

*Messages
on
Philippians*

Walter L. Wilson, M.D.

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by

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I.

THE PURPOSE OF THE BOOK

Paul's letter to the Philippians is permeated with joy and happiness, gladness and sweetness, song and service. Its message gives wings to the feet of God's people, lifts their burdens and enables them to rejoice in song and to serve the Lord with gladness.

Paul was a prisoner when he wrote this lovely epistle and he wrote it to a church that began in prison. It began in an earthquake; so Paul writes much about peace. It began in stocks, stripes and bonds; so Paul makes mention of rejoicing in the Lord. There is no note of sadness in this precious letter, although it was written by a prisoner in a prison. Many excellent things have been written in prison. Sir Walter Raleigh wrote his *History of the World* while in prison. Cervantes wrote *Don Quixote* from his prison cell. Marco Polo wrote his *Travels* while incarcerated. Bunyan wrote his celebrated *Pilgrim's Progress* from his dungeon. Oscar Wilde wrote the famous *Ballad of Reading Gaol* from a cell. John wrote the book of Revelation from the barren, rocky confines on the Island of Patmos. How indebted we are to jails and prisons for bringing out the sweetest things that are in human life!

Paul's purpose in writing the Philippians was that they might know Christ and rejoice in Him, want Him, be like Him, rest in Him, serve Him, suffer with Him and wait for Him. Paul wrote much about happiness, rejoicing, joy and gladness because he knew that the happy Christian would not be a quarrelsome Christian; the glad Christian would not be a critical Christian; the rejoicing Christian would not be a fussy Christian, but instead would be a fruit-bearing Christian.

There were two women at Philippi who were at "outs" with each other. Paul wisely and beautifully seeks to tune up their hearts with his beautiful message about rejoicing before he recommends that they quit their quarrel and become reconciled so that they may again sing together in the joyful service of the King.

Paul was a master at soothing souls and healing the hurt of God's people. In the case of Philemon and Onesimus you will note how beautifully and wisely he plays upon the feelings of Philemon, how he arouses a feeling of fellowship and love, and then presents his petition for Onesimus. So it is in Philippi. He assures these two quarreling sisters of his love for them, of his desire for their fellow-

ship and his need of their ministry. In three beautiful chapters, he opens up his own heart and then very graciously requests that they lay aside their private complaints and join in with him and with the other saints at Philippi in the great work of winning souls and blessing saints.

Paul knew that those who present a common front against the enemy and stand firm with one heart and one soul will not easily fall out with one another. Paul knew that those who have the mind of Christ do not exhibit the mind of Satan. How sweetly Paul presents his unanswerable argument in order to cause God's saints to love one another and to serve together as with one shoulder (Zephaniah 3:9, margin).

In this happy message Paul speaks very graciously of those who labored with him in the blessed service of the King. He speaks of Timothy, Clement and Epaphroditus. He feels also the need of Euodias and Syntyche in this same happy service. He misses their co-operation. He desires their fellowship, and so he pleads with them to lay aside their personal troubles and join with God's saints in the battle for God.

Let us seek to emulate his example in our own dealings with God's people. Each one has some fault or failure. Who does not? None are all that we would like them to be, but neither are we ourselves. Let us therefore use grace and patience, wisdom and kindness as we seek to heal *the hurt of the daughter of my people*. Let us not widen the breach and deepen the wound. Oil and wine heal much more effectively than a sword and salt.

II.

UNITY IN CHRIST

Unity is exceedingly essential both in worship and in service. Unity in the home is necessary for blessing and prosperity. Unity in business matters cannot be overlooked without disaster. Certainly unity in the Church is an absolute requirement for God's blessing and spiritual growth. The Church must be united as the body is united in all its members, as the watch is united in all its parts, as the tree is united in its branches, twigs, roots and trunk. Paul writes a great deal about unity because he knew that no one individual could carry on the work of God successfully by himself.

In chapter 1:5 Paul speaks of *unity in service*. It was fellowship in the Gospel that stirred his heart. It was not merely fellowship in church service as we know it today. It was not fellowship in church work, church suppers, interchurch athletics, building programs, or clean-up campaigns. He loved these people because they were united with him in the blessed business of winning souls. They prayed and preached, he prayed and preached, and together they rejoiced in the power of the Gospel of Christ.

In verse 7 we read that he rejoiced with them because of their sweet union brought about by the grace of God. They exercised the graces of Christ among themselves. They forgave one another; they were patient with one another. They were faithful and true to Paul while he was away from them. Their lives were filled with grace and this knit them together in heavenly bonds.

In verse 14 we learn that Paul's sufferings were used of the Lord to unite the saints of Philippi in service. When Christians are busy serving, there is no time for grumbling. When Christians are pulling together, there is little opportunity for kicking, biting, or holding back. Paul in his lonely prison cell rejoiced that his children in the faith had not fallen by the wayside but were striving to preach Christ and to make known the unsearchable riches of the Lord of Glory.

In verse 27 Paul compares the believers at Philippi to those who play in games. His experience in the Roman games reveals itself clearly in this passage. The basketball "five," the baseball "nine," the football "eleven" work together. Each player seeks to fit in perfectly with the actions of the others. Each one in his position seeks to reach the goal and thwart the enemy. The players do not stop to criti-

cize one another or complain or find fault. If they did, it would mean defeat in the game. If they did, the umpire would dismiss them from the game and put someone in line who would work in co-operation with the other members of the team. Each player must supplement the other. If the first one misses the ball or fumbles it, the second player and even the third must go running to make up for the error and to put out the opponent. The team must operate like clockwork. There must be unity.

Paul knew also that in the great game of life, in the battle between Satan and the Lord, between darkness and light, between evil and good, the team standing for God and for righteousness must work together in perfect co-ordination and devoted fellowship. Nothing short of this will do. Some things may be omitted from the Church but there must be unity or else there will be defeat and failure. Paul knew it; therefore he impressed it strongly upon his loved ones in order that they might stand fast, *striving together for the faith of the gospel*. Their spirits must be in accord; their minds must be in agreement; their plans and programs must be co-ordinated. When this is true, success will come though there may not be a great deal of knowledge; blessing will come although the believers may be more or less young in the faith and somewhat ignorant of the Word. When unity is present, Satan is thwarted, God's people are strengthened and the work of the Lord will prosper.

In chapter 2 Paul expresses his desire for *unity in humility*. Throughout the chapter there is a call to humbleness of mind. In verse 1 the Lord's people are told to be humble enough to let the consolation of Christ mend their broken hearts and His love bring solace for their sadness. They are to be willing to walk in the fellowship of the Spirit, not in arrogancy and pride.

In verse 2 the Philippian believers are exhorted to be willing to think with one another, to *be likeminded*, willing to be guided somewhat by the thoughts of other believers. No believer should elevate himself above others as knowing more than they do. Each one is to have love for the other.

In verse 3 Paul warns them about pride, egotism, self-sufficiency and self-elevation. Pride and love do not go together. Pride does not make things go smoothly; rather it makes them go very hard. Lowliness of mind is most essential to successful ministry. No church can prosper if the leaders are proud, exalt themselves and extol their own virtues.

The remedy for this pride is found in verse 4. The Lord's people are to observe the needs of others rather than to satisfy their own selfish desires. They are to fit in with the lives of others, the hearts of others, the minds of others; and this applies to every man, not just a few. Pride will not be present where hearts are filled with

love for others. Humility will reign where there is love for others. We must be willing to be a doormat in the palace of the King.

Let us be linked together with all of God's people in humbleness as Christ became the Head of the Church through humility. He took the low place, the humble place, the place of weakness. He did not grasp after the throne and its power but was willing to be born in a stable and to die on a cross. Humility leads to exaltation. Humility precedes promotion. It hurt Paul's heart because there was not as much humility as there should have been, for he expresses his feelings in verse 21, *all seek their own*.

Paul expresses his appreciation of Epaphroditus because of his humility. He tells us in verse 25 of the sweet service rendered by this humble man who was such a great man. Although he was a brother in Christ to Paul, although he was his partner and fellow soldier, he humbled himself to be a body servant to Paul. His humility is recorded. The record of his deep desire to serve others occupies a place in the Word of God.

In chapter 3 Paul speaks of *unity of purpose*. Beginning at verse 2, he declares that there should be purpose of heart to live a life of separation from false leaders and teachers, and evil workers. Such people are not to be permitted to teach or minister among God's people.

There must be purpose of heart also to lay aside the things that would naturally appeal to our sense of comfort and ease, or even to our spiritual pride. We must strive to become more like Christ and take advantage of each and every means of grace. Paul expressed his purpose and desire in no uncertain language. In verse 15 he links his purpose with theirs and with ours. He desired that all believers be united in mind and heart. He says, "*LET US . . . be perfect . . . and whereto WE have already attained, LET US walk . . . LET US mind.*" He did not keep his purpose of heart for himself alone. He joined with others so that all together might seek to grow in grace and become more and more like Christ. We, today, need also to help one another along this blessed path.

