

# **The Epistle of Paul to the Philippians**

**A Commentary on the Greek Text**

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# Preface

My grandson recently presented me with a gospel tract given him while shopping. He didn't think I needed it, although I am reminded of my first appointment as a curate. After the first service, I was taken aside by a wonderful old street preacher who presented the gospel to me, just in case! How good is that! Anyway, I'm warmed within when I see young people getting the gospel out into the highways and byways.

The gospel tract was titled *Are you Good Enough for Heaven?* The tract went down the usual trail and ended with the obvious truth, Jesus makes you good enough! Well done Bible Truth Baptist Church, Bairnsdale. In a nutshell, that's the point Paul wants to make to the brothers and sisters in the church at Philippi.

Philippians is one of Paul's portfolio of letters from prison; Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon, and of course, not forgetting Ephesians and the Pastoral letters. In substance, it is a thank-you letter, but Paul knows well that the flawed doctrine of *sanctification by obedience for blessing* is out and about undermining the doctrine of *salvation by grace through faith*. So, Paul takes time to remind the Philippians that through faith in Jesus they are good enough for heaven.

It is my hope that these notes aid your task of knowing the mind of Christ.

Bryan Findlayson, 2021.

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# Notes

**Commentary Intention:** This exegetical commentary aims to provide a foundation for expository preaching, assisting fellow pastors with *rusty* Greek to come to grips with the text. The Greek level is college years 2/3, with a focus on syntax to aid an understanding of the text - accents are only used where necessary. Highly technical issues are avoided, with the exposition primarily guided by the expressed views of respected published commentators. Where possible, the commentary is structured to conform with the readings of the Revised Common Lectionary.

**Format:** RCL study units - synopsis, context, structure, interpretation, homiletical suggestion and exegesis: the Greek word or phrase; a limited parsing; the English text (NIV and/or NIV11); a literal English translation; syntax where necessary; comment, often with a published translation.

**Copyright:** No copyright provision covers this commentary, nor is citing expected. Where citing is required for academic purposes; Findlayson, *The Epistle of Paul to the Philippians; A Commentary on the Greek Text, 2021*.

**Abbreviations:** See Series Addendum.

**Print:** Format; A5. For mono laser "render color black."

**Greek:** Nestle-Aland / UBS 4 Greek New Testament.

**Greek Glossary:** See Series Addendum.

**Inclusive language:** Numerous older translations and paraphrases are used throughout the studies to enhance the meaning of the text. Latitude is given to sexist language, although alterations are sometimes made to the original text.

**Primary English Text Bible:** The New International Version, NIV, 1985, and / or NIV11, 2011, copyright by International Bible Societies and published by The Zondervan Corporation. All rights reserved worldwide. The full text is not provided under copyright requirements and it is recommended that a copy of the NIV be at hand for these notes.

**Author:** Findlayson, Bryan. Anglican Diocese of Sydney, Australia. b 1942. MTC. ThL 1970, MC Dip (Hons) 1971; P 1972 by Abp Syd; C Narrabeen 1971; C Cronulla 1972-1975; C Engadine. 1975-1978; CIC Helensburgh 1978-89; Sabbatical 1989-1990; R Cronulla 1990-1999; Retired.

**Dedication:** To my children, Marelle, Paul and Justyne.

**Typos:** Forgive me! I keep finding clangers.

# Commentaries on Philippians

**Beare**, Blacks, 1959. 3  
**Bruce**, NIBC, 1989. 3R  
**Caird**, New Clarendon 1977. 2D  
**Caudill**, Blue Ridge Press, 1980. 1D  
**Fee**, NICNT, 1995. 4R  
**Ferguson**, LS, Banner of Truth, 1997.1  
**Fowl**, Horizons, 2005. 3  
**Grayston**, EPC, 1957. 2  
**Hanson**, Pillar, 2009. 4  
**Hawthorn**, Word, 1983. 4  
**Hellerman**, EGGNT, 2015. 5  
**Hendriksen**, Banner of Truth, 1963. 4  
**Houlden**, Westminster / Pelican, 1970. 2D  
**Koehne**, ChiRho, 1987. 2DR  
**Lightfoot**, Macmillan. 1890. *Reprinted*. 5D  
**Martin**, NCB, 1976. 2D  
**Melick**, NAC, 1991. 3  
**Motyer**, BST, 1994.  
**Muller**, NICNT, 1955. 3D  
**O'Brien**, NIGTC, 1991. 5R  
**Reumann**, Anchor, 2008. 4  
**Silva**, BECNT, 2005. 3  
**Synge**, Torch, 1951. 1D  
**Verner**, HGT, 2016. G  
**Vincent**, ICC, 1897. 4G  
**Witherington**, Trinity, 1994. 3

## Key:

Level of complexity: **1**, non-technical, to **5**, requiring a workable knowledge of Greek

Deceased: **D**. For publications no longer in print, search [bookfinder.com](http://bookfinder.com)

Other identifiers: Greek technical **G**. Recommended **R**. Theology **T**

The above is only a selection of some of the English Bible Commentaries available on Philippians



# Analysis

## *Prologue*

### **1. Introduction, 1:1-11**

Greeting, thanksgiving and prayer for the church, 1:1-11

## *Background*

### **2. Paul's personal situation. 1:12-26**

i] Paul describes his difficulties, 1:12-18b

ii] Paul's personal difficulties glorify Christ, 1:18c-26

## *Proposition*

**Struggle together for the truth of the gospel, 1:27-30**

## *Argument Proper*

### **3. Exhortations, 2:1-18**

i] Steadfast in Christian unity, 2:1-4

ii] Humility based on the example of Christ, 2:5-11

iii] An appeal: Work out your salvation, 2:12-18

### **4. Personal information, 2:19-30**

The forthcoming visit of Timothy and Epaphroditus, 2:19-30

### **5. Warnings and appeals, 3:1-21**

i] Paul warns of the Judaizers (nomists), 3:1-4a

ii] Seek the prize of knowing Christ, 3:4b-11

iii] Seek the high calling in Christ Jesus, 3:12-16

iv] Stand firm in the Lord, 3:17-21

## *Application*

### **6. Practical pastoral issues, 4:1-9**

i] A personal appeal for unity, 4:1-3

ii] Christian virtues, 4:4-9

### **7. A word of appreciation. 4:10-20**

God provides all our needs, 4:10-20

## *Conclusion*

### **8. Conclusion. 4:21-23**

Personal greetings and benediction, 4:21-23.



# Introduction

Philippi was the first church on European soil. Paul, Timothy, Silas and Luke, following the vision of "a man from Macedonia", visited the town on their second missionary journey, Acts 16. Members of an unofficial Jewish synagogue (obviously there were less than ten male members), led by Lydia, were evangelized by Paul. Lydia became the founding member of the church in Philippi which, in its early years, met in her home. Paul and Silas were jailed after a riot, and were then forced to leave the town. On Paul's third missionary journey, he again visited the Philippian church, Acts 20. It soon developed into a mainly Gentile church, very supportive of Paul's ministry. This, Paul's *thank-you* letter to the church, evidences the deep affection that existed between Paul and the members of the Philippian fellowship. The ongoing character of the church is evident a century later when they gave wholehearted support to Ignatius, the bishop of Antioch, when he faced martyrdom.

## Structure

Philippians presents as a letter with a prescript, 1:1-2, and *conclusio*, postscript, 4:21-23, although, given that Paul intends for it be read to an assembled congregation, he employs some of the rhetorical forms and conventions of the day to progress his argument. This is evident in the structure of the letter, although only generally so - it is dangerous to impose an artificial scheme on the text.

A rhetorical scheme for deliberative rhetoric, where the author / speaker seeks to persuade his audience concerning a particular matter, presents as follows:

*Exordium* - an introduction serving to introduce the subject matter while eliciting the sympathy of the audience;

*Narratio* - a narrative section providing background information;

*Partitio* - summary proofs / thesis to be tested, and/or *Propositio*, proposition;

*Probatio* - rhetorical proofs, arguments in favour of the proposition, often with a *refutatio*, a refutation of the opponents' arguments;

*Digressio* - a digression where a proof or refutation is covered in more detail;

*Exhortatio* - exhortation;

*Peroratio* - a concluding recapitulation of the main theme.

Watson in *A Rhetorical Analysis of Philippians*, 1988, proposes the following structure:

*Exordium*, 1:3-26;

*Narratio*, 1:27-30;

*Probatio*, 2:1-3:21;

*Peroratio*, 4:1-20.

