - 2. So in this context Paul promises to God’s joyful, trusting, thankful, right thinking people not only the “peace of God” but the source of that peace—the “God of peace”.
- B. This lesson deals with some characteristics of heavenly citizenship. We have noted the following points.
 - 1. Heavenly citizenship calls for steadfastness.
 - 2. Heavenly citizenship calls for unity and cooperation.
 - 3. Heavenly citizenship calls for rejoicing and peace.
 - 4. Heavenly citizenship calls for proper thinking and acting.

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON TEN:

1. What were two main weaknesses of the Philippian church as studied in previous lessons?
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____

2. Heavenly citizenship calls for steadfastness as stated in 4:1. List the four things Paul says about steadfastness in this verse.
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
 - 4) _____

3. Heavenly citizenship calls for unity and cooperation as stated in 4:2-3. In what two areas are unity and cooperation mentioned by Paul in these verses?
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____

4. Heavenly citizenship calls for rejoicing and peace vs. 4-7. What five points does the teacher make about this rejoicing in these verses?
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
 - 4) _____
 - 5) _____

5. Heavenly citizenship calls for proper thinking and doing, vs. 8-9. What two things or areas does Paul speak of in these verses?
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____

LESSON ELEVEN

THANKS FOR THE GIFTS

INTRODUCTION:

The church had been established in Philippi by Paul, Silas, Timothy and Luke – Acts 16. Paul was proud of this band of disciples, thanked God for them and called them “my brothers, you whom I love and long for, my joy and crown” (4:1).

This was a church known for its liberality and generosity in meeting the needs of others (2 Corinthians 8:1-3; 2 Corinthians 11:9). They had assisted Paul “from the first day until now” (Philippians 1:5). Their recent gifts sent by Epaphroditus brought forth this letter. Paul writes to these beloved, thoughtful and generous saints and says, “Thanks for the gifts.”

LESSON TEXT: Philippians 4:10-23

LESSON AIM: To see Paul’s complete reliance on the provision of Christ in every and all circumstances of life.

LESSON OBJECTIVES: You will . . .

1. Marvel at the calm and trusting attitude Paul exhibits in every circumstance of life – both in times of want and times of plenty.
 2. Learn the correct attitude toward sharing material things with those who are preaching the gospel – both how to give and how to receive.
 3. Discover that all our giving goes up to God as a “sweet smelling sacrifice” with which God is pleased.
-

PAUL’S SUFFICIENCY IN CHRIST (4:10-13)

A. Sufficiency Through Caring Brethren. *“I rejoice greatly in the Lord that at last you have renewed your concern for me.”*

1. A renewed concern. The word “renewed” means to “blossom again.” It was used of a tree that appeared dead in the winter but then in the spring put forth fresh green sprouts indicating life was within.
2. A constant concern. *“Indeed, you have been concerned.”* The concern was always there. They had experienced no change in attitude toward Paul.
3. A hindered concern. *“But you had no opportunity to show it.”* Paul does not specify why they had no opportunity to express their concern. But looking at some of his other writings we see the following possibility:
 - a. Paul learned in Thessalonica and later in Corinth that his accepting material aid would be misrepresented by his detractors as proof that he

wanted to live at their expense. So he determined to receive no support in such situations (2 Thessalonians 3:7-8; 2 Corinthians 11:8-9).

- b. It is possible that Paul even requested that no more financial aid be sent to him during a certain period of time.
- c. Paul was involved for a long period of time in the collection of a relief fund for the Jerusalem church, and the Macedonian churches had already given “beyond their ability” (2 Corinthians 8:1-5).
- d. Now the situation has changed. The relief fund had been given to the Jerusalem church. Paul had been in prison 2 years in Caesarea before being sent to Rome for his trial before Caesar. The Philippians found another opportunity to minister to Paul’s needs, and they did so in sending these gifts by Epaphroditus.