In chapter 4 the apostle states that there is *unity in meditation*. At the beginning of the chapter he urges the believers to meditate on the Lord Jesus Himself. He urges these two quarreling sisters to think about the Lord and not about the failures of each other. He wanted his fellow laborers to rejoice in the loveliness of their Lord, His greatness, His power and His sufficiency.

In verse 6 he exhorts them not to meditate upon the sorrows and problems of life, but to join their hearts together in prayer and thanksgiving for answered prayer. Paul knew they would have perfect peace when they meditated on Christ's perfect power.

In verse 8 Paul directs their meditation to the things that are *true, honest, just, pure, lovely, of good report, virtuous and full of praise*. If the heart meditates on such things, then the very presence and fellowship of the God of peace will be our happy portion.

In verse 11 Paul reveals that his meditation on the Person and the work of Christ was quite sufficient to keep him from meditating upon and grieving over the sorrows of his life.

The unity which we have been considering cannot be obtained or enjoyed unless the Spirit of God conforms us in some measure to the image of Christ. We are to be like Christ in our manner of living, as Paul states in chapter 1:21. When we live as He lived, we are in happy union and communion with others of God's people. Paul said, *For me to live is Christ*, and again he said, *Christ liveth in me*. Christ's lovely, living presence will make us act toward others as He did, and this will mean sweet unity in the family of God everywhere.

In chapter 2:5, we are told to be like Christ in our manner of thinking. The apostle tells us, *Let this mind be in you*. Again he says, *Think on these things*. We read in Proverbs, *As he thinketh . . . so is he*. The mind controlled by the Holy Spirit will think in accordance with God's will.

Only as the Spirit controls our thoughts will godly unity be maintained with other believers. This is brought about, as we read in Romans 12:2, by the *renewing of your mind*. The Spirit does it. When He does not do it, we are thinking thoughts about our brethren, but which, however, are not wholesome and conducive to the unity which the Spirit desires. When He controls the thoughts, then the lips are affected and each expression is controlled. Godly unity is brought about by godly thinking.

In chapter 3:7 we are exhorted to be like Christ in our decisions. Paul decided that nothing was worth while except the glory of Christ. He knew that Christ could not be glorified in dissension and strife; therefore he exhorts us to be of the same mind, to care for each other's welfare, and to think more of others than we do of ourselves. When we choose that path, we have decided on a path to godly unity which will prevail wherever we go. You remember that Moses esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the pleasures of Egypt. He made his decision.

Esau made a decision that was calculated to bring a terrible division between himself and Jacob. Demas by his decision brought a division between himself and Paul. We must decide according to the will and mind of God, and when we do so, then we shall find a happy communion and unity with other believers.

In chapter 4:13 we are exhorted to be like Christ in our manner of performance. When Paul said that he could do all things through

Christ, he meant that he could endure long, he could live sweetly with those who opposed him, he could bear patiently the insults heaped upon him. Thus Paul brought much blessing to the people of God and sent his benediction to all the people of God. You will notice that when he expressed his love to them and gave his benediction of *grace, mercy, and peace* it was ever to *all the saints*. He omitted none; he included everyone. By thus showing his love and devotion to every believer he was able to live in sweet union and communion with them. He reveals to us also that we, too, may maintain a godly unity and thus bring honor to our blessed Lord.

III.

FELLOWSHIP IN CHRIST

Fellowship is a uniting of hearts, minds, hopes and aims. Without fellowship we may go through a form; we may be orthodox in manner and in faith; but it will be a dry, dead, cold orthodoxy disturbed by frowns, scorns, tumults and tempests. Fellowship is the oil that makes all the fitted parts operate smoothly. Paul seemed to like the word "fellowship" for he used it very often in this little epistle. He realized the necessity of *fellowship in Christ* if God's dear people are to have sweet communion together. Let us consider what it means to the heart and life of the child of God.

In chapter 1:5 Paul speaks of the *fellowship in the gospel*. This fellowship filled Paul's heart with joy. It helped him to be a happy preacher. It helped him to be a better preacher. It enabled him to preach with power as he told of the peerless Son of God and of His priceless, precious blood. Every time he thought of these dear saints he thought of their fellowship—how they stood for the truth he stood for and told him so, how they encouraged him with their prayers and supported him with their money as well as by their words of encouragement. They helped to make it easy for Paul to endure the sufferings and the sorrows that came so frequently into his life.

Their fellowship in the Gospel filled him with confidence concerning their spiritual condition. He knew that backsliders do not show such fellowship. He knew that worldly or quarreling Christians do not spend much time encouraging the preaching of the Gospel. Their fellowship proved to him that they were going on for God, growing in grace and continuing in faith (verses 6 and 7).

Every heart loves fellowship. Paul was no exception, even though he was a famous and noted preacher. Great men have human hearts just as lesser men. Great men desire the sweet fellowship that may be given by the most obscure Christian. No one is independent or self-sufficient. Especially is this true of those who walk with God. The cheering word from another saint, the comforting suggestions, the helpful advice, the gracious handshake, the lovely smile—all help the servant of God on his way over the rough places and enable him to run the race with no weights about his neck.

In chapter 2:1 we read of the *fellowship of the Spirit*. Our Lord has gone back to glory and has sent another lovely, wonderful, precious Person to live in us, the Holy Spirit of God.

Paul speaks again of this fellowship in the benediction verse (II Cor. 13:14). He desires that the Corinthian saints shall be blessed by this communion of the Holy Spirit or, in other words, His fellowship. This fellowship has a wonderful effect upon the soul of the saint, as Paul well knew. Paul had the unusual privilege of conversing with the Lord Jesus after He went to heaven. Stephen did also, and so did John as a prisoner. What an honor these three men had! The Saviour was in glory at the right hand of the Father. The heavens opened in order that they might see. But for the rest of their lives and for ours, we walk along the way with this precious other Person of the Trinity, rejoicing in His fellowship, loving His communion, and with our hearts filled with glorious visions of our blessed Lord as He unfolds to us His marvelous graces and beauties. What a fellowship this is!

God has given us a double fellowship. When Paul began to write to the Corinthians he said, as we read in I Cor. 1:9, *God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the FELLOWSHIP of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord*. When he wrote to the Corinthians in the Second Epistle, he said . . . *And the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen*. Thus we have a double blessing. What a privilege and joy it is to walk with this lovely Person, the Holy Spirit, who has come here to dwell with us and in us. He leads us to worship. He fills our hearts with holy thoughts. He makes us of one mind with other believers in adoring the living Christ. He removes strife and vainglory. He enables us to have a lowly mind so that we recognize the gifts and graces in our fellow Christians. The worst of God's people have some of the best of God's graces. No saint of God is all bad or all wrong. The Spirit of God enables us to look at our brother through the Shekinah glory; then we can get along with each other four hundred years without difficulty.

The fellowship of the Spirit enables the mind of Christ to dwell in us. He was the Lord of Glory, yet He thirsted. He commanded angels and archangels, yet He lay helpless in the manger. He communed with the cherubim and the seraphim from His place on the eternal throne, yet He communed with an alien woman on the well curb. He could ride upon the clouds, yet He chose to ride upon an ass. He could call the dead out of their graves, yet He permitted men to place Him in a grave. *Let this mind be in you*. Only the Spirit of God can put it there. We never can bring it about, but we can permit ourselves to be led, taught and filled by this lovely One who has come to serve the Father and the Son here. Surely if Christ with all His power, place, position, and authority was willing to be submerged under the tide of human ignominy, shame, suffering and death, we, too, can afford to be a doormat if that is the will of our

blessed Lord. The Holy Spirit brings that about in the heart and mind of the one who walks and talks with Him.

This is confirmed in verse 13, where we read that it is *God which worketh in you* to bring this about. The results are found in verse 14. If the Spirit of God fills the heart and mind, then there will be no murmuring and disputing. Where these unhappy things are present, worship ceases. We may continue to go through the form of worship, but certainly the heart will not be in it. We may say the words, but they will not be inspired. We may frame beautiful sentences, but they will only be the golden casket that contains the corpse of a cold, stiff performance.

In chapter 3:10 Paul speaks of the *fellowship of his sufferings*. Paul opens the inner recesses of his heart and soul to tell us of the spring, the fountain, the source of His marvelous life of devotion to God. Paul wanted to be like Christ, not only in his life, but in his suffering as well. He was willing to take his place by the side of the Lord Jesus and receive the same treatment that He received. He was willing to stand with Christ at Calvary and let them nail him to a cross also. In fact, he seemed to count it his highest joy to be conformed even to the death of the One he loved so well and with whom he had such precious fellowship. He said, *For me to live is Christ*. He wanted to lose his own identity. He desired to be entirely wrapped up in his lovely Lord, even if it meant death. He wanted to be with Christ as they crowned Him with thorns, and have the thorns on his own brow. He wanted to be with Christ as they lashed His back, and receive the lashes on his own back. He wanted to be with the Saviour as they bound His hands and feet, and have them bind his own hands and feet with cruel Roman chains. He was so much in love with Christ Jesus his Lord that he wished to be identified with Him in every movement, every punishment, every detail of suffering. He wanted to be like Jesus.