Witherington argues for the following divisions in the first two chapters:

*Exordium*, 1:3-11;

*Narratio*, 1:12-26;

*Propositio*, 1:27-30.

Black in the *Discourse structure of Philippians*, 1995, divides the central argument into:

*Propositio*, 1:27-30;

*Probatio*, 2:1-30;

*Refutatio*, 3:1-21.

## **Purpose**

Philippians is a thank-you letter outlining Paul's affairs and plans. First and foremost, it serves to say thank you to the church for a gift sent to Paul while in prison. The gift came via Epaphroditus, who, after a serious illness, carried Paul's *thank-you* letter back to the church.

## **Author**

Baur, in *Paul: His Life and Works*, English translation 1875, was the first to seriously challenge Pauline authorship, although his arguments have not stood the test of time. Only in recent times has there been a revival of the idea that the letter is pseudonymous / a forgery, and this by means of a statistical analysis of the language used in Paul's letters. None-the-less, the vast majority of commentators regard Paul the apostles as the author of Philippians.

## **Date and place of writing**

The letter tells us that Paul is in prison, but it doesn't tell us where he is imprisoned. Paul mentions that during his ministry he was imprisoned a number of times, 2Cor.6:5, 11:23, 24. We know that Paul was a prisoner at Philippi, Jerusalem, Caesarea and Rome. There is strong evidence that he spent time in an Ephesian prison, although this is not recorded in Acts, and in any case, the reference to the praetorian guard rules this out. Caesarea is certainly a possibility because Paul was imprisoned for two years (AD 57-59) in Herod's palace, rightly designated a *praetorium*. Yet, Caesarea is a political backwater and an unlikely setting for Paul's enthusiastic account of the gospel's advance while in prison. So,

it is likely that Philippians was written while Paul is in prison in Rome. If Rome, then it is during or after the period recorded in Acts 28, that is, around AD 60-63.

## Unity

There is some evidence that Paul wrote more than one letter to the Philippians and that both letters are present in our one letter. It is argued that from 3:1b there is a dramatic change in tone, indicating the incorporation of a different document. Although the Church Father Polycarp said, when addressing the Philippian church, that Paul, "being absent, wrote letters to you", there is little possibility that our letter is a compilation of two letters.

## Argument

This is a personal letter, a thank-you letter outlining Paul's affairs and plans, along with an exhortation toward unity in the church through humility. It is, above all, a word of appreciation. It rings with joy and gratitude. Although ostensibly a word of appreciation, Paul does touch on some important theological issues: justification, mystical union, the second coming.... In particular, Paul establishes the pre-existence of Christ, and the two states of his being, namely, humiliation and exaltation.

A synopsis of the letter presents as follows:

- After a greeting and an expression of appreciation, 1:1-11;
- Paul explains how his present troubles are serving a positive end, 1:12-26. Paul is able to witness to unbelieving Roman officials, and at the same time, encourage the local Christian congregation. So, the gospel is proclaimed, and for this Paul rejoices;
- Paul then follows up with an exhortation for harmony in the Philippian congregation, asking that they depreciate personal squabbles by recognizing the servanthood of Christ, 1:27-2:18;
- Personal information follows concerning Paul's intention to send Timothy to them and of the present visit of Epaphroditus who is charged with carrying Paul's thank-you letter to the church, 2:19-30;
- Paul seems ready to end the letter at this point, but then he launches into a warning, 3:1-4a. He wants his readers to be on guard against those who undermine their faith;
- To this end Paul sets out to summarize the key components of faith in Christ and its fruit of love, 3:4b-4:1.

FAITH = RIGHTEOUSNESS = **BLESSINGS** = WORKS.

- Paul follows up with an appeal for unity and for an application of *the seven steps to peace*, 4:2-9;

- This is followed by a word of appreciation for the gift carried by Epaphroditus from the Philippian fellowship, 4:10-20;
- The letter ends with personal greetings and a benediction, 4:21-23.

### **Grammatical Note:**

This corrected edition uses a descriptive classification for a genitive of source, rather than an ablative classification. See *A Note on the Genitive* in the **Series Addendum**, page 69.

# Commentary

## 1:1-11

### 1. Introduction, 1:1-11

#### Greeting, thanksgiving and prayer for the church

##### Argument

As is typical, following the greeting Paul gives thanks and prays for the welfare of his readers. His thanksgiving is by no means an oblique prayer on behalf of his readers, rather it is made directly to God in appreciation for His gracious kindness toward the Philippian congregation, a kindness reciprocated by the congregation toward Paul in support of his missionary work. Paul then prays for the perfection of his readers; he prays for their spiritual insight / knowledge / true discrimination, so that they might reap the full harvest of righteousness - the fruits of God's redeeming love.

##### Issues

i] Context: Paul, as usual, opens with a greeting, 1:1-2, moving quickly into the body of his letter, or probably better, his address to the Philippian believers (the letter would be read to the church as a whole). The letter tends to follow the format common to first century deliberative rhetoric:

*Exordium*, 1:3-11: An expression of appreciation.

*Narratio*, 1:12-26: Paul explains how his present troubles are serving a positive end. Paul is able to witness to unbelieving Roman officials and at the same time encourage the local Christian congregation. So, the gospel is proclaimed, and for this Paul rejoices.

*Propositio*, 1:27-30: He then follows up with his proposition,

**Let us struggle together for the truth of the gospel.**

*Probatio*, 2:1-30: Paul goes on to develop his main argument which calls for harmony in the Philippian congregation; he asks that they depreciate personal squabbles by recognizing the servanthood of Christ, 2:1-2:18. Personal information follows concerning Paul's intention to send Timothy to them and of the present visit of Epaphroditus who is charged with carrying Paul's thank-you letter to the church, 2:19-30.

*Refutatio*, 3:1-21: Paul seems ready to end the letter at this point but then launches into a warning, 3:1-4a. He wants his readers to be on guard against those who undermine their faith. To this end Paul sets out to

summarize the key components of faith in Christ and its fruit of love, 3:4b-21.

*Peroratio*, 4:1-20: Paul follows up with an appeal for unity and for an application of *the seven steps to peace*, 4:1-9. This is followed by a word of appreciation for the gift carried by Epaphroditus from the Philippian fellowship, 4:10-20.

*Conclusio*, 4:21-23. The letter ends with personal greetings and a benediction.

## ii] Background:

During Paul's second missionary journey, he was instructed in a vision to leave the Roman province of Asia and cross over to Macedonia. He went by ship to Neapolis and then to Philippi, a Roman colony, where he was able to establish a small congregation of believers, cf., Acts 16:1-15. This was probably around AD51. During his third missionary journey, in the midst of the troubles that had developed in the Corinthian congregation, he made at least one more visit to Philippi, Acts 20:1-6, AD53-55. At this stage, Paul is organizing the collection in Macedonia for the poor believers in Jerusalem and Judea, but due to the poverty of the Philippian church, Paul intended not to ask them to contribute, but they insisted, cf., 2Cor.8:1-5. Troubles ensued on delivering the collection to the saints in Jerusalem, inevitably leading to Paul's arrest, imprisonment, and ultimately his house-arrest in Rome as he waited to make his appeal to Caesar, AD60-62, cf., Acts 28.

Paul's letter to the Philippians indicates that he was in prison when he wrote the letter. Arguments abound as to where this may be (eg., Caesarea, Ephesus, even Corinth), but most of the conservative commentators hold that he wrote Philippians while he was awaiting trial in Rome during his first imprisonment (assuming there was a second imprisonment at the time of Nero, around 67AD) - probably during the latter part of his imprisonment. It seems likely that when the Philippian believers learnt of Paul's circumstances, they collected funds for his support, and sent Epaphroditus, both to carry the funds to Paul and to offer practical care for him. Epaphroditus was only able to reach Rome at the risk of his own life, having fallen sick on the journey. On reaching Rome, Epaphroditus was able to inform Paul of the difficulties facing the church. The church was under increasing societal pressure from without, as well as people-troubles from within. The problems within the church were mainly caused by the Judaizers, members of the circumcision party, the core members of which were ensconced in the Jerusalem church. These difficulties were

undermining the faith of the congregation, prompting dissension and self-seeking. Even the leadership was under stress, with Euodia and Syntyche noted for their failings. Epaphroditus was also able to pass on to Paul the request that he send Timothy to lead the church through these difficulties, but Paul was unable to allow him go at this point in time. Too many of Paul's associates had deserted him.