B. Sufficiency Through Contentment. *“I am not saying this because I am in need.”*

1. Contentment in all circumstances. *“For I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances.”*
 - a. The biblical writers urge contentment and freedom from the love of money and worldly cares (Luke 8:14; Luke 12:15; Hebrews 13:5; Ephesians 5:5; 1 Timothy 6:6-8).
 - b. Paul had urged others to a life free from anxiety and worry—a life of trusting in the faithful God to meet one’s needs. This he had learned and practiced.
2. Contentment in need and plenty. *“I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty.”*
 - a. Since he had become a Christian and suffered the loss of all things, he often was in serious need as we learn from his writings (1 Corinthians 4:11-13; 2 Corinthians 6:4-5).
 - b. But there were times when he had plenty. As he enjoyed the hospitality of Christians wherever he traveled, he must have felt then that he had plenty. At other times the Philippian church and others had sent to meet his needs, and Paul did not accept these gifts without feeling that he had plenty.
3. *“I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well-fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want”* (v. 12; 2 Corinthians 6:10).

C. Sufficiency Through Christ’s Empowering. *“I can do everything through him who gives me strength”* (v. 13).

1. The pagan stoics used the word “content” to mean self-sufficiency, and they boasted in not needing anyone else or depending upon any power outside of themselves.
2. Paul’s sufficiency is not in himself but in Christ. He knows that apart from Christ, he can do nothing (John 15:5).
 - a. *“I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has given me strength. . .”* (1 Timothy 1:12).
 - b. *“For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline”* (2 Timothy 1:7).

- c. “*Our competence comes from God*” (2 Corinthians 3:5).
- 3. Paul learned that his weakness became the occasion of his strength in Christ (2 Corinthians 12:9-10).

PAUL’S APPRECIATION OF THEIR GIFTS (4:14-20)

A. Paul’s Gratitude for Earlier Gifts (vs. 14-17)

1. A shared ministry. “*Yet it was good of you to share in my troubles.*”
 - a. Paul wanted them to know that his contentment was not based on outward circumstances, even the receiving of their gifts.
 - b. Yet he would have them know of his gratitude for their gifts and fellowship with him in the gospel throughout the years.
2. A long-standing commitment. “*In the early days of your acquaintance with the gospel. . .*” He had spoken of their early fellowship with him in the gospel in 1:5 – “*. . . because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now.*”
3. A balanced ledger. “*In the matter of giving and receiving. . .*”
 - a. These were accountants’ terms. The ledger showed “giving” – this by the Philippians, and it showed “receiving” – this by Paul.
 - b. *When I set out from Macedonia.* This would involve his going to Achaia and especially to Corinth as recorded in Acts 18. We know from Paul’s second letter to the Corinthians that he received no support from the Corinthians but that his needs were met by the Macedonian churches (would include Philippi, Thessalonica and Berea). “*I robbed other churches by receiving support from them so as to serve you. And when I was with you and needed something, I was not a burden to anyone, for the brothers from Macedonia supplied what I needed*” (2 Corinthians 11:8-9).
 - c. “*For even when I was in Thessalonica, you sent me aid again and again when I was in need*” (v. 16). This would be even earlier than the “giving and receiving” mentioned in verse 15. Paul went from Philippi to Thessalonica, and this young, mission-minded church in Philippi sent to his needs there again and again.
4. A Christ-like attitude toward the gifts (v. 17). “*Not that I am looking for a gift, but I am looking for what may be credited to your account.*”
 - a. Paul was helped and blessed by the gifts sent by Epaphroditus, but this was not the main benefit from the transaction.
 - b. The greatest benefit was “what may be credited to your account.” The enriched fellowship, the joy of serving others would be to the Philippians like interest added to their account. Jesus taught this same truth (Matthew 6:20). See also Hebrews 6:10; 1 Timothy 6:17-19.
 - c. These verses are not telling us that such deeds of serving others merit or earn salvation, but they are telling us that both faith and love are proved and demonstrated by action. Apart from such a life of service there is no real faith or love.
 - d. Paul reminds us in Acts 20:35 of Jesus’ statement: “*It is more blessed to give than to receive.*”
 - e. The Philippians had long experienced the joy of giving. To them it was

not a painful duty but a precious privilege. *“For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service”* (2 Corinthians 8:3-4).