We sometimes sing, "I would be like Jesus," but we are not thinking of His rejection, the sneers and jeers that were hurled at Him. We are not thinking of His experience with no place to lay His head, the long night hours on the mountainside, the false accusations brought against Him. We are not thinking of His arrest and of the treatment He received from the traitor Judas, and from His best friend, Peter. When we sing, "I would be like Jesus" we are not thinking of the mob that mocked Him, spit upon Him, struck Him in the side, tore the hair from His face, and then nailed Him to Calvary; but Paul was. He wanted to have the same attitude toward life and death that Jesus had. He wanted to have the same attitude toward suffering and sorrow and loss that Jesus had. Paul wanted to experience everything that Jesus experienced in regard to His friends, His enemies, Satan and God the Father. Paul wanted to feel toward sin-

ners as the Saviour felt when He cried out, *Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do*, or when in the midst of anguish He said, *Today shalt thou be with me in paradise*.

Fellowship means union and communion. Fellowship is a deep, sweet attachment. Fellowship means a giving and taking of a loving heart. Paul wanted to know the fullness, the depth, the breadth and the length and height of the sufferings of his adorable Lord.

In chapter 4 Paul brings before us the sweet *fellowship of trust* in the living, loving God. He very wisely and graciously avoids a direct scolding of the two quarrelsome women mentioned in verse 2. But he tells us through the chapter how blessed it is to trust in our Lord individually and collectively, which will make it impossible for such a quarrel to continue.

Notice in verse 4 that he calls upon us to rejoice, and repeats it. One will not rejoice in the Lord if he is doubting Him. Only when there is perfect trust do we have fellowship with one another and fellowship with God. If a shadow comes so that the trust is removed, then the quarrel begins.

In verse 5 he admonishes us not to ride a hobby, because that is not trust, nor to command God's people, for neither is that trust. God did not send us to enforce His Word but only to preach it. He did not send us to stress one subject and try to make everybody else believe as we believe. If our trust is in the Word of God, the Son of God and the Spirit of God, then we will be sweetly moderate and graciously kind to all men. We will realize that our blessed Lord is standing near, watching, listening and waiting to take the task out of our hands and handle it Himself.

It is only when we trust that we are *careful for nothing*. Worry and trust do not go together. They are antagonistic. They are opposed. When we trust we do not worry, and when we worry we do not trust. How sweet it is to tell the story of our problems to the living Lord, then trust Him to take care of them. If this problem happens to be a church problem, then God's dear people will have sweet fellowship together as they leave the solution with the God of heaven. If, however, some seek to enforce it themselves, there is discord instead of concord.

In verse 8 we are exhorted to trust our fellow Christians. We are to think upon the beautiful traits in their lives and not be obsessed with their faults. We are to be possessed with their virtues, not their vices. We should not misjudge them nor gossip about them. We should trust them and trust our Father, the Shepherd of the sheep, and the Teacher of the Word, all three to deal blessedly with each Christian heart.

We should trust in regard to temporal things, as Paul tells us in verses 11, 12 and 13. Leave the finances with God. Trust Him to

move the hearts of His people to do for us and provide for us because we are His children. Like Paul, trust Him to supply the needs of others, as we read in verse 19. Such trust will spread to others, as it did on the ship when Paul proclaimed, *Sirs, be of good cheer: for I believe God.* Those who live lives of sweet, simple trust are a blessing to the Church. They are peacemakers. They enrich the hearts of the people. They are dependable. They help both sides. They love to lift the burdens and dry the tears. What a sweet fellowship is produced when we trust our Lord to take care of His people and trust rather than suspect one another.

Philippians is a book of fellowship. Let us seek grace from heaven to enrich our fellowship so that we shall have no fellowship with *the unfruitful works of darkness* but shall have a great abundance of fellowship with *the fruits of righteousness, the children of light* and that precious One who is the Light of the world.

IV.

REJOICING IN CHRIST

Philippians is indeed a book of rejoicing. That is one of the miracles of the book. How could Paul rejoice when he was shut out from preaching, shut away from those he loved, confined by a chain and hindered from the comforts of life? There is only one answer: Paul was *IN THE LORD*. Twelve times in this short letter Paul speaks of rejoicing, and he speaks of *JOY* six times, so that the book is a bouquet of sweetness from the heart of one who is being crushed beneath the Roman yoke.

He had learned the blessed secret of living *IN THE LORD*. He was surrounded by the Lord and therefore was not interested in prison bars. The Lord's presence filled him with fragrance and sweetness so that he was not affected by the foul odors of the prison. He fed upon the living Bread and drank the living Water; therefore he was not crushed by the sight of prison walls and stone floors. He heard the voice of his Master and was not confused by the voices of the prisoners. He lived and walked and rejoiced *IN THE LORD JESUS*. No matter in what circumstance he found himself, he found something over which to rejoice. He had many things to make him sad but more things to make him glad.

In chapter 1, we see that Paul *rejoiced in fellowship*. He was joyful in prayer, (1:4). He could rejoice as he prayed because of the sweet knowledge of the fellowship of the saints at Philippi in his service and in his sufferings. The happy heart always prays best and preaches best. Paul was thankful, and this thankful spirit made his heart happy. He encouraged the believers' hearts by telling them about it. Some Christians make us sad when we think of them and of their actions. Some make it difficult for us to be happy in the Lord. Their looks, actions, failure to co-operate and opposition to progress tend to make the heart heavy and the spirit weary. These Philippian saints, however, had the opposite effect upon Paul. He thought of them with gladness. He prayed for them with joy, and he rejoiced in the memory of their fellowship.

In verse 18 we find one of the secrets of Paul's happy heart. Christ was being preached and he loved Christ. Christ was being exalted and Paul had given his life for the exaltation of Christ. The people were hearing what Christ could do and that filled Paul's heart with ecstasy, for he knew what Christ could do. Paul was not occupied

with the vessel that held the living water but only with the administering of that life-giving stream. He did not care whether the spoon that dished up the honey was made of brass, bone, or gold. He was glad that the people were getting the honey of the Gospel, and so he rejoiced. God grant that each of us may have this great undimmed vision of the power of Christ, the blessed miracle-working power of the Gospel, and may get our eyes off the instrument so that we, too, may rejoice that Christ is preached.

In verse 25, we find that Paul was interested in seeing that the Philippian saints were happy Christians. He was confident that his Lord would permit him to remain for a while so that their joy would be full. Some ministers make us miserable; some make us doubtful; some make us resentful; but Paul's ministry would make them joyful. He would add to their faith and help lift the load from the heart, and bring the song of worship and the oil of gladness instead of the spirit of heaviness. Paul's ministry would make the flowers grow where the weeds of discontent had flourished. His ministry would give them to see the power of the Lord Jesus over their besetting circumstances.

In verse 26 Paul assured the believers at Philippi that his ministry would give them more abundant joy in Jesus Christ. He would not be satisfied with a halfway measure, just a wee little bit of joy, just a smile once in a while. He would have the wells of salvation cleaned out, the flow of sweet living water increased, until a river would flow from their hearts. God grant that all of us who preach may have more joy in our ministry and bring more gladness to those who listen. He knew that there would be adversaries (verse 28) and suffering (verse 29) and conflict (verse 30), but in the midst of all of this he would so minister to them that they would have abundant joy in their souls and a supply of gladness in their hearts.

Chapter 2 reveals that Paul *rejoiced in the unity of God's people*. He starts in verse 2 by telling them that if they wish to make him as happy as he wants to be, they should be of one mind and one heart in the things of the Lord. That always brings joy to the servant of God. It is exceedingly depressing to minister when the congregation is pulling in opposite directions and when the members are at "outs" with one another, faultfinding and critical. How can one lead a flock or a herd when they are fighting and fussing among themselves? It hurt Paul's heart that Euodias and Syntyche were antagonistic. Of course, each one of them had friends and the friends had taken sides, so that there was serious trouble, and Paul's heart was feeling the hurt of it. He needed their fellowship. He wanted their assistance. He desired their co-operation, and he wrote the whole book in order that he might get it. I suppose we might say that God turned that liability, the liability of their quarrel, into an asset for

us. We might not have had this book of Philippians if they had not quarreled. Let us learn from this that none of us is a quarrel unto himself. When we are quarreling with another we are hurting many. A little root of bitterness may defile a large company. We should bring joy to the heart of those who are our guides and shepherds, and not make their path hard and difficult.

In verse 16 Paul indicates that his joy was affected by the growth of this Church of God. If they united in holding forth the Word of Life, then he would rejoice in the coming day of judgment. If he could see this group of believers gathered around the Saviour in the glory after having lived a life of sweet unity and godly service, that would bring joy to his heart as the shepherd of the flock. If they did not run well together, nor work with each other, it would hinder and affect his joy most adversely. He would rejoice if he saw them ministering to saint and sinner with the precious life-giving Word. If, however, they failed to do so and ceased running the race in order to bicker and fuss with one another, his heart would be heavy and his spirit sad.