It is in this context that Paul writes to the believers in Philippi, entrusting Epaphroditus with its delivery. The letter seeks to thank the Philippians for their support, encourage them in their distress, rebuke the trouble makers, counter false doctrine, and exhort the congregation to faithful service.

*The troublemakers in Philippi:* Lightfoot proposed that those who were running a campaign against Paul were the Judaizers, members of the circumcision party, the group specifically targeted by Paul in Galatians, and indirectly in Romans. Most modern commentators are unwilling to be so specific. The key passages to consider in Philippians are 1:15-17, 1:27-28 ("those who oppose you .... they will be destroyed"), 3:2 ("mutilators of the flesh" = circumcision), 3:18-19 ("enemies of the cross .... their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is set on earthly things" = eat not, touch not regulations).

Some commentators have suggested that the problem Paul is addressing is a Jewish form of Gnosticism, but the majority of commentators argue that the problem concerns Jewish exclusivism with respect to the application of the Law of Moses. The proponents may be Hellenistic Jews, but are most likely Jewish believers. Commentators divide with respect to the number of opposition parties Paul addresses. Many opt for two, given the different tone evident in Paul's criticisms: opponents in Rome who are preachers of Christ, chapter 1, and unidentified opponents in Philippi, chapter 3. Some opt for a third opposition party, libertines, 3:19. A single opposition group seems most likely, but the issue will always remain a matter of debate.

Lightfoot sees the heresy promoted by the Judaizers as legalism, but it is more likely nomism, the idea that although right-standing before God is a gift of grace through faith, the full appropriation of the promised blessings of the covenant are by works of the law. A nomist believes that by law-obedience sin is restrained and holiness progressed for blessing. This pharisaic heresy, originally confronted by Jesus, constantly bedevilled Paul throughout his ministry, and it is likely that even now he is having to deal with it in the church at Rome, particularly with Jewish believers. For

Paul, the promised blessings of the covenant (new life in Christ) are fully realized in union with Christ apart from the works of the law. A believer lives by the Spirit, not by the flesh.

Paul:

FAITH = RIGHTEOUSNESS = **BLESSINGS** = WORKS

Paul's opponents / Nomism:

FAITH = RIGHTEOUSNESS + **WORKS** = BLESSINGS

Legalism:

FAITH + **WORKS** = RIGHTEOUSNESS = BLESSINGS

(the heresy assumed by Lightfoot).

Paul's criticisms in chapter 3 are certainly harsh, and well reflect his attack on the Judaizers in Galatians, but it is interesting that in chapter 1 he accepts that they preach Christ (see also 2Cor. 11:4 for a similar perspective - "the preachers of a Jesus other than the Jesus we preached". Were they also judaizers?). A few years in a Roman jail is well able to mellow a fiery temperament and foster the "meekness and gentleness of Christ." So yes, they preach Christ crucified, but like any sectarian group they are highly motivated to lead believers to that special little extra for a *full* Christian life.

For a survey of opinions as to the identity of those who "preach Christ out of envy and rivalry", see O'Brien p102-105.

iii] Structure: *Greeting, Thanksgiving and Prayer*:

Greeting, v1-2;

An appreciation for the Philippians' friendship in the gospel, v3-8;

A prayer for the church, v9-11.

iv] Interpretation:

Paul's letter of appreciation to the Christian community at Philippi (technically a speech in the form of a letter), follows the typical form of a letter at this period of time. Three elements are usually found in the opening statement of a letter, elements evident in this letter: the name of the sender; the name of the recipient/s; a greeting, v1-2.

A common element found in a number of Paul's letters, after the opening salutation, is a thanksgiving, and Philippians presents a particularly effusive salutation, or as O'Brien puts it, "unusually earnest", v3-8 (a thanksgiving is not found in 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, 1 Timothy, Titus). The thanksgiving reveals the affectionate relationship that Paul has with the Philippians. It also evidences that other than a desire to thank the Philippians for their kindness toward him, there is no burning

issue that Paul needs to bring before the church. Sanders suggests that Pauline thanksgivings reflect "the liturgical form of the prayers of the Christian community", or even more likely, the prayer form of a Jewish synagogue at the time. Indeed, Paul is a Jew and the Christian church initially drew its form of worship from Jewish tradition.

A thanksgiving, by its very nature, can be classified a prayer, but in Philippians, as in Colossians, Paul moves from his prayer of thanksgiving to a prayer of intercession, v9-11. It is interesting to note the similarities between this prayer in Philippians with the example found in Colossians, Col.1:9-11. In both, Paul wants his readers to grow in the knowledge of God; he prays that they may be filled according to God's power and glory. These verses actually reveal Paul's driving purpose for his readers, a growing understanding of what matters "in order that you may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ", v10. Above Paul's purpose for mere mortals is a higher purpose, that all this be "to the glory and praise of God", v11. Silva calls this a "pervasive biblical principle" of prayer evident throughout the Old and New Testament - note the Lord's Prayer.

v] Homiletics: *Living in Love*.

Paul's prayer for the church was that they might grow in love. First, that their love might be insightful, a love lived out in wisdom and knowledge. Second, that their love might be active, a love lived out in deeds of righteousness.

The Philippian church certainly lived out the command of our Lord to "love one another". It was not just compassion, but a bonding to Jesus, to each other, and to their apostle. Paul's needs were their needs; Paul's ministry was their ministry. It was for their Christian love that Paul gave thanks to God, and he did so in the knowledge that their love would further mature as the indwelling Spirit of Christ continued his sanctifying work within. It was within this context that Paul prayed for the Philippians; he prayed that they might grow in love.

Paul prayed for an insightful love. He prayed that their "love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight." A love without direction is of little value. Understanding the character of God, his will for us in the present and in the future, is an essential characteristic of effective love. How can I love God if I don't understand him? How can I love my neighbour if I don't know what is God's will for my neighbour? How can I love God, my neighbour and myself, if I do not have the ability to discern the shades, the subtleties of truth, as they interact with darkness? Love must be insightful.

Paul prayed for an active love. He prayed that the Philippians' love might foster a life "filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through faith in Jesus Christ." A love that is not lived out, is a love without substance. Living out love in righteousness, through the power of the indwelling Christ, is an essential characteristic of effective love. How can I love God if all I do is please myself? How can I love my neighbour if I blindly ignore their practical needs? Love must be active.

Filled with the fruit of love that is both insightful and active, Paul prayed that the Philippians live, mindful of Christ's coming. Let us also, through Christ's life-changing power, similarly prepare for that coming day.

### Text - 1:1

Introduction: i] Opening salutation, v1-2.

**δουλοι [ος]** "**servants**" - [PAUL AND TIMOTHY] SLAVES. Nominative standing in apposition to the nominative absolutes "Paul and Timothy." Properly meaning "slave", but servant / minister is surely intended, as in the OT, "servant of the Lord." None-the-less, the word could of itself be taken to mean slave / bondservant as one who is dedicated to fulfill the Master's commands.

**Χριστου Ιησου [ος]** gen. "**of Christ Jesus**" - The genitive is adjectival, possessive, or idiomatic, "servants *who are under the authority* of Jesus Christ."

**τοις ἁγιοις [ος]** dat. "**to [all] God's holy people**" - TO [ALL] THE HOLY, SAINTS. Dative of recipient.

**εν "in [Christ Jesus]"** - Local, expressing incorporative union; "in union with Christ Jesus."

**οὔσιν [εἰμι]** dat. pres. part. "-" - BEING. The participle is adjectival, attributive, limiting "the saints"; "who are in Philippi."

**εν + dat. "at [Philippi]"** - IN [PHILIPPI]. Local, expressing space.

**συν + dat. "together with"** - WITH [OVERSEERS AND DEACONS]. Expressing association / accompaniment. The mention of these two ministries in the Philippian church is interesting. The two Greek words are used for the English words of bishop and deacon. The word **επισκοπος** is used of an overseer, one who exercises rule and authority, while the word **διακονος** is used of one who serves, ministers to others. So, the words refer to the leaders in the congregation and to others who exercise some form of ministry / service within the congregation. It is very unlikely that at this stage they refer to an ecclesiastical office.

v2

ὑμῖν dat. pro. "**to you**" - [GRACE] TO YOU [AND PEACE]. Dative of indirect object / interest, advantage. The common Hebrew greeting is *shalom*, "peace", and the common Greek greeting is just that, *χαίρειν*, "Greeting", although Paul moves to the Hebrew equivalent, *hesedh*, so "grace."