- f. On the spiritual level the gain of the Philippians was more permanent.

B. Paul’s Acknowledgment of the Present Gift (4:18-20)

1. A debt fully paid. *“I have received full payment and even more.”*
 - a. Paul continues to use accounting language and he is saying: “Here is my receipt for all you have sent; paid in full.”
 - b. “And even more.” Their generosity has more than covered his need. This is an example of his being “well-fed” and “living in plenty” (v. 12).
2. A payment fully accepted. *“They are a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God”* (v. 18).
 - a. In the Old Testament sacrifices are spoken of as a “pleasing aroma” to the Lord (Genesis 8:21; Exodus 29:18).
 - b. Paul spoke of Jesus’ death in this way (Ephesians 5:2).
 - c. The Christian’s life of dedication and service to God and man is a *“fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God.”*
 - 1) *“Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer yourselves as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—which is your spiritual worship”* (Romans 12:1).
 - 2) *“You also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices to God through Jesus Christ”* (1 Peter 2:5). See also Hebrews 13:15-16.
 - d. Also the preaching of the gospel to the Gentiles was looked upon as a priestly service by the apostle Paul (See Romans 15:15-16).
 - e. They are “pleasing to God” because the concern and care we manifest towards others reflects our attitudes toward God (1 John 4:20; Matthew 25:40).

C. Paul’s Confidence in the Supply of God. “And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus” (v. 19).

1. The Philippians have sent gifts to meet Paul’s needs; now he assures them that “my God” will meet all your needs.
2. This means “our needs,” not necessarily all that we desire, whether it be in the realm of health or prosperity or in some other category. Paul wanted healing from his painful thorn in the flesh, but that was not considered by the Lord as a need, and he was given sufficient grace to sustain him instead (2 Corinthians 12:8-10).
3. Paul did not say that God will meet our needs “out of” his glorious riches but “according to his glorious riches.” It will not be simply from His wealth but in a manner that befits His wealth or glorious riches. Our needs will be met on a scale worthy of His unlimited resources.

D. Paul’s Aim – The Glory of God. “To our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen” (v. 20).

1. This outburst of doxology or praise is the joyful response to this section of Paul's letter.
2. But it is also the response to everything that God is revealed to be and to do in this epistle.

FINAL GREETINGS AND BENEDICTION (4:20-23).

- A. Final Greetings from Paul.** "*Greet all the saints in Christ Jesus*" (v. 21). Paul has addressed the letter to "*all the saints in Christ Jesus at Philippi*" (1:1). He closes with a greeting to each one.
- B. Greetings from Paul's Fellow-workers.** "*The brothers who are with me send greetings.*" This would include Timothy, perhaps also those who were emboldened to preach the gospel fearlessly because of Paul's chains (1:14).
- C. Greetings from the Whole Church.** "*All the saints send you greetings especially those who belong to Caesar's household.*"
 1. Members of the Lord's church felt strongly the ties of brotherhood throughout the empire and wanted their greetings sent to fellow Christians (2 Corinthians 13:13).
 2. "Those who belong to Caesar's household" are not likely members of his own family but domestic and civil servants who are in his service. That saints could be found in such a place is a great incentive for sacrificial missionary effort to every place throughout the world.
- D. Greetings from the Lord.** "*The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit*" (v. 23). Paul desires that the one who is the theme of his life and the main subject matter of this letter be with the spirit of these Philippian loved ones.