In verse 17 he speaks of a different kind of joy. In this instance, Paul would have these Philippians with him to the uttermost limit in growing in grace, in learning the Word and in ministering to others. He does not care if they pour him out as a drink offering; he does not care if they use all his service and ministry to the very limit. He would willingly die for them or live for them if by any sacrifice he might make they would be brought nearer to God and become more useful in the service of the King. What a great heart Paul had! He had no thought of his own comfort but only of their happiness.

In verse 28 he reveals that his joy is still concerned with them. He would send Epaphroditus to them so they could hear from his labors, how he was getting on, and how the Lord had graciously restored Epaphroditus to health again. He would willingly do without the presence and fellowship of Epaphroditus if by sending him to Philippi their hearts would be made glad. What a self-denying preacher, what a self-effacing shepherd was this master mind Paul!

In chapter 3 we see that Paul *rejoiced in humility*. In verse 1 he calls them to forget their surroundings, persecutions, oppositions and local quarrels and be a singing, happy group IN CHRIST. In verse 3 he reminds them again that their rejoicing must be in the Lord and not in their circumstances. They are not to depend upon men, for if they do, their hearts will be disappointed and they will have tears instead of joy. If they will take the low place so that their feelings will not be hurt and if they will look not at the things which are seen but at that blessed, lovely Lord who is unseen, then they will keep singing and serving with happy hearts and joyful lips.

Those who are proud and self-sufficient, independent and egotistical, stiff and hard are not usually fruitful in the service of our lovely, lowly Lord. Christ is on the throne highly exalted, but the exaltation followed the humility. If the mind of Christ is in us, the heart of Christ will be in us. Then we will abide in Him in sweet humility and rejoice in Him rather than complain about our circumstances, our associations, or our friends.

In chapter 4 *we see that Paul rejoiced in attainment.* They were his joy. With what feelings of exultation a mother watches her famous son receive the Congressional Medal of Honor! With what gladness does the teacher see her pupil win the silver cup! So Paul felt, as he looked forward to the day of Christ when these lovely saints whom he had taught, comforted, trained and ministered unto would receive their reward and the approval of their Lord.

Having said all of these lovely things, he now turns to these two Christian girls and asks them to join with him in the deep desire for the happiness of all the saints at Philippi. They knew in themselves that they were not happy. There could not be joy in their hearts while they were quarreling. Paul knew also that possibly their difficulties were of such a character that they could not find a happy solution. Therefore, they should lay aside this particular quarrel, wrap themselves up in Christ, have the mind of Christ and love each other as believers.

He cannot drop this subject of joy; so immediately after pleading with them he says, and no doubt for their benefit, *Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice* (verse 4). Paul was wise. He knew that if he could get these two girls to sing about the loveliness of their Lord, they would soon forget their difficulties. He emphasizes the rejoicing by repeating it the second time, and then in order to further help these women he tells them to be full of care about nothing (verse 6). If their prayers and supplications were filled with thankfulness, then peace would fill their hearts, God's own peace, and if their minds were occupied with those eight beautiful graces found in verse 8, they would be rejoicing Christians instead of faultfinding Christians.

Again Paul's joy is expressed because he had attained to the place of contentment, whether he had much or little (verse 11). This is a wonderful attainment. Not many reach this place. Paul could rejoice and their gifts had added to his joy when he was in this far-off prison. So Paul closes this lovely story with the joy of attainment in contentment. How blessed it would be if all of us could have this same sweet experience and sing in the storm and rejoice in the rain!

V.

THE HUMILITY OF CHRIST

The Apostle Paul was so drawn to Christ and so much in love with Him that his great ambition, as expressed in the third chapter, was to be *like Christ* in his life and in his death. This deep feeling of his heart is brought out in every chapter in this book. He calls to the believers to imitate him in this blessed anticipation and expectation. He had a deep desire to see the saints at Philippi respond to the call of the Spirit to become more and more like the Saviour. He calls them to be like Christ in every aspect of life, in every circumstance and in every condition. He calls them to be united in Christ as the Father and the Son are united, as the members of the body are united, as the family is united. He calls them to walk in sweet fellowship with Christ as the disciples did, as the angels do, as the Father and the Son are in fellowship with each other. He calls upon them to rejoice in Christ, to fill the home with Him, to love His very presence just because of who He is, to rejoice because they belong to Christ and He belongs to them. These calls to the saints are echoed and re-echoed from his blessed pen throughout the four chapters of the book.

Perhaps the climax is found in chapter 2:5-7. What an unusual mind our blessed Lord had in that He *made himself of no reputation*. This was a miracle. No one else in all the world could do it. Michelangelo painted beautifully and was an unusually skillful sculptor. He made his reputation with no effort on his part, for his gift could not be hidden. Mendelssohn was a master musician. His skill became widely known and he was greatly honored. Burbank was a plant wizard. His reputation spread far and wide because of his wonderful work in developing plants, vegetables and fruits. Edison became known throughout the world for his wonderful discoveries in the field of electricity. Wherever he went his reputation preceded him. Napoleon was a wonderful warrior. Many volumes have been written about his person and work. Dr. James Young Simpson became famous for his introduction of chloroform to the medical profession in England. General Goethals built the Panama Canal and has a place in history for that mighty achievement. All of these men were men of reputation.

Christ Jesus, however, paints the beautiful sunset with colored tints and multicolored rays. The clouds are lined with silver and

the winter sky becomes a halo of glory, yet no one speaks of Jesus as the painter who so marvelously mixes and mingles His colors.

Christ Jesus gave the song to the canary and to the lark. He makes the wind to sing through the trees; gives a beautiful singing voice to many men and women, has made the strings to vibrate in such ratio as will cause them to blend in beautiful harmony, yet He has no reputation as a musician.

Christ made the blushing peach, the beautiful apple with its delightful tints, the juicy orange, the nutritious potato and all other fruits and vegetables, but no one speaks of Him as a plant wizard.

Christ made the lights to hang in the heavens and made all the forms of light that there are, yet He has no such reputation as Edison among the scientists.

Christ has directed the wars of the ages, making it possible for a small army of His people to defeat a huge army of His enemies, yet no one ever speaks of Him in glowing tones as a mighty strategist or a marvelous warrior.

Christ gives sweet sleep as the shadows fall. The birds tuck their heads beneath their wings and sleep throughout the night; the animals lie down to rest; human bodies relax in restful slumber, but He has no reputation as a sleep-giver as Dr. Simpson has.

Christ made the Royal Gorge and the Grand Canyon which fill men's eyes with admiration and their lips with praise as they gaze upon His marvelous work, yet He has no reputation as an engineer such as General Goethals has.

Dr. Zeiss designed wonderful lenses and became world famous, but Jesus made the most perfect lens of all, the eye of the eagle and the eye of man. It contracts and expands with the light with no conscious adjustment on our part. It accommodates for far distance or near-by objects and needs no regulation by the human hand. In all of this, the Saviour gets no glory whatever, for *he made himself of no reputation.*

The surgeon replaces a bit of bone or performs a grafting operation on the skin. He becomes well and favorably known for his ability to handle the human body. Christ Jesus made the human body, designed it, fastened it, gave it life, sustains it and makes it work, yet we listen in vain for any word of praise to Him. *He made himself of no reputation.*

Christ, the mighty Monarch of the eternal ages, *made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant* that He might save man. This is an astounding fact and a truth not seen elsewhere in human experience. The One who created man and made all the marvelous tendons, muscles, joints, sinews and every part of the foot is seen sitting on the floor washing the soiled feet of twelve

men. The One who made the gold, the silver, nickel, aluminum, platinum, magnesium, iron and copper is seen one day asking for a penny.

It is as though the King of England should lay aside his royal robes, put on a pair of overalls, and be found sweeping the streets in the slums of London. It is as though the Commander-in-Chief of the Army should lay aside his uniform and be found in an old ragged suit, carrying a box over his shoulder, and stopping to shine the shoes of people sitting in the park. It is as though the Commodore of the Fleet should lay aside his position on the bridge and be found stoking coal deep down in the hold of the vessel. It is as though the Chairman of the Board of Directors of a great banking institution should be found in workman's clothes, polishing the brass on the front door of the bank.

None of these illustrations adequately express the great condescension of our wonderful Lord. He who communed with angels stopped in His journey to converse with a poor woman at the well. He who rode upon a storm and for whom the clouds became the dust of His feet rode upon an ass into Jerusalem. This One who commanded the host of heaven took the little children in His arms to bless them. This One who was the Author of life became the subject of death. This One who dwelt in *light unapproachable* and was surrounded with the glory of heaven endured the shame of the Cross and the darkness of Calvary at midday for *he took upon him the form of a servant*.

This great and lovely Christ became the center of Paul's vision so that his life was given in order that Christ might be preached and that Christ might be lived and that Christ might be honored. Paul rejoiced if Christ was preached. No other one could save the soul. No other one was worth preaching about. No one else could give life. Paul knew this. He reveled in it. He wanted others to know it, and when even his enemies preached Christ, his soul was glad for His desires were accomplished.