ἀπο + gen. "**from [God]**" - Expressing source / origin. As a formalized invocation the sense is "May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you grace and peace."

πατρὸς [ἡρ ρος] gen. "**Father**" - FATHER [OF US]. Genitive in apposition to "God".

Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ [ος] "**Jesus Christ**" - [LORD] JESUS CHRIST. Genitive is apposition to "Jesus Christ."

v3

ii] A thanksgiving for the Philippians' fellowship in the gospel, v3-8. Paul, thanks God because, under His guiding hand, the Philippians shared in the work of evangelism, probably financing Paul, so Syngé. "Every time I think of you I thank my God."

The translation offered by the NIV / 11 for v3 aligns with translations, but Moffatt's translation is worth considering; "I thank my God for all your remembrance of me." In the context, it does make sense. Note also the problem with the first three verses in what is a very long Gk. sentence. The main verb *ευχαριστω*, "I give thanks", is usually taken with v5 leaving v3a-4 as a kind of parenthesis, so Lightfoot. It seems best to take v3 with 4a as the main clause, and 4b-5 as a subordinate participial clause; "I give thanks to my God for all your remembrance of me always in every prayer of mine on your behalf, offering these prayers joyfully because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day that it reached you right up to the present."

ευχαριστω pres. "**I thank**" - I GIVE THANKS, THANK. The present tense is obviously iterative where the action is repeated.

μου gen. pro. "**my**" - [THE GOD] OF ME. The genitive is adjectival, possessive is somewhat problematic, possibly relational, although better idiomatic / of subordination.

τῷ θεῷ "**God**" - TO THE GOD. Dative of direct object after the verb "to give thanks", "I give thanks to my God."

πανσὴ + dat. "**every**" - [AT] EVERY [REMEMBRANCE OF YOU]. Rather than "every time I remember", better "in all my remembrance", Varner; BDF #235.3, not "every", but "in the whole of."

**επι** + dat. "**time**" - ON, UPON, AT THE TIME OF. Spatial, "in", particularly of time, "at the time of", as NIV; "every time I think of you", CEV. Possibly expressing cause / reason / ground, "because of"; "**for** all your remembrance of me", Moffatt. In this translation Moffatt has taken **ὑμων**, "you" as a subjective genitive, "your remembrance of *me* (the Philippians and their financial support to Paul), rather than "*my* remembrance of you." The only problem with this translation is that when Paul uses similar language in other thanksgivings it clearly means Paul's remembrance of his readers in his prayers.

#### v4

Regarded as a parenthesis by some commentators, Lightfoot etc., "and praying for you does make me happy." On the other hand, O'Brien and others regard the joy Paul feels, when he prays for the Philippians, as the first ground for his thanksgiving. "When I pray for you, and that means all of you, I always feel very happy."

**εν** + dat. "**in**" - [ALWAYS] IN [EVERY]. Instrumental, expressing means; "by means of all my prayers." Note the repeated idea of completeness, "always, in all my prayers = every prayer for all of you."

**δεησει [ις εως]** "**prayers**" - REQUESTS, ENTREATIES, PRAYERS. Usually in a specific sense, "supplications".

**ὑπερ** + gen.. "**for**" - Expressing representation, "on behalf of" / benefaction, "for the benefit of."

**παντων** adj. "**all [of you]**" - [YOU] ALL. Not always translated, but Paul seems to stress inclusiveness with the Philippians, possibly due to an awareness on his part of congregational disunity.

**ποιουμενος [ποιεω]** pres. mid. part. "**I [always] pray**" - MAKING, DOING [THE SUPPLICATION WITH JOY]. The participle is adverbial, possibly temporal, "whenever I pray for you", REB, or when taken with the prepositional phrase, modal, expressing manner, "joyfully praying."

**παντοτε** adv. "**always**" - EVERY TIME, ALWAYS. Temporal adverb.

**μετα** + gen "**with [joy]**" - The preposition is probably adverbial here, expressing manner, "joyfully"; "when I pray for you, and that means all of you, I always feel very happy."

#### v5

If v4 is not a parenthesis, then this verse states the second ground for Paul's thanksgiving, namely the Philippian's partnership with Paul in gospel ministry. Paul is thankful for the Philippians' practical interest and involvement in his gospel ministry.

**επι** + dat. "**because**" - IN VIEW OF. Here expressing cause / ground, "because of / on the basis of"; "for they (my prayers) bring back to my mind how we have worked together for the gospel", Phillips.

**τη κοινωνια** (a) "**partnership**" - THE FELLOWSHIP, PARTICIPATION, SHARING. Some argue for a passive sense, but an active sense seems best; "your cooperation in promoting the gospel", O'Brien.

**εις** + acc. "**in [the gospel]**" - INTO. Here most likely adverbial expressing reference / respect; "with respect to / with reference to." See also 2:22.

**το ευαγγελιον [ον]** "**the gospel**" - THE IMPORTANT MESSAGE. Tending always to refer to the important divine message proclaimed by John the Baptist, Jesus ..., namely "the kingdom of God is at hand." Often referred to as the good news, but it's certainly not good news for those who have rejected it. Here, probably not just the actual message, but the business of communicating it; "for your cooperation in spreading the gospel", Weymouth.

**απο** "**from [the first day]**" - Temporal use of the preposition. Presumably "from the first day it arrived among you", Barclay.

**αχρι** + gen. "**until**" - Here serving as a temporal preposition; "until".

**του** gen. "-" - THE [NOW]. The article serves as a nominalizer turning the adverb "now" into a substantive; "the present."

## v6

It is most likely that we have here the third ground for Paul's thanksgiving, namely, his confidence that God will finish the good work. Paul has a sure belief in God's grace at work in the Philippian church, a sovereign grace which will continue to affect the inner disposition and the outward activity of the members of the congregation. This work of God, in their lives, will continue until the advent of Christ.

**πεποιθως [πειθω]** perf. part. "**being confident**" - HAVING BECOME CONFIDENT OF. The participle is adverbial, best treated as causal, "because of"; "for of this I am confident", Weymouth.

**αυτο τουτο** "**of this**" - THIS THING. Standing as accusative complements of the participle "having become confident." Not referring to some particular antecedent, but rather underlining his confidence, "I am confident with just this confidence", Hawthorne.

**οτι** "**that**" - Introducing an object clause / dependent statement of perception, expressing Paul's confidence, namely the completion of the good work.

**ο αναρχαμενος [αναρχομαι]** aor. part. "**he who began**" - THE ONE HAVING BEGUN. The participle serves as a substantive. The agent is obviously God.

**εργον αγαθον** "a good work" - A WORK GOOD. Accusative direct object of the participle "having begun." Given the context, the good work is the work of the gospel that the Philippians were participating in, a work begun by God and one that will ultimately be completed by him. None-the-less, the idea of completing this work may indicate that Paul has in mind their salvation which "began" when the gospel was preached to them.

**εν** "in [you]" - IN, WITH [YOU]. Possibly locative, "in / within [you]", as NIV, reflecting the view that the "good work" is the eternal salvation of the Philippian believers. On the other hand, an instrumental sense is possible, "by means of [you]", reflecting the view that the "good work is the work of evangelization. The Philippian believers, along with Paul's mission team, served as God's instrument for evangelizing Philippi.

**επιτελεσει [επιτελεω]** "will carry it on to completion" - WILL COMPLETE, ACCOMPLISH, BRING ABOUT. Carrying the sense of both continuation and completion, so "will continue to work ..... until he has finished what he has planned", TH.

**Χριστου Ιησου [ος]** gen. "of Christ Jesus" - [UNTIL DAY] OF CHRIST JESUS. Adjectival, possessive, in the sense that the day belongs to Jesus, or more likely idiomatic / temporal, "the day *when* Christ Jesus comes."

v7

In v3-6, Paul expresses warm affection for the Philippian believers and he now explains the reason for his strong feelings. Whether, during his time in prison, or during those times when he was free to defend and establish the truth of the gospel, the Philippians have stood with him and supported him in his ministry, a ministry graciously given to him by God.

**καθως** "-" - JUST AS, AS [IT IS RIGHT]. Comparative, although sometimes taking a causal sense, "because / since / in so far as." Because of v3-6 it is only right for Paul to feel the way he does. "Indeed, it is only right ..." Hawthorne.