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON ELEVEN:

1. What are the three main divisions of this lesson?
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____

2. Verses 10-13 speaks of Paul's *sufficiency* through what three means?
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____

3. In Paul's mind, what was the greatest benefit brought about by the Philippians' gift to him? _____

4. Who were the "saints who belong to Caesar's household?" _____

5. In God's sight, all Christians' free-will offerings are? _____

LESSON TWELVE

REVIEW AND SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION:

In this final lesson on Paul's letter to the Philippians we will be doing two things. First, we will look at a review and summary of the letter, noting the major points in each chapter. Second, we will look at a special note on joy, the keynote theme of Philippians.

LESSON TEXT: All the book of Philippians

LESSON AIM: To review and summarize the book of Philippians.

LESSON OBJECTIVES: You will . . .

1. Review the establishment of the church in Philippi.
 2. Get an overview and review of all four chapters of the Philippian letter.
 3. Study a special lesson on "joy" as presented in the New Testament.
-

REVIEW AND SUMMARY OF PHILIPPIANS

A. Establishment of the Church in Philippi

1. The second missionary journey of Paul accompanied by Silas, Timothy and Luke (Acts 15:40-41; 16:1-10).
2. The Macedonian call – "*Come over to Macedonia and help us.*"
3. Conversion of Lydia and members of her household (Acts 16:11-15).
4. Paul and Silas cast into prison after a slave girl with a spirit of divination is healed (Acts 16:16-24).
5. Conversion of the jailor and his family (Acts 16:25-34).

B. Philippi, a Ministering Church

Some 10 years later Paul is in prison in Rome and receives a gift from the Philippian church sent by Epaphroditus. After a serious illness, Epaphroditus is being returned with this letter from Paul which expresses thanks for the gift and deals with other necessary matters in the life of Paul and in the church at Philippi.

C. Chapter One – Review and summary:

1. Salutation (1:1-2).
 - a. From Paul and Timothy
 - b. To saints, overseers, and deacons
2. Paul's thanksgiving and prayer (1:3-11).
 - a. Thanksgiving for their fellowship in the gospel (vs. 3-6).

- b. Paul's affection for them (vs. 7-8).
 - c. His prayer for their spiritual growth and fruitfulness (vs. 9-11).
- 3. Paul's chains advance the gospel (1:12-14).
 - a. The purpose of his imprisonment has been made known throughout the palace guard (v. 13).
 - b. "Most of the brothers" have been emboldened to preach the word of God fearlessly (v. 14).
- 4. Wrong and right motives in preaching (1:15-18).
- 5. Christ exalted by Paul's life or his death (1:19-26).
- 6. Exhortation to live in a manner worthy of the gospel (1:27-30).

D. Chapter Two – Review and summary:

- 1. An exhortation to unity and humility (2:1-4).
- 2. The example of Christ in humility and obedience (2:5-11).
 - a. His humility.
 - b. His obedience.
 - c. His exaltation.
- 3. Exhortation to work out their salvation (2:12-13).
 - a. Their responsibility (v. 12).
 - b. God's enabling power (v. 13).
- 4. Shining like stars in the universe (2:14-18).
 - a. A life free from grumbling and arguing.
 - b. A life of blamelessness and purity.
 - c. Holding forth the word of life.
- 5. Timothy and Epaphroditus (2:19-30).
 - a. Timothy – Paul's faithful co-worker (vs. 19-24).
 - 1) Timothy's genuine concern for them.
 - 2) His relationship with Paul.
 - 3) His usefulness as a messenger representing Paul.
 - b. Epaphroditus (vs. 25-30).
 - 1) Their messenger to meet Paul's needs.
 - 2) His serious illness and recovery.
 - 3) His deserved welcome from the Philippians.