Paul rejoiced if Christ was lived. He wanted all the world to see the beauty of the life of Christ. He wanted everyone to know the virtues that were in Christ as they were manifested in human lives. Not only could he say, *For me to live is Christ*, but he wanted all the saints at Philippi to say it, too. He wanted the life of Christ to be multiplied and magnified. No other life is worth living. No other life is worth imitating. No other life is so attractive.

Paul rejoiced if Christ was known. His desire was to know Christ above all else and to make Him known above all else. This knowledge would last for eternity. This knowledge believed would fill the soul with gladness and the life with holiness. This knowledge accepted would transform those who found it. He knew that every problem could be solved in Christ Jesus if only they knew Him. Paul realized

the great and boundless blessings that followed the knowledge of God in Christ Jesus. This knowledge was so wonderful and so valuable that Paul rejected everything else. He refused all else in order that he might *know him, and the power of his resurrection.*

Paul rejoiced if Christ was honored. He wanted to see his Lord made Lord of all. He wanted the Lord to be the *chief among ten thousand*, greater than anyone else and more attractive than everyone else. Christ must have no competition in Paul's plan. He must be wholly supreme. All lives must be conformed to His life. All hearts must yield the throne to His beneficent reign. Paul would have Christ look wonderful to every seeking soul. Christ must be magnified by Paul and in Paul and through Paul. Then Paul would rejoice. His desires were fulfilled, his heart hunger was satisfied. Prison bars became palace walls when Christ filled his vision. Prison fare became heavenly manna when Paul saw the Saviour he exalted and blessed and honored.

Thus we see that the book of Philippians expresses Paul's feelings about the One he had met on the Damascus road and all of this blessed revelation of Paul's heart was probably given in order to win the hearts of Euodias and Syntyche. If they could only partake of his vision, they would no longer see the faults in each other. If they could only be filled with these same desires, no longer would selfishness rule and criticism reign. If only their hopes and ambitions could be centered in Christ as his were, then these two Christian girls would spend their time in magnifying the Lord, glorifying Christ, spreading His precious Gospel, and thus the quarrel would cease. What a blessed remedy this is for everything that is wrong in human hearts and lives! God grant that each of us shall be partakers of these same graces, desires and ambitions.

VI.

CHRIST EXALTED

Paul was in love with Christ. Ever since that blinding flash of light on the Damascus road, Paul could see no one else but the Lord Jesus, His glorious Person and His wonderful work. Paul, like David, set the Lord always before his face (Psalm 16:8). Because of this, the Lord set Paul always before His face (Psalm 41:12). Paul loved the Lord who permitted him to be put in prison. Christ had so won Paul's heart that he loved Him for everything He did. He never found fault, though the stripes were on his back and the chains were on his wrists. In each chapter in Philippians, Paul exalts the Lord Jesus in glowing terms.

Surely as we read this book we shall want to sing, "What a wonderful Saviour is Jesus my Lord." After the first chapter we will sing, "Jesus saves." After the second chapter we will sing, "But I know whom I have believed." After the third we will sing, "Following Jesus ever day by day," and at the end of the fourth, we shall burst out with that coronation anthem, "All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name."

In chapter 1 *Christ is preached*. Notice in verse 15 that there are various kinds of preachers, but each one is preaching the same lovely Lord. As long as the people hear about Christ, Paul is happy. He knows what Christ will do. He knows that Christ will save. He knows His saving power and the cleansing blood. He has experienced the presence of the Lord and knows His beauty and loveliness.

As long as the right medicine is given, Paul is not concerned with the kind of spoon that feeds it nor the hand that holds it. It is the medicine that will do the work and the medicine that every human heart needs is the love story of this lovely Lord. Paul could discern the spirit that was behind the message. It is always so. The audience knows whether the speaker feels his message or is merely giving a lecture on some interesting subject.

A lecturer under a chautauqua tent was giving a marvelous description of France. He told of the beautiful scenery, the great enterprises, the culture of the people, the military might, the educational advantages. When he finished he asked if anyone in the audience would like to ask a question on the subject. An elderly woman rose near the back of the tent and said, "Please, sir, tell us how you felt when you sailed away from your beloved France, saw the hills fade in the distance, and realized that perhaps you would never see those shores again."

The speaker appeared confused. He hesitated. The woman remained on her feet, waiting for the reply. After a few embarrassing moments, the man said, "I am sorry, lady, but I never was in France."

She replied, "I suspected that was the case, for you talked as one giving a lecture and not as one who had had the experience."

So it was with Paul. He could sense the spiritual temper. Let us remember as we preach that those who listen know whether the message is coming from our lips or from our heart.

Paul rejoiced when he heard his Lord well spoken of under adverse conditions. How beautifully he expresses his feelings in verse 18. His heart was set on the preaching of Christ. He wanted to do it himself. He wanted others to do it. He knew that Christ was God's answer for every human heartbreak and every problem of man.

Not only did he want Christ talked about but he wanted Christ to live again in him in such a way that his body would be like a magnifying glass to make Christ look more wonderful, more blessed, more precious, more marvelous and more sufficient. He wanted Christ to be magnified by every possible means in him. There are many things to hinder in this path, but there are many things to augment and facilitate also. It seems to be entirely a matter of the heart, doesn't it? When the heart is bent, set and firmly fixed on magnifying Christ, the center of the soul's affection, then the beautiful life of Christ is manifested in our mortal bodies as the Holy Spirit enables.

In chapter 2 *Christ is revealed*. What a description Paul gives of this lovely Lord! He tells us of the mind of Christ, the place Christ occupies, the feelings Christ had toward God the Father, the decisions He made about His reputation, the attitude He took toward men in all their wickedness and sin, the humbleness of Himself and the obedience to that worst of all enemies, the death on the Cross. Those who know Christ best love Him best. Those who enter deepest into the humiliation of our precious Lord rejoice the most in His exaltation. Paul realized that those who know Christ best will follow Him the closest. He knew that if we were occupied with the loveliness of Christ, we would have little use for the apparent needs of ourselves. To see Christ in His humility is most effective in humbling ourselves. To see Christ highly exalted makes us desire to kneel at His feet in utter devotion and consecration. So Paul sought to reveal Christ in word and in deed.

Paul answers some very important questions in verses 6-8. Did Christ live before He was born of Mary? Yes, He had a pre-natal, glorious throne life. Was Christ God during that time? Yes, He was in the very form of God, exercised all the prerogatives of God, and had in Himself all the attributes of God. But Christ had such a wonderful spirit of humility and such a deep love for man that He was willing to leave the throne for a while and come down and mingle

with us in all of our sorrow, shame and suffering. He knew that the journey would be filled with every heartache and sorrow and that the Cross was the end of the road. He knew that men would spit in His face and prove their utter wickedness by their treatment of the loveliest Person that ever walked the earth. Even though He knew all this, He did not grasp after the throne, nor covet staying up there as the God of Power. He preferred to come and be the Prince of Peace.

How Christ humbled Himself or emptied Himself we do not know. He still manifested His eternal Godhead both in His preaching and in His miracles. No man ever spake as He spake. No man performed as He performed, although in the Old Testament Elijah and Elisha both raised the dead. Elisha caused the iron to swim; Elisha fed a large multitude with a small portion of food. Still, none of these claimed to do it of himself. Nor did anyone continue to do so except in the single instance. Christ gave them the power to do it. Christ was doing it through them. Christ could do it continually, anywhere, anytime and of His own sovereign will.

How, then, did He humble Himself? His glory was manifested on the Mount of Transfiguration when from His raiment and from His precious body there issued those brilliant rays of white light above the brightness of the sun, the greatest light God created, and above the whiteness that the fuller could produce, the best of man's creation. He spoke and the multitude fell backward. He spoke and the storm ceased. He spoke and the tree withered. His Godhead was manifested constantly in the animal kingdom, the vegetable kingdom, the mineral kingdom and the celestial kingdom.

He did lay aside His glorious power. He did become a weak little baby. He did eat and drink as other men do and was tempted in all points like as we, yet completely without any sign or response of sin. This is the Christ that we know. This is the One we trust, love, follow and obey. He is God's eternal Son.

Now we turn aside for a little while from the exaltation of our blessed Lord and note that *He is our pattern*. We are to be like Him. He is to fill us, manage us and distinguish us from others.

Paul had much to boast of in his own religion. He gives a list of eight virtues which would be considered as assets by his fellow men. He was circumcised, an Israelite, a Benjaminite, a Hebrew, a zealous Pharisee, blameless before the law of God and persecuting that which he considered to be opposed to God. The world would call him an ideal Christian, but he did not know Christ. He did not believe in Christ. He was opposed to Christ. He did not want to have Christ preached or trusted.