**εμοι** dat. pro. "for me" - Dative of interest, advantage.

**φρονειν [φρονεω]** inf. "to feel" - TO THINK, TO BE CONCERNED FOR, FEEL [THIS]. The infinitive forms an infinitival phrase which serves as the subject of the verb to-be, "to feel ..... is [only right for me]." The word expresses both feelings, "a sympathetic attention to", but also "the holding of an opinion"; "it is only natural for me to be thinking of you all", Moffatt.

**υπερ** "about [all of you]" - ON BEHALF OF [YOU ALL]. Here expressing reference / respect, "concerning", as NIV, but possibly advantage / benefit, "on behalf of."

**δια** + acc. "since" - BECAUSE OF, ON ACCOUNT OF. Taking a causal sense, "because".

εν "in [my heart]" - [YOU HAVE ME] IN, WITHIN [THE = YOUR HEART]. Locative, expressing space / sphere. The word order is ambiguous so possibly also expressing Paul's knowledge that he is very dear to the Philippians; "I have a secure place in your hearts", Bruce.

τε .... και "weather .... or" - BOTH [IN MY BONDS OF ME] AND [IN THE DEFENCE AND VINDICATION OF THE GOOD NEWS]. Serving to relate two sequential elements; "both in my imprisonment also while I was free to defend ..."

τη απολογία [α] "defending" - THE DEFENCE. To speak against accusations presumed to be false\*.

βεβαιωσει [ις εως] "confirming" - CONFIRMATION, VERIFICATION, VINDICATION. "To defend and establish the truth of the gospel", Barclay.

του ευαγγελιου [ον] gen. "the gospel" - The genitive is usually taken as verbal, objective.

οντας [ειμι] pres. part. "[all of you] -" - [YOU ALL] BEING. The participle of the verb to-be is adverbial, possibly causal, "because all of you share ..."

συγκοινωνους [ος] "share" - FELLOW PARTICIPANTS, SHARERS TOGETHER, PARTAKERS. Predicate accusative.

της χαριτος [χαρις] gen. "in God's grace" - OF THE GRACE. The genitive may be treated as verbal, objective, or adverbial, reference / respect; "being participants with respect to grace." Paul uses the word "grace" here in the sense of the gift of his apostolic ministry. That ministry was a gift of God, exercised in authority and power against great odds. "All of you have helped in the work that God has given me", CEV.

μου gen. pro "with me" - OF ME. The genitive is adjectival, possessive, or idiomatic / of association; it is Paul's grace in that it is a ministry given to him by God, which ministry the Philippians share in.

v8

Finally, Paul calls on God to confirm his love for the Philippian church, a love derived from Christ and empowered by Christ.

γαρ "-" - FOR. Here transitional and therefore left untranslated, as NIV.

μαρτυς [υς υρος] "testify" - [MY] WITNESS [ις GOD]. Predicate nominative. The clause functions as an oath witnessed by God; "God knows that I am telling the truth", Barclay.

ως "how" - AS, LIKE / WHILE. Possibly expressing degree, "God knows how much I long for your companionship", Phillips, possibly manner, as NIV, but more likely introducing the content of the witness, rather than its quality; "God witnesses to the fact that I yearn for you", Hawthorne.

**επιποθω [επιποθεω]** "**I long for**" - I YEARN FOR, YEARN AFTER, LONG FOR. Paul is expressing an intense longing for the Philippians, a longing that is deeply affectionate, loving.

**παντας** adj. "**all [of you]**" - [YOU] ALL. Attributive adjective. Note again Paul's use of this inclusive descriptor.

**εν** + dat. "**with**" - IN, WITH, BY, TO. Instrumental, expressing means, or modal, expressing manner.

**σπλαγχνοις [ον]** "**affection**" - *the* ENTRAILS, BOWELS OF AFFECTION. Used in the sense of a deep feeling of intent or affection. Probably brotherly love best defines this feeling. Yet, here not so much of human affection, although that would be a strong aspect of it, but rather a love transformed to another level. Paul's love for the Philippians is the love of Christ for them. Paul is a channel of Christ's love toward the church. They are one in Christ and are therefore bound together in his love.

**Χριστου Ιησου** "**of Christ Jesus**" - The genitive is adjectival, possibly verbal, subjective, ie., an "affection" poured out from Christ, or idiomatic / source, "affection" sourced from Christ, or just simply, attributive, ie., an "affection" which is Christ-like, a Christ-like type of affection.

v9

iii] Paul now articulates his prayer for the Philippian congregation; "this is my prayer: ....", v9-11. Great love already exists in the church, a love toward God, toward each other, toward the world, and of course, toward Paul himself. Yet, their love, like the love of all, is imperfect. So, Paul prays that their love might abound more and more "in deeper knowledge and broader perception."

**ινα** + subj. "**that [your love] may abound**" - [AND THIS I PRAY] THAT. This construction is being used here to introduce an object clause / dependent statement of indirect speech expressing the content of the prayer.

**η αγαπη [η]** "**[your] love**" - THE LOVE [OF YOU]. Nominative subject of the verb "to abound." No object of the love is supplied, indicating the possession of a quality rather than the action of being loving. It is that which is "the central element of the Christian life", Beare.

**περισσευη [περισσευω]** pres. subj. "**may abound**" - MAY ABOUND, OVERFLOW, HAVE EXCEEDING MUCH, BE EXTREMELY RICH. The present tense indicating ongoing action; "may continue to abound."

**ετι** adv. "-" - YET, STILL [MORE AND MORE]. Used as an intensifier of the adverbs **μαλλον ... μαλλον**, "more [and] more", so expressing a super abundance, an ever-expanding love. "That your love may overflow with deeper and deeper knowledge, and with greater and greater sensitive awareness of every kind", Barclay.

εν + dat. "in" - Here Local expressing sphere; "within the domain of knowledge and all insight", O'Brien.

ἐπιγνώσει καὶ πάσῃ αἰσθήσει "knowledge and depth of insight" - ADVANCED KNOWLEDGE AND PERCEPTION / DISCERNMENT. Paul is obviously praying for an improvement in the quality of their love. He is praying for a knowledge of God, of his will and person. Such knowledge is gained through a study of the Bible. As Vincent puts it in his commentary, Paul is praying for an "intelligent and discerning love". For a believer to love, it is essential to know the truth; we have to be able to distinguish good from evil, ie., we must understand the ethical implications of any action. To act in a loving way necessitates a correct understanding of the mind and character of God. It is when we understand the "good", we are then able to apply that knowledge to each and every situation. Our action then becomes a loving act. Although much of our behaviour stems from the best of intentions, it is often done with little understanding of the mind of God. The unthoughtful act is often anything but loving. So, a loving act must be an "intelligent and discerning" one. "In deeper knowledge and broader perception", Hawthorne.

#### v10

With the quality of their love improved through knowledge, the believers in Philippi will be better able to distinguish between good and evil. If they can possess a true gift of discrimination, they will find that their behaviour toward others is sincere and does not give offense, or lead another into sin. This applied discrimination will prepare them for their reign with Christ in eternity.

εἰς τὸ δοκιμαζεῖν [δοκιμαζω] inf. "so that you may be able to discern" - FOR [YOU] TO TEST = THAT [YOU] MAY TEST. The articular infinitive with the preposition εἰς "most commonly expresses purpose", Burton #409. The verb translated "discern" in the NIV either means "test", to prove something by testing, or "approve", having tested and proved the worth of something. Muller states in his commentary that with their love directed by knowledge they will "be able to determine, by judicious discernment, what things really matter, what is the best and most virtuous, and what is of most importance." They will be able to judge / discern, to gain spiritual insights as to the right value of actions and beliefs. Such discernment can be applied to self, to the life of the church, and to the workings of society. The end result is "that small things should as small be seen, and great things great to us should seem", Barth. "Approve", RSV; "discriminate", NEB.

τὸ διαθεροντα [δαθερω] pres. part. "what is best" - THE THINGS BEING SUPERIOR, EXCELLENT, WORTHWHILE. The participle serves as a substantive.

ἵνα + subj. "[and may be pure ...]" - THAT. Unlikely to form a causal clause, "for I want you to be pure and blameless", Barclay, possibly a final (purpose)

clause, "in order that / so that", Moffatt ("and" in the NIV repeats the "so that" at the beginning of the verse), or a consecutive (expressing consequence, result) clause; "then [as a result] on the day of Christ you will be flawless and without blame", REB.