E. Chapter 3 – Review and Summary:

- 1. An admonition to "rejoice in the Lord" (3:1).
- 2. A warning about the Judaizers (3:2-3).
- 3. Paul's potential reasons for having confidence in the flesh (3:4-6).
- 4. All these privileges and attainments were considered as loss, yes even as rubbish (3:7-8).
- 5. The surpassing greatness of gaining Christ and the righteousness in Him (3:9-11).
- 6. Pressing on toward the goal (3:12-16).
 - a. A forgetting what is behind whether privileges, attainments or failures.
 - b. A pressing toward the goal.
- 7. The example of Paul and others set a godly example for them (v. 17).
- 8. A tearful warning about the enemies of the cross of Christ (3:18-21).
 - a. Their character.

- b. Their destiny.
- c. Contrasted with the heavenly citizenship of those faithfully following Christ and awaiting His return (vs. 20-21).

F. Chapter 4 – Review and Summary:

- 1. A call for steadfastness (v. 1).
- 2. An appeal for unity and cooperation (vs. 2-3).
- 3. Rejoicing, gentleness, prayerful trust (rather than anxiety) and peace (4:4-7).
- 4. Proper thinking and doing (4:8-9).
 - a. “Think on these things” (v. 8).
 - b. Doing what they learned, received, heard and saw in Paul (v. 9).
- 5. Thanks for the gifts (4:10-23).
 - a. Paul’s contentment in all circumstances.
 - b. His gratitude for the gift.
 - c. The blessing they received and God’s acceptance of the gift as an acceptable sacrifice.

SPECIAL NOTE ON JOY

A. Some Preliminary Background on Joy in the New Testament

- 1. Jesus promised joy to His followers (John 15:11; 16:22).
- 2. Those who received the gospel experienced joy (Acts 8:38-39; 16:33-34).
- 3. Joy is often associated with the Holy Spirit (Acts 13:52; Romans 14:17; Galatians 5:22).
- 4. Joy is “in the Lord” (Philippians 3:1; 4:4).

B. Yet Christians Do Not Have Joy Automatically

- 1. The frequent exhortations to rejoice (Philippians 3:1; 4:4).
- 2. This is also true of the other aspects of “the fruit of the Spirit.”
 - a. Love is commanded and urged upon Christians (1 Peter 1:22; 1 John 5:3).
 - b. Peace is the result of a prayerful life of trust (Philippians 4:6-7).
- 3. It is obvious that Christians of the first century and Christians today do not automatically have joy.

C. There Are Things That Rob Us of Joy

- 1. Circumstances (chapter one).
 - a. This puts joy on a very shaky foundation. If one is basing his joy on outward circumstances, he will often be joyless and miserable.
 - b. The example of Paul, *“I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances”* (Philippians 4:11).
- 2. People (Chapter two).
 - a. People are often difficult to deal with. Attitudes such as malice, deceit, hypocrisy, jealousy, slander and other annoying attitudes can be found among God’s people (1 Peter 2:1).
 - b. Paul had plenty of reason for disappointment and discouragement because of people (Philippians 2:21; 2 Timothy 4:10; 4:16).

- c. But Paul did not let his relations with others take away his joy.
- 3. Material possessions can possess us and take away joy (Chapter three).
 - a. Jesus' warning: "*Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions*" (Luke 12:15).
 - b. Paul's joy was not taken away by the absence of material possessions (2 Corinthians 6:10).
- 4. Worry and anxiety can rob us of joy (Chapter four).
 - a. Not dealing properly in our minds with circumstances, people and things leads to worry and anxiety.
 - b. Worry, not suffering, is the real killer of joy.
 - c. Paul had many reasons to have anxiety and worry: his imprisonment, false motives in preaching brothers, internal friction at Philippi, dangers from false teachers and corrupting life styles.
 - d. Though Paul did have anxiety or care for all the churches and deep concern for those being led astray, he maintained an inner joy and peace, free from debilitating worry.

D. The Secret of Maintaining Joy Lies in the Mind or Attitude (Proverbs 4:23; Philippians 4:8). This attitude of mind will involve the following:

- 1. Trust in God. "*Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus*" (Philippians 4:6-7). See also 1 Peter 5:7.
- 2. Reliance upon His providential working (Philippians 1:12; Romans 8:28).
- 3. Acceptance of His promises (Philippians 4:13; 1 Corinthians 10:13; Ephesians 3:20).
- 4. A single-minded dedication and submission to Jesus Christ (Philippians 1:21; 3:13-14; 2:5).