Then one day he met Christ. What a chance took place! He had heard about Christ, but now he heard Christ Himself. Christ had

revealed Himself to Paul and Paul was never the same again. From that time on, He was the pattern of Paul's life. Paul wanted to be like Christ in His life, in His death, in His preaching, in His sufferings. Christ was his sample, his example, his pattern, his goal, his objective. All these other assets were reckoned liabilities. He counted them loss, dung, refuse, garbage, trash and ashes. Nothing now was worth while except to be like Christ. He wanted his thoughts brought into subjection to Christ. He even wanted to be crucified like Christ and to die as He died. Paul was fascinated, attracted and entranced by that marvelous Man of Galilee, the Christ of the Cross, the Lord on His throne in glory. He had seen the face of Jesus and cared for nought beside. He wanted to know Christ intimately. He wanted to know the power of the resurrected Christ in his own life. He wanted to enter fully into the secret, sacred thoughts of Christ in regard to His suffering for sinners and His becoming a Substitute for wicked men. Paul wanted to be poured into the very mold of Christ. He wanted to be soft and responsive to receive the very imprint of the Lord Jesus Christ in the mint of God. Everywhere Paul went, he wanted people to see Christ Jesus. He said, "Not I, but Christ." "Not I" in business or law. "Not I" in pleasure or in the home. "Not I" in religion or social service. He hid himself in Christ Jesus. Paul "put on" Christ so that the life of Jesus was manifested in his body.

He told the Philippian saints that they could have this same attitude if they wanted it. In verse 15 he gives them the formula. Paul realized that everyone would not want Christ to be his pattern. Some would have their minds on the great men of earth and would want to be like them. He knew that we are affected by those who are greater than we. Paul exposed himself to Christ so that in his thoughts, affections and purposes he was a follower of the Lamb. The Lord grant that we, too, may have such a holy desire.

In chapter 4 *Christ is supreme*. In verse 13 Paul feels himself almost omnipotent in and through Christ Jesus. With Christ dwelling in him, he can accomplish anything, is afraid of nothing. In Christ he has learned how to be abased as Christ was and to be exalted as He was. In Christ he has learned to be full of care about nothing whatever. Did he float about in the sea after the shipwreck? Then he sang the praise of the Lord who "plants His footsteps in the sea and rides upon the storm." Was he smitten with thirty-nine stripes? Then he sang about his Lord who carried the burden of sin from the shoulders of the wicked world on His own blessed back. Was he beaten by the mob? He was in perfect peace as he sought to tell his tormenters about the precious Saviour who saves. He knew how to pray to a God who knew how to answer. If the answer was "no," Paul rejoiced. He had absolute confidence in the wisdom and knowl-

edge of God. He did not question God's decision or resent God's answer. He had met the Prince of Peace. He knew the God of Peace and the lovely King of Peace was with him wherever he went.

He urges the Philippian saints to rejoice continually in this mighty Lord of their lives. Because Christ is supreme, His people may always rejoice in Him. Because Christ is the Sovereign, we will never be disappointed, discouraged, nor cast down. Christ rules the raging sea. Christ controls the elements. Christ is Lord of lords so that no lord can mistreat us unless our Lord permits.

Every need may be met, as we read in verse 19, because Christ is so rich. He gives liberally to enrich us, but His abundant giving does not impoverish Him in the least. He gives and gives and the supply is exhaustless. The assets are always sufficient. No wonder Paul had peace. We shall have peace, too, if we learn to rest in the sufficiency of the Almighty Lord Jesus Christ.

VII.

EXPECTATION FROM CHRIST

The Psalmist said, *My expectation is from him* (Psalm 62:5). It is a tonic for the heart to be always in an attitude and a spirit of expectancy. Some of God's people never expect God to do anything. Some also never expect God's people to do anything. Paul was not in this class. He was full of expectancy and hope. He believed that God's people would grow in grace and would show a fruitful life because of his ministry. Paul did not expect to find midgets and runts among the saints of God. He gave them the *sincere milk of the word*. They drank it in and so they grew and fruit abounded. We shall, in this message, consider some of the things that he expected from these Philippian saints.

In chapter 1 we see that he expected more love from their hearts, more progress in their lives, more prayer in their devotions, more co-operation in their ministries.

Verse 9 reveals that he expected their love to grow, increase and abound. He expected it to be a sensible and intelligent love based on knowledge and discernment. The Lord wants us to love fervently, truly and constantly, but it is to be a love for right things, a pure love which will have the approval of the Lord. If we love God's people, we do not criticize them nor berate them. We seek to help them, encourage them and build them up in the most holy faith. If we love our Bibles, we do not neglect them, nor read them carelessly, nor indifferently. We listen to the voice of God through the sacred page and seek grace from heaven to put it into practice. If we love the Church, we do not find fault with it, but rather seek a remedy for that which seems to be wrong. We seek to be a helper instead of a boss. We work for it, not against it. In referring to the activities of the Church, we say "we," not "they." When we love the Church we seek to be identified with all of its interests and all of its projects. Love heals the wounds; love bridges the gap; love quiets the turmoil. No wonder Paul expected their love to increase, for he knew they desired all these blessings.

In verse 10 we see that Paul expected them to be discerning Christians so that they would know what was of God and what was not; what came from heaven and what did not; what message was inspired by the Spirit and what was not. He wanted them to be true in their testimony, and not be hypocrites. He wanted their whole Christian

life to be sincere, just, true, wholehearted and upright in every respect. He expected that the ministry of the Word which he had given them, plus the ministry of others, plus their own study, plus their helpful counsel to one another, would produce this desired result.

Verse 19 shows that he expected them to pray efficient and effectual prayers. He knew they were praying people and that they prayed for him. He knew he would have many deliverances and be saved many heartbreaks and heartaches because they prayed. He knew that because they prayed the Spirit would work. What a confidence! What a reputation they had with this great man of God!

Verse 27 tells us that he expected more co-operation. He knew that if they loved one another and prayed for one another, they would work together blessedly and successfully. He expected this to be the case. He was not disappointed. They were good givers, both of themselves and of their substance, to the work of the Lord.

Chapter 2 reveals that he expected to see more unity among them, more unselfishness, more worship, more effort.

Verse 2 indicates that Paul expected unity of thought and love. In verse 4, we see that he expected unselfishness. Perhaps some were looking on their own things. We know that Euodias and Syntyche wanted their own way. Perhaps those who sided with these two were also selfish and wanted their own way. Those who enlist in the army or the navy expect to abide by rules and regulations. There is no thought of sulking if one cannot have his own way. So it should be in the things of God. There must be unselfishness if we would see success crown the efforts and our Lord's smile resting upon His people.

Verse 10 tells us that Paul was looking forward to that day when *every knee* shall bow and *every tongue* confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. What a scene that will be and what a hope it is! The atheist will bow the knee to the Man whom he despised. The modernist will find that Jesus Christ is Lord and is God. The agnostic will see that it was fatal to him not to know the Son of God. The worldling will bow both knees to the Man whom he condemned to die. Pilate, too, will confess that the Man whom he rejected is the Man whom God exalted. The indifferent and the careless will bow and confess. What a blessing it will be in that day, and Paul expected to see it.

In verse 12 we see that Paul expected more effort to be put forth by the saints of God. He wanted them to work well for the Lord, whether he was there or not, whether there were special meetings or regular meetings. He wanted them to study the Word, teach the Word and win souls just as much in his absence as in his presence. He expected them to follow the inner urge of the Holy Spirit and spend and be spent for the honor and glory of the Lord Jesus. He looked forward to a good report concerning their efforts.

In verse 16 we find that he expected more preaching and perhaps better preaching. They were to *hold forth the word of life*. All of them were to do it; each of them was to do it. They were to do it constantly, wisely and helpfully. They were not to hold forth theology as such. They were not to paint only pictures of heavenly things. They were to hold out for the hungry hearts of the people the precious Word of God; fresh, not stale; soft, not hard; in abundance, not scantily; freely, not grudgingly. He expected them to find troubled hearts and then to use the Word of Life in the way in which those hearts needed it. What a blessed expectation on the part of this great leader of God's people!

In chapter 3 we find that Paul expected grace and growth. Verse 2 reveals that he desired more carefulness on their part. He wanted them to discern wisely and to know when things savored of God and when they did not.

Verse 9 indicates Paul's desire for more holiness in his own life. He wanted to be where he belonged—hidden in Christ. He wanted God's people to know that as far as he was concerned, Christ alone was the Sovereign of his soul. He seemed to be afraid lest people should think that he was good and right and wonderful apart from Christ. He did not want them to think more of him than they should. He did not want to be one thing in public and another in private. He expected to be more like Christ and to be more godly and more devoted to his absent Lord.

In verse 10 we see that Paul expected more knowledge. He knew much but he wanted to know more. He understood a great deal but he wanted to grasp something more. He was not satisfied merely to be saved from hell. He wanted to go on to much greater things, until he felt that he knew this lovely One with whom he was to live forever. He wanted to have the consciousness of the indwelling Christ in his soul constantly.

Verse 14 states that his ambition and expectation was to press forward and gain the prize. More ambition was necessary for growth in grace. He had to press forward for there were many hindrances. He had to lay aside the weights and avoid those who would hinder him. He kept his eye on the prize for he wanted it. He knew there was something better ahead and he determined to obtain it. A godly ambition is essential. The Lord grant more of it.

In chapter 4 we see that Paul expected more yieldedness. He mentions it specifically in verse 5, for the word "moderation" sometimes is translated "yieldedness." Euodias and Syntyche evidently were not yielding to each other. They were pulling apart instead of together. They were hindering the church instead of helping it. They were the brakes on the buggy to keep it from going.