ειλικρινεις [ης] και απροσκοποι [ος] adj. **"pure and blameless"** - YOU MAY BE WAX-LIKE = PURE AND BLAMELESS. With a "gift of true discrimination", a believer can shape their behaviour toward others in a sincere way that does not give offense or lead another into sin. This is probably what Paul means by "pure and blameless". The word translated "pure" in the NIV is virtually unknown, but probably means something like "genuine" or "sincere". The word translated "blameless" in the NIV is something like "without causing offense / causing to stumble". An intransitive sense is possible, "without stumbling", O'Brien. The problem with the NIV choice of words is that they convey the idea of a faultless moral life. This suggestion is a dangerous one, given that the words in the Greek text do not push to such an extreme. The sense is of our life-style being both ethically sincere / true and inoffensive (particularly in the sense of leading a brother into sin - ie., causing a brother to abandon Christ).

εις + acc. **"until [the day of Christ]"** - INTO. Adverbial use of the preposition, probably temporal, "leading up to = until" as NIV, or "on the day of Christ", TEV, "when you meet with Christ on the last day", possibly also spatial, of direction toward or arrival at, "toward": "mindful of the day of Christ", Muller; "in view of the day of Christ", Bruce; "in preparation for the day of Christ", O'Brien.

Χριστου [ος] gen. **"[the day] of Christ"** - The genitive is adjectival, as for v6; "the day of judgment and glorification when Christ returns."

## v11

Paul gives another picture of this love, refined by the knowledge of God; it is behaviour which "abounds in the fruit of right-doing". Paul's prayer is that the Philippians might be "filled" with this fruit, this ethically sincere and non-corrupting behaviour, this "harvest of righteousness." It is a fruit which comes "through Jesus Christ", a fruit "which Christ produces." Jesus is the prompting-cause of this fruit in that by grace through faith he shapes right-doing in our lives through the indwelling Spirit.

πεπληρωμενοι [πληρω] perf. pas. part. **"filled"** - HAVING BEEN FILLED, COMPLETED. The perfect tense indicates a completed state with the passive usually classified as theological / divine - God does the filling. This nominative participle is usually treated as attendant on the predicate nominative substantive adjectives "pure" and "blameless", v10, as NIV, although it may well be

adverbial, consecutive, expressing result, "with the result that ...", so Varner; "Reaping the harvest of righteousness", NEB.

**δικαιοσύνης** [η] gen. "[**the fruit**] of righteousness" - [*with the* FRUIT] OF RIGHTEOUSNESS. The genitive is adjectival, attributive, limiting fruit, "righteous / right-doing fruits", or epexegetic, specifying the fruit in mind. Possibly righteous in the sense of a right status, that which is ours by grace through faith, although it is possible that the participle phrase, "filled with the fruit of righteousness" expresses action accompanying "may be pure and blameless", in which case an ethical quality is being described; "abounding in the fruits of right-doing", Williams.

**τον** "that" - The article serves as an adjectivizer, turning the prepositional phrase "through Jesus Christ" into an attributive relative clause limiting "the righteous fruit"; "which comes through Jesus Christ."

**δια** + gen. "**through**" - THROUGH, BY MEANS OF [JESUS CHRIST]. Instrumental / agency; "the harvest of righteousness which Christ produces", Moffatt.

**εις** "to" - INTO, TO [GLORY AND PRAISE]. In the sense of advantage / purpose, "for"; "all this is for the glory and praise of God", O'Brien.

**θεου** [ος] "**of God**" - The genitive is usually taken as adjectival, verbal, objective, "the purpose of the fruit, therefore, would be to praise God", Varner. An possessive sense is certainly not impossible, "for God's praise and glory", identifying the possession of a characteristic quality, or "for the praise and Glory which *is due to* God", etc., ie., descriptive, idiomatic.

## 1:12-18b

### 2. Paul's personal situation, 1:12-26

#### i] Paul describes his difficulties

##### Argument

It may well seem to the Philippian believers that Paul's imprisonment in Rome has severely blunted the work of the gospel. At this point in his letter, Paul sets out to reassure his readers that is not the case. Many of the praetorian guard are now in contact with the gospel, v13, and local believers are encouraged and are redoubling their efforts to communicate the gospel without fear, v14. Sadly, there is some opposition to Paul within the local Christian community, v15-18b. Paul has always had his opponents, and it seems some of these are present in Rome, yet even here there is a positive outcome. They may be witnessing the gospel out of impure motives, but none-the-less, "Christ is preached."

##### Issues

i] Context: See 1:1-11. In Romans and 2 Corinthians Paul, gives a short account of his present circumstances, although this is toward the end of the letters. Here in Philippians 1:12-26, Paul gives a detailed account of his circumstances before commencing the letter / speech proper. It probably serves as an encouragement to the Philippians, assuring them that things are not as bad as they may seem from a distance.

ii] Background: See 1:1-11.

iii] Structure: *Paul's description of his personal situation:*

The advance of the gospel, despite Paul's imprisonment, v12-14;

The advance of the gospel, despite opposition, v15-18b.

iv] Interpretation:

This passage evidences a particular focus on the communication of the gospel. On the one hand, from his cell Paul is communicating the gospel ("the kingdom of God is at hand"), the message of God's grace toward humanity in Christ. On the other hand, the local believers are communicating it with renewed vigour, encouraged by Paul's situation, and even Paul's opponents are communicating it.

Paul tells the Philippian believers that his opponents are communicating the gospel, not out of pure motives, but inevitably to accentuate his sufferings - "supposing that they will add weight to my chains." They may be preaching the gospel, but their end-purpose is a form of Christianity which Paul rejects. So, their evangelizing is probably not

increasing Paul's physical suffering, but his psychological suffering, the knowledge that those who follow their lead will be led to damnation. For the *Who*, see "Background", 1:1-11.

### Text - 1:12

Paul describes his difficulties: i) The gospel is proclaimed despite Paul's imprisonment, v12-14. The opening statement "now I want you to know" is used elsewhere in Paul's letters to indicate a new section, or more particularly here, the body of the letter, cf. 2Cor.1:8 and Gal.1:11. "Some may have intended to curtail his ministry with chains, but, in fact, his imprisonment has led both to the evangelization of pagans and to the edification of believers (leading in turn to even greater evangelism)", Silva.

**δε "now"** - but/and. Transitional, indicating a step in the argument, here the body of the letter.

**γινωσκειν [γινωσκω]** pres. inf. "**to know**" - [I WANT YOU] TO KNOW [BROTHERS]. The infinitive is best classified as complementary, but following a cognitive verb / desiring, it could be classified as introducing a dependent statement of perception.

**ὅτι "that"** - Introducing an object clause / dependent statement of perception expressing what Paul want's known. "I want you to know, brothers, *contrary to all that might be expected*, what has happened ....", Barclay

**τα "[what]"** - THE THINGS [CONCERNING ME HAVE COME EVEN MORE INTO A PROGRESS OF THE GOSPEL]. The article serves as a nominalizer turning the prepositional phrase, "concerning me", into a substantive, subject of the verb "has come."

**κατ [κατα]** + acc. "-" - CONCERNING. Expressing reference / respect; "that the things with respect to me."

**μαλλον** adv. "**actually**" - Here with an elative / intensive sense, "has really served", ESV, rather than comparative.

**εληλυθεν [ερχομαι]** perf. "**served**" - HAVE COME. The perfect expresses a state of affairs. Divine action may be implied by the impersonal nature of this verb. "Turned out to the advance of the gospel", Phillips.

**εις "to"** - Here serving to express purpose / end view, or better result; "what has happened has resulted in the progress of the gospel", Barclay.

**του ευαγγελιου [ον]** gen. "**[advance] the gospel**" - [PROGRESS, ADVANCE] OF THE GOSPEL. The genitive can be treated as adjectival, limiting by describing or specifying "the progress" in mind, but it is usually taken as verbal, objective; "what has happened to me has helped to spread the good news", CEV.

### v13

Paul's imprisonment has resulted in many of the pretorian guard / cohorts stationed in Rome, numbering some 9,000 men, and serving officials in Rome, coming to know of the circumstances and reasons for his incarceration. "I want to report to you, friends, that my imprisonment here has had the opposite of its intended effect. Instead of being squelched, the Message has actually prospered. All the soldiers here, everyone else too, found out that I'm in jail because of this Messiah. *That piqued their curiosity, and now they've learned all about him*", Peterson.