CONCLUSION:

In view of these principles we can indeed obey Paul's injunction: "***Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!***"

"Now I commit you to God and to the word of his grace, which can build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified." (Acts 20:32)

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON TWELVE:

1. Give a five-point summary of the events describing the establishment of the church in Philippi.
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
 - 4) _____
 - 5) _____

2. Name four things which can rob the Christian of his joy which will serve as an abbreviated outline of the book.
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
 - 4) _____

3. The secret of maintaining joy lies in the mind or attitude. What are four attitudes of the mind that help the Christian maintain his/her joy?
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
 - 4) _____

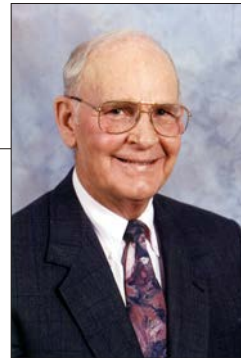
SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Barclay, William, The Letters to the Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians (The Daily Study Bible Series, Westminster, 2nd Edition, 1959).
2. Bell, R.C., Studies In Philippians (Firm Foundation Publishing House, 1956).
3. Bruce, F.F., Philippians (A Good News Commentary, Harper & Row, 1983).
4. Eerdman, Charles, The Epistle Of Paul To The Philippians (Westminster, 1932).
5. Hendriksen, William, Exposition of Philippians (The New Testament Commentary, Baker, 1962).
6. Martin, Ralph, The Epistle of Paul To The Philippians (Tyndale New Testament Commentary, Eerdmans, 1962).
7. Muller, Jac J., The Epistles of Paul To The Philippians And To Philemon (The New International Commentary On The New Testament, Eerdmans, 1961).
8. Robertson, A.T., Paul's Joy In Christ (Studies in Philippians; Baker, 1980).
9. Tolle, James, Notes on Philippians (Tolle Publications, 1972).
10. Wiersbe, Warren, Be Joyful (Victor Books, 1974).
11. Ash, Anthony L., Philippians, Colossians & Philemon, NIV Commentary, College Press Publishing Company*

* This book is required and supplied with the course.

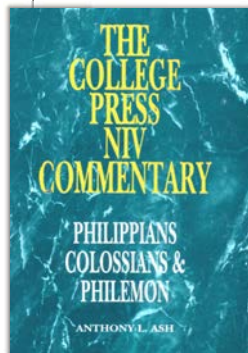
Study Guide

Doyle Gilliam



Doyle Gilliam was born in Fallcreek, Texas in 1931. He attended public schools in Fort Worth, Texas, graduating from Polytechnic High School. After attending Texas Wesleyan College and Abilene Christian University, Doyle received his B.A. degree from Florida Christian College. His M.A. degree was earned from Abilene Christian University. Doyle has been preaching over 40 years, having spent much of this time in mission work in Africa beginning in 1957. He is the author of a *Topical Index To The Bible* in the Chichewa language of Malawi which has been translated into English, Spanish, French, Swahili, Chishona, Russian, Bulgarian and "Pidgin English." He has written a Commentary on John's Gospel in a *Commentary on the New Testament In Simple English* published in 1988.

The Gilliam family served nearly 20 years in Malawi, Kenya, and Zimbabwe, returning to the United States in 1977. Since then Doyle has taught in Sunset International Bible Institute as well as Sunset School of Missions. He and Louise, parents of five children, make frequent teaching trips back to the African mission field.



➡ The College Press NIV Commentary on Philippians, Colossians & Philemon is a companion book to this study.

SUNSET
International Bible Institute
External Studies

3728 34th Street • Lubbock, TX 79410
1-800-687-2121 • www.extensionschool.com