If each one would yield a little, both would lose something, but they would gain each other and much more. The grace of yielding is one we should covet earnestly. It is one of the "best graces." *Yielding pacifieth great offences* (Eccles. 10:4). The cotton bale stops the cannon ball much more effectively than a stone wall. It is surely not necessary that we have our own way all the time. Why should we? Perhaps the other way is better. Paul expected that the saints would yield to one another. He expected great things from them because they had a great Saviour to save them, a great Holy Spirit to teach them, and a great man of God to shepherd them.

Verse 4 indicates that Paul expected more happiness. Not many of God's people are happy. Once in a while you find a singing Christian who sings the whole day long. Once in a while you meet one who is radiant, but not often. Even orthodox Christians are not usually found singing the Doxology. They believe the truth, stand for the truth, defend the truth, but they are not very happy while doing it. Paul expected more happiness. He knew it was necessary because the rough road would be more easily traveled if there was a song on the journey. He expected them to learn the sweet secret of being constantly happy in the Lord.

In verse 6 we see that Paul expected the believers to have more rest in their lives. Care prevents rest. Lack of prayer hinders rest. Carrying burdens certainly produces no rest. If, however, they would cast every care at Jesus' feet, take their care baggage to the check room and check it so they would not need to carry it, then they would have rest. Paul knew the secret of this. He had had much trouble and many burdens. He had experienced deep grief, but he had learned to rest in the Lord and leave his burden there. He could be content in poverty, distress, or suffering. He expected them to learn this secret more and more.

In verse 19 we see that Paul expected the believers to have more confidence in the living God — confidence in His provision and care, confidence in His teachings. Paul had great expectations for these Philippian saints, for he was a real shepherd of the sheep and desired their rich blessing. Let us expect great things from God and from God's people.

VIII.

PAUL'S PERSONAL TESTIMONY

We shall now consider the book of Philippians as a book of personal testimony on the part of the saintly Apostle Paul. As you read through the book, you will scarcely be conscious of the fact that Paul is talking about himself, though he uses the pronouns "I," "me" and "mine" 113 times in this short book. He boasts of himself in every chapter, yet we do not resent it in the least. His is a godly boasting, a holy boldness, a glory that brings glory, for it leaves Christ Jesus supreme and the Apostle Paul His bondservant.

Paul's personal boasting was of three kinds: he boasted of his relationship to God, his relationship to man and his own personal condition and position.

In chapter 1:3-4, 8-9 he speaks of this thankfulness for his prayer life. He boasts of his memory and of the things that he prayed for as touching their interests.

Evidently Paul knew how to pray. He did not have a long preamble, a great prologue, nor a marvelous introduction to his prayers. Neither did he instruct God on the meaning of His Word nor how He should do His work. Paul's prayers were to the point. He spoke to his Lord intelligently. He prayed confidently and tersely. He did not beat about the bush nor spar with God for an opening. He states specifically that he was praying on their behalf. We love this kind of praying. It thrills us and inspires us and urges us to pray more. It teaches us how to pray and makes us enjoy praying. Thank God for such an example!

In verses 13-14 he boasts of his attitude toward his unhappy situation. He tells us of his patience in suffering, his godly contentment under very trying circumstances and of his fine example as a prisoner. He reminds the Philippians that others have been inspired and stirred by his example so that they have been ready to preach, to teach and to suffer.

In verse 18 he boasts of his fair-minded attitude toward other preachers. He was sorry that some preachers had wrong motives, but he did not rebuke them nor fall out with them nor scold them. He boasts of his happy spirit toward his enemies. He was a fair servant of God, not jealous of the ministry, or the position of other preachers.

In verse 21 he boasts of his devotion and consecration. There is no uncertain note in his claim. He does not say that he is *trying* to

live for Christ. He does not say that he *wishes* he could do it better. He does not say that he *hopes* God is pleased with what he is doing. He was "straight out from the shoulder." His whole life was wrapped up in Christ and he boasted of it. He did not hide it nor misrepresent it. He did not wait for someone to say it about him. What a boasting! No one denied it. Everyone knew it was so. His life confirmed his testimony. This man was God's man and he boasted of the fact.

In chapter 2 Paul boasts quite confidently of his sacrificial effort, which is mentioned in verses 16-17. He expected the saints at Philippi to give him a happy culmination. He boasted that he had not been beating the air nor fighting a visionary battle. He had run the race successfully. He had finished the course with the laurel wreath in his hand. He expected to have some golden grain, some sheaves, some precious jewels to lay at the feet of his lovely Lord when he met Him face to face.

He boasts of his humility. If these lovely Christians should pour him out as a drink offering before God, his heart would rejoice. He was perfectly willing to be spilled on the ground if Christ would be exalted and the saints would be enriched. He gave himself for them. He was willing to part with the company of Epaphroditus for them, as he indicates in verse 28. Paul sacrificed his comfort, his wishes, his desires and most everything else that would be gain to him in order that he might bring such a blessing to them as would make them be what he wanted them to be.

In chapter 3 he again boasts of his humility. In I Cor. 15:9 he speaks of himself as the *least of the apostles*. One would think that this was humility enough, because the apostles were great men, and, in the judgment of many, Paul was the greatest of them all. He, however, took quite the opposite view. He was one born out of due time. He came into the apostleship after Judas fell out. Christ did not choose him to be one of the Twelve and it may be that he felt it keenly. Probably he did. Nevertheless, he took the place of the least of the apostles, but the Holy Spirit gave him a wonderful ministry above all the others.

Paul then steps down a bit and considers himself *less than the least of all saints* (Eph. 3:8). There were many saints of every kind and character at the time Paul wrote this, yet he felt in himself that he was less than any of them. That is a great step down from his previous confession. He was an apostle and he exercised the powers of an apostle, yet among God's people, and without regard to his apostleship, he takes the place belonging to the least of all the Christians. Surely this reveals his heart of humility and lowliness.

As though that were not sufficient, he considers himself the *chief of sinners* (I Tim. 1:15). He felt that he was the chief of sinners because he had persecuted God's people. He had hated Christ. He

had killed the saints. He had rejected the Gospel. He had refused God's mercy. He had sought to uphold the old law after God had set it aside. He had a humble heart. He repented fully of his religious zeal and accepted the Saviour whom he had formerly despised. All of that which he had formerly counted as an asset he now esteems a liability and he boasts of that fact.

In verses 9-10 he boasts of his consecration. There is nothing ambiguous about his story of consecration. He tells about it gladly. He writes about it for the world to read. He has laid aside all sorts of religious forms, services and ceremonies in order that he may give his life, his heart, his efforts and his energies to promoting the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. His boasting is good. We love it, we delight in it. We thank God for such a man. He was not backward at all when it came to confessing Christ. Boldness, forwardness and enthusiasm mark his confession.

We find in verse 13 that he boasts of his inefficiency. He is not proud of it, but he certainly is trying to recover from it and find a remedy for it. He says distinctly that he has not attained to that which he would like to reach. He has come short of that which he would like to be. He does not want the saints at Philippi to think that he has reached so high a place as he hopes to obtain. He assures them that he is willing to forget the past with all of its victories, honors and successes. He boasts of his energy, his vision, his ambition to get above where he is and to be better than he is.

In verse 17 he boasts of his leadership and example. He wants them to be like him. None of us would do this. None of us would say to this great company, "I wish you were just like me. I urge all of you to follow my example." We feel our inefficiencies and, of course, we have many of them, but the apostle had very few. It takes a brave man to say what Paul said. Paul knew that he was living as he should, loving as he should, preaching as he should, learning the Scriptures as he should, and living up to his opportunities and privileges in the sight of God. Therefore, he had a right to say, *Be ye followers [or imitators] together of me*. Paul said this more than once. Certainly one who can say *For me to live is Christ* or *Christ liveth in me* has a perfect right to say "Follow me." Paul boasts of his godly example and his position as God's servant.

In chapter 4 his boasting is of a different nature. In verse 9 he boasts of his purity. He had told them of the eight blessed meditations in verse 8, and now he boasts of the fact that he himself does that very thing. He boasts of his purity, goodness, godliness and righteousness and hopes that the other saints of God will follow his example and will be like him.

In verses 11-12 he boasts of his contentment and position in regard to finances. Sometimes he had plenty of money for all his needs;

many times he did not. Under either condition he acted as a godly man should act and was contented. When he had plenty it was not squandered; when he had nothing he did not fuss about it nor raise a complaint. He had learned to be a contented man and he boasts of it.

He boasts of his sufficiency in verses 13 and 18. "*I can do all things*" is certainly a marvelous statement of faith and indicates the unlimited power that was at his disposal because he kept his hand in the hand of God. He was not afraid of any test. The fear of man was unknown to him. He felt able to undertake missionary journeys, establish churches among the heathen, face the most difficult conditions and go forward when the Red Sea and the wilderness were in front and behind. He boasts that he can do anything. He boasts of the gifts that were sent to him and then of the sufficiency of his soul because of their loving-kindness.