**ὥστε** + inf. "**as a result [it has become]**" - SO THAT [THE BONDS OF ME IN CHRIST TO HAVE BECOME MANIFEST]. This construction, **ὥστε** + the infinitive **γενεσθαι**, "to have become", serves to form a consecutive clause expressing result; "what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel so that it has become known .....", ESV.

**εν** + dat. "**throughout**" - IN [ALL THE PRAETORIUM AND ALL THE REST]. Local, expressing sphere, "the sphere in which Paul's witness has been effective", O'Brien. The preposition applies to the datives "the praetorium" and "the rest / remaining", such that both groups are somehow linked. Paul's standing as a believer is now manifest to the pretorian guard in Rome and all the other prison officials.

**μου** gen. pro. "**that I am**" - [*that* THE CHAINS] OF ME. The genitive is adjectival, possessive.

**τους δεσμούς [ος]** "**in chains**" - THE CHAINS. Accusative subject of the infinitive "to have become."

**εν** + dat. "**for [Christ]**" - IN [CHRIST]. Here expressing cause / reason / ground; "because of Christ" = due to his being a believer. Bruce still thinks a locative sense / incorporative union is present, "his life in Christ .... sharing in the sufferings of Christ", so also O'Brien, so giving the sense "my bonds have become manifest-in-Christ", "become known / come to light in Christ."

### v14

It seems that Paul's imprisonment has become a talking point in Rome and this has given the Christian community the confidence to explain the gospel to their pagan neighbours. "The *chains* which have resulted in Christ's becoming known among his captors, have also served as the immediate cause of newfound boldness among the brothers and sisters in Rome", Fee.

**και** "**and**" - AND. Adjunctive; "and also, or consecutive, *and as a result*, most of the brethren ..... *are* even more so to dare ..." The construction **ὥστε** + inf. is picked up again from v13, here with the infinitive **τολμαν**, "to dare"

τοῖς δεσμοῖς [ος] dat. "**because of my chains**" - [MOST OF THE BROTHERS IN *the* LORD HAVING BECOME CONFIDENT] TO THE CHAINS [OF ME]. The dative is adverbial, reference, "with respect to my bonds", or causal, "because of my bonds", or instrumental, "by means of my bonds."

πλειονας adj. "**most**" - Accusative subject of the infinitive "to dare."

των αδελφων [ος] gen. "**of the brothers and sisters**" - OF THE BROTHERS. The genitive is adjectival, partitive. Many translations, as NIV, do not link the following Gk. εν κυριω, "in *the* Lord", with "the brothers", but with the participle "having become confident." A local εν expressing incorporative union is very strong in the NT, but "in *the* Lord" can also be an identifier of association, virtually adjectival, so "brothers in *the* Lord" = "Christian brothers", Moule, so Bruce. "Fellow Christians", NEB.

πεποιθοντας [πειθω] perf. part. "**have become confident**" - HAVING BECOME CONFIDENT, PERSUADED. The participle is best treated as adjectival, attributive, limiting "Christian brothers"; "who have been encouraged by my bonds." "Most of the Lord's followers have become brave and are fearlessly telling the message", CEV.

περισσοτεως adv. "**[dare] all the more**" - *are* MORE READILY [TO DARE]. Comparative adverb modifying the infinitive "to dare."

λαλειν [λαλω] pres. inf. "**to proclaim**" - TO SPEAK [THE WORD FEARLESSLY]. Variant "to speak the word of God fearlessly", NEB, but probably not original. The infinitive is complementary, completing the sense of the verb "to dare." At a stretch it could be classified as introducing a dependent statement of perception expressing what is dared, namely, "to communicate the gospel fearlessly." "Boldly proclaiming the word of God", Phillips.

## v15

ii] The advance of the gospel despite opposition to Paul, v15-18b. These opponents of Paul are not easily identified. They are obviously believers, not unbelieving Jews. Some have suggested that they are leaders in the church who have grown accustomed to the perks of their office and feel somewhat threatened by Paul's circumstances, his Christ-like suffering. Yet, it is more than likely that they are Paul's old enemy, the members of the circumcision party, law-bound nomists. That Paul doesn't mention their heretical teachings here is not a sound argument for proposing that they are not heretical, only anti-Pauline. See "Background" 1:1-11.

In comparing his friends and enemies, v15-17, Paul uses a chiasmic structure:

- envy and rivalry
- goodwill
- love

selfish ambition

και ... και "it is true that" - AND. At least the first, if not both of these conjunctions, exhibit "emphatic force", Silva; "indeed". "Some indeed preach Christ from envy and rivalry", ESV.

μεν ..... δε "..... but .." - *on the one hand*, [SOME PROCLAIM CHRIST AND = INDEED BECAUSE OF ENVY AND STRIVE], BUT *on the other hand*, [SOME AND = INDEED BECAUSE OF GOOD INTENTION]. Adversative comparative construction.

τινες pro. "some" - "Certain" of the "most of the brothers" = "some of the brothers."

κηρυσσουσιν [κηρυσσω] pres. "preach [Christ]" - The word is commonly used in the NT of preaching the gospel. The accusative "Christ" is most likely an accusative of respect; "some preach *the gospel concerning / about* Christ."

δια + acc. "out of [..... others] out of" - BECAUSE OF. Expressing cause, "because of", or basis, "from the motives of envy and rivalry", NAB. "Some .... proclaim Christ in a jealous and quarrelsome spirit", REB; such a description could well apply to the judaizers / members of the circumcision party.

ευδοκιαν [α] "goodwill" - Referring to the others who witness / preach Christ out of the right motive; "the right intention", JB.

## v16

"Brotherly love" is the driving motivation of those who preach the gospel about Jesus Christ out of "goodwill" for Paul.

μεν ..... δε "the latter ..... the former ...." - [ONES = THESE] *on the one hand* [OUT OF LOVE KNOWING THAT I AM APPOINTED FOR A DEFENCE OF THE GOSPEL] (v17) BUT *on the other hand* [*those other* ONES ....]. Adversative comparative construction covering v16-17.

οί "-" - THE ONES. Used instead of a 3rd. pers. pl. pronoun.

εξ [εκ] + gen. "do so out of [love]" - FROM [LOVE]. Expressing source origin; "out of love *for me*", Phillips = a pure motive.

ειδοτες [ειδον] perf. part. "knowing" - The participle is adverbial, best taken as causal; "because they know ...", TEV.

οτι "that" - Introducing a dependent statement of perception expressing what is known.

κειμαι [κειμαι] pres. "I am put here" - I AM PLACED, LAID DOWN, SET, RECLINE / VALID FOR, APPOINTED, CHOSEN. The first meaning, "I am put here *in prison*" is followed by most translations, but the figurative meaning, "to be appointed or destined for something", BDAG, is adopted by some, "God has given me the work of defending the gospel", TEV. Either way, the agent is presumably God.

εις + acc. "**for**" - [I AM PLACED *HERE*] TO/FOR [A DEFENCE]. The preposition here expresses purpose. The **απολογιαν**, "defence", *apologetic*, in mind is unclear. Bruce suggests that this proving that the gospel is right is the opportunity Paul will soon have to explain the gospel before Caesar's tribunal. "Paul's goal was not a defence of himself to protect his life, but a defence of the gospel of Christ", Hanson.

**του ευαγγελιου [ον]** gen. "**of the gospel**" - The genitive is adjectival, usually treated as verbal, objective, but at a stretch it could be taken as attributed, "gospel defence."

### v17

"Partisan spirit" is the driving motivation of those who preach the gospel about Jesus Christ out of "rivalry" against Paul; they are seemingly happy to rub salt into his wounds.

**οἱ δε** "**the former**" - BUT *on the other hand, these other* ONES. The apodosis of the adversative comparative construction; see **μεν ... δε**, v16.

**τον Χριστον [ος]** acc. "**[preach] Christ**" - Accusative of reference / respect; "others proclaim *the gospel about* Christ."

**εξ [εκ]** + gen. "**out of**" - Expressing source / origin.

**επιθειας [α]** "**selfish ambition**" - RIVALRY [NOT PURELY]. The word is used of purchasing favour, or promotion, by gifts, so gaining an official position to use for one's own selfish ends: "self-seeking"; "selfish ambition", ESV; "from mixed motives", NEB; "jealous of us", CEV. To help with meaning Paul adds **ουχ ἄγνως**, "not purely / sincerely" This qualification helps us understand what Paul means by **επιθειας**; "they preach in a partisan spirit", Phillips. As already indicated, it is likely that they are nomist believers. They preach the cross of Christ, grace through faith, but the problem lies with the little extra they tack on to the cross. They argue that the full appropriation of the promised blessings of the covenant requires submission to the Law, ie., FAITH = RIGHTEOUSNESS + **WORKS** = BLESSINGS (life). It's a bit like the old Billy Graham gospel tract which had an illustration of the cross serving like a bridge over the valley of hell, so allowing humanity to pass from the world to heaven. The little extra is that necessary added on piece that supposedly enables the cross to reach the other side of the valley. Of course, over the years Christians have thought up many necessary extras like law-obedience, eg., confirmation, believer's baptism, Spirit baptism, Sabbath worship, the sacraments, .....

**οιομενοι [οιομαι]** pres. mid. part. "**supposing**" - The participle is adverbial, best treated as causal, "because they think, intend, hope, imagine, consider ..... that ....."

**εγειρειν [εγειρω]** pres. inf. "**that they can stir up**" - TO RAISE UP. The infinitive introduces a dependent statement of perception expressing what they intend.

**θλιψιν [ις εως]** "**trouble**" - TROUBLE, DISTRESS, AFFLICTION = PRESSURE. Here with the sense "cause me to suffer more", TH. It is hard to imagine how, or even why, believers would purposely try to increase a person's physical suffering, irrespective of how much they may dislike the person, or disagree with their theological position. So, surely the suffering is psychological, possibly something like Peterson's paraphrase below. O'Brien is inclined to a more physical suffering driven by the motive of envy, so taking the view "that through their preaching they will stir up trouble for Paul as a prisoner."

**τοις δεσμοις [ος]** dat. "**while [I am] in chains**" - IN THE BONDS, CHAINS [OF ME]. At a structural level, we have a dative of indirect object; "intending to add pressure to my chains. With both "chains" and "trouble" taken figuratively we end up with something like "they see me as their competition, and so the worse it goes for me, the better - they think - for them", Peterson. The NIV has taken the dative as adverbial, temporal. It could also be instrumental, expressing means, "to make use of my imprisonment to stir up fresh trouble", NEB mg. The genitive **μου**, "my", is of course possessive.

## **v18a, b**

Whatever the motive of friend and foe, the gospel is preached and Paul rejoices. The twin statements of joy are quite forceful and have prompted difficulties with paragraph division. Lightfoot sees them as a twin expression which "reflects the conflict in the Apostle's mind: he crushes the feeling of personal annoyance, which rises up at the thought of this unscrupulous antagonism." Yet, it seems likely that the first statement of joy serves as a concluding thought leading on to a new matter which also gives Paul cause to rejoice.

**τι γαρ** "**but what does it matter?**" - WHAT FOR? The conjunction **γαρ** is more transitional here than cause / reason, drifting toward inferential, "therefore". The interrogative pronoun + **γαρ** is elliptical (omission of words) and as O'Brien notes, serves as "a separate exclamation and question", the sense being "what does it matter?", "what are we to think?" "What then *shall I say about my troubles?*" Silva.

**πλην οτι** "**the important thing is that**" - ONLY THAT. Together **πλην**, used here as an adversative conjunction + **οτι**, serve to introduce a dependent statement of perception in response to a mused rhetorical question; "what is my considered opinion about all this? Only that ...."

**τροπω [ος]** dat. "**in [every] way**" - Adverbial, expressing manner.

ΕΙΤΕ .... ΕΙΤΕ "weather .... or" - EITHER .... OR. A disjunctive coordinative construction.

προφασει [ις εως] dat. "from false motives" - [WEATHER] IN PRETENCE [OR IN TRUTH]. Meaning an ostensible reason = a pretext. As with αληθεια, the dative is adverbial, expressing manner, "falsely" and "truthfully." Both words identify motives, not the content of what is preached. So JB, "dishonest motives" and the TEV "right motives."

καταγγελλεται [καταγγελλω] pres. mid./pas. "[Christ] is preached" - [CHRIST] IS ANNOUNCED, DECLARED, PREACHED, COMMUNICATED. "All that matters is that people are telling about Christ", CEV.

εν + dat. "because of [this]" - [AND] IN [THIS]. The preposition here expresses cause / reason, "because of this", as NIV. O'Brien notes that τουτω, "this", is neuter, so "because of this fact I rejoice."

χαιρω [χαιρω] pres. "I rejoice" - The present tense being durative / imperfective may give the meaning "I continue to rejoice."

## 1:18c-26

### 2. Paul's personal situation. 1:12-26

#### ii] Through Paul's personal difficulties Christ is glorified

##### Argument

Paul begins his letter to the Philippians with a thanksgiving and prayer for the church, 1:3-11. He then touches on his personal situation, 1:12-26. Having spoken about "the attitudes of others, both those who are for him and those who are against him, [Paul] now proceeds, with serene nobility, to speak of his reactions toward all of them", TH. The passage before us reminds us to let Christ be exalted, whether in our day-to-day living, or in the day of our dying.

##### Issues

i] Context: See 1:12-18b. As already noted, it seems likely that *ἀλλὰ καὶ*, "but and", v18b, serves to introduce a new paragraph, so Hawthorne, although the content of the new paragraph is clearly related to v12-18b.

ii] Background: See 1:1-11.

iii] Structure: *Paul's final vindication and his glorifying of Christ:*

Joy in the promise of salvation, v18c-20;

The threat of death holds no dread when hope is set on being with Christ, v21-24;

A word of encouragement in the hope of a positive outcome for Paul's imprisonment, v25-26.

iv] Interpretation:

As already noted, a highly personal statement, as found in 1:12-26, is unusual in Paul's letters. Some personal statements are found, but usually toward the end of the letter. Here in Philippians, we find "a remarkable passage in which the apostle lays his heart bare and reveals the deepest motives of his life", Silva. Paul's words are future-looking, a reflection of the expected outcome of his coming trial. Lurking behind his words is the fear of death, and this causes him to muse on which of the two would be better: death leading to life with Christ, "the better by far"; or life leading to an ongoing relationship his brothers and sisters. If the choice remains his, then he chooses to be with his brothers and sisters enabling his continued ministry in the gospel. Yet, Paul's outlook is fundamentally positive, rather than negative, so instead of death he expects vindication for himself and the gospel, so leading of to a future visit with the Philippian believers.

v] Homiletics: *To live is Christ.*

As a young minister, I was visiting a nursing home and a beautiful little lady told me that she just wanted to die. It was the first time someone had said this to me and I didn't know what to say.

It's not unusual for elderly brothers and sisters in Christ, especially if bedridden in a nursing home, to feel that it is time to be with the Lord. It's a common feeling with those who have fought the good fight and now look toward their eternal reward. As we get older, we may express the same desire. The struggle of old age can be like that. We find ourselves confined to our bed, and in this condition, it is "better by far" to "depart and be with Christ", for glory awaits us there. No longer restricted by our body, no longer struggling for each gulp of air, no longer bowed by the limitations of the flesh. The day may come when we will desire such freedom, for then death will be "gain."

Yet, there is value in the continued struggle. Of course, that's easy for us to say if we have good health, but obviously not so easy if life has become a little tedious. It had obviously become tedious for Paul as he struggled to survive the daily drudgery of prison. Yet, whether it is easy or difficult to continue in the struggle of life, it is often more valuable to remain. The apostle defines this value simply:

- To learn courage in the midst of life's difficulties, rather than be overcome by fear and let the Lord down, v19-20.
- To give fruitful labour for the building up of the kingdom of God, rather than seek the easy path of self-gratification, v21-24.
- To advance the knowledge of our brothers and sisters in Christ and so enhance their joy in believing, v25-26.

In our journey through this *shadow land*, may life for us be Christ, and death be gain.

### **Text - 1:18c**

Paul's dilemma, v18:c -26: i] Paul is sure that he will be delivered from his present difficulties, 1:18d-20. Paul knows that the prayers of the church and the ministry of the Holy Spirit will support him in this difficult time. He believes he will stand firm, courageous to the end. Thus, Christ will be honoured, either by his life or by his death. He actually uses the word "deliverance", but does he believe that the prayers of the church will gain his release from prison? It is likely that "deliverance" here has an eternal sense. Paul knows that all things will ultimately work for God's good and therefore his good. Of