In verse 19 he boasts of his faith and trust. He knows God and he knows what God will do. He tells us that he does. He is not ashamed to say so, for he knows it will be accomplished. What a boasting! He boasts in faith and trust. He is not guessing at it. He is not merely hoping it may be so. He very graciously and wonderfully gave all the credit to his Lord and boasted that he knew the God of his life. I trust that we have many things in our lives of which to boast — the things which God mentions to us and does for us.

IX.

CHRIST OUR EXAMPLE

In our final message we shall consider the thought that Paul presents Christ as our example in the book of Philippians.

In chapter 1 Paul declares that *Christ is to be preached*. We are to preach up Christ and preach down sin. Christ is the remedy for sin; therefore Christ is to be preached. Christ perfectly meets the needs of sinners; nothing else and no one else is needed. Whether it be the black man of Africa, the Eskimo, the yellow man, the red-skin, the island natives, or the leaders of our educational institutions, Christ alone can meet the need, and no one else.

In verse 20 we see that *Christ is to be exalted*. He only is worthy. Christ has no competitor. He is the only perfect Man who lived a perfect life; therefore He is to be exalted. God will exalt no other.

Verse 21 tells us that *Christ is to be lived*. He is to live in us. The living Christ is to have His own way in our hearts. It is His life lived out in others that influences the unsaved. It is not an imitation of Christ. It is the real life of Christ in the soul that we are to enjoy and manifest to others.

In verse 26 we learn that *Christ is to be enjoyed*. Many believe in Him who do not enjoy Him. Many preach about Him but do not enjoy Him. It is one thing to believe the truth about Christ; it is quite another to rejoice in His lovely Person. As we have mentioned before, most of God's people are not happy Christians. They carry burdens and grieve over unrequited love. There is trouble in the church; their plans have been thwarted; their hopes have been blasted; and they do not enjoy the Lord. Paul wants us to enjoy Him and to believe in Him (verse 29). What a joy it is to have perfect confidence in one, loving that one, confiding and trusting in that one, being happy and comfortable under the guidance and care of that one. This is our privilege in Christ.

But it is also our privilege to suffer with Christ, as we learn from verse 29. Some suffer because of their own peculiarities; others suffer because of their religious idiosyncrasies; some suffer because they are busybodies and want to make everybody believe as they do and do as they want them to do. We may suffer for Christ by our loyalty to Him, devotion to Him, zeal for Him and our knowledge of Him. He makes the battle smooth and sweet when the suffering is really for Him. So Paul could sing in the prison and John could worship on the Island of Patmos and Peter could sleep in jail.

In chapter 2 we learn that we are to enjoy the comfort, consolation and solace of Christ. How sweetly He comforts His own! He dries the tears as He did for Mary and Martha. He holds us close to His heart as He did the saintly John. He holds us in His arms as He did those lovely little children. He speaks magic words as He did to the woman of Syro-Phoenicia. It is His comfort, care and consolation that is our own precious portion for the daily Christian life.

We are to let His mind be in us. We are to think His thoughts after Him. *My meditation of him shall be sweet* (Psalm 104:34). The mind of Christ in us will make us humble, easy to live with, easy to work with. If His mind dwells in us, we will not be proud, independent, nor self-sufficient. We will feel the need of His presence, the ministry of the Spirit and the fellowship of God's people. We will let Him arrange our work and service as He desires.

Verse 11 tells us that we are to confess Him. We are to confess His Lordship and His glory. He is the Master of the sea, the earth, the sky. We are to confess that He is God's Saviour and ours. We confess His beauty, His power, His majesty, His might. He is the Maker of heaven and earth. He controls the elements. He continues to *uphold all things by the word of his power*. We should love to confess Him before men and tell about Him and His rich blessings for our soul.

In verse 21 we are exhorted to seek for and promote His glory. We present Him first and foremost. He has no second place. He is the Chief, and we are glad to be His soldiers and bondservants. We are to seek the things that will bring glory to Him, and not to ourselves. We should desire His honor, and not honor for ourselves. We are to promote His interests, not our own. He is the One to whom attention is called.

In verse 30 we are told that He is to be served. We love to serve Him; we love to work for Him; we love to plan for Him; we think of Him constantly as we preach or teach or give away tracts or hold personal conversations. The work of Christ charms us, allures us, draws us, holds us. We rejoice in the honor of being His workmen and His servants.

In chapter 3:8-9 it is quite evident that we are to be like Christ. The righteousness we receive is through Christ. The faith we have is in Christ. The acceptance we enjoy is because of Christ—"accepted in the beloved." Eventually we shall be conformed to His image. We cannot be competitors of Christ. We are to be His without reservation and without mortgage. Christ is to own us completely, fully and absolutely. His image is to be impressed upon us. His likeness is to be imprinted upon us. We are to be called by His Name and are to call upon His Name and upon no other. We are to be like Christ in every respect.

Verse 12 indicates that we are to understand Christ and understand why He has called us. We are not to follow in ignorance nor darkness. The Lord does not want us to be ignorant nor to walk in the shadows. He wants us to understand and to know His will. He wants us to grasp in some measure the reason He has called us to be His own and what He expects of us after He has called us. What wonderful opportunities there are; what privileges, what open doors! The Lord enable us to enter them.

Verse 20 expresses the fact that we wait for Christ. We look for His return. We watch for the marks of His appearing. Columbus discovered the West Indies long before he sighted land. Land birds flew through the rigging, lit on the spars, settled on the deck, and he knew that land was near. So our Lord is sending the birds, the tender leaves, the sprouts to remind us that the day is not far distant when the Prince of Peace will come to a warring world and bring peace.

We close our discussion of this precious book of Philippians by observing in chapter 4 that we are to be true to Christ. We are not to be vacillating, blown about by the winds of doctrine, nor washed away by the flood tide of public opinion. We are to be *rooted and grounded* in the truth and our faith is to be fixed firmly on this wonderful Rock of Ages, Christ Jesus our Lord.

Verse 4 tells us that we are to rejoice in Him. We have already observed this, but Paul speaks of it often. In chapter 3:1 he mentions it. In I Thessalonians he mentions it. In fact, because of its supreme importance he will not let the subject rest. Joy in the Lord is an absolute requirement for a happy, profitable, useful life.

There is an imitation joy which does not come from the heart. There are exclamations of joy which are not inspired. When the preaching is over, the countenance is sad and the heart is heavy. This is not the real joy of the Lord. The person who is happy in Christ will be found happy bending over the washtub, or sitting at the piano, or clerking in the grocery store, or pounding the typewriter, or selling merchandise. Wherever he is, his heart will be glad, his countenance will be radiant and his lips will be filled with praise. That is what Paul desired for his children by faith in Christ Jesus.

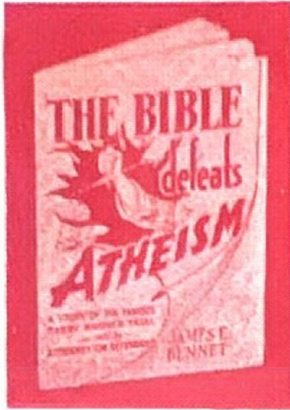
Verse 7 indicates that we are to enjoy the peace of God and be kept by Christ both in our heart, the seat of our feelings, and in our mind, the abode of our thoughts. It is essential that we have peace both in heart and mind. Sometimes the heart grows heavy, and sometimes the mind is confused. We need the keeping power of our blessed Lord in order that we may think straight and feel happy.

Let us close our meditation by noting in verse 13 that we are to work with God and for His glory. We are not to be lazy Christians

nor indifferent. We are not to shirk our duty nor ignore our privileges. We are to let our blessed Lord have all of our time and talents. He can make the weakest Christian carry out an important mission. He can engrave His image on any kind of stone and make that one to do His wonderful will. Let us serve our Lord with gladness, with reverence and with godly fear. Let us seek to become better servants, to improve our knowledge of God and of His Word, to become more efficient in the Scriptures and in diagnosing the need of many hearts. Let us not be content merely to drift along and enjoy only a few of the blessings of God. Let us strive to be workmen that are not ashamed.

It may be clearly seen from a careful study of the entire Word and of this lovely book of Philippians that Christ Jesus is the center of all of God's plans and arrangements. It is His Name that is called upon us and we are to be His bride. He is the One who is King of kings and we are His lawful and loyal subjects. He is the One whom we imitate in our walk and talk and thought. Our songs of praise are concerning Him and His wonderful work at Calvary. We depend upon Him as the limb of the tree depends upon the trunk of the tree. We feed upon Him as the wee baby lives by the mother's breast. We grow up in Him to a full stature because His life is to be manifest in our mortal body. He is the subject of our Gospel. He is the gathering center of His Church. It is His power that is given to us for judgment and for blessing. It is His Name that causes angels and men to fall in adoration and demons to flee. It is the risen, glorified Man Jesus, made both Lord and Christ, to whom all authority has been given in heaven and earth. He is the One who accompanies us through the valley of the shadow. Our life is hid with Him in God. He has gone to prepare a place for us and it is with Him that we shall walk in white. Surely He is our example and pattern. Surely He is the goal, the aim and the object of the life of every believer.

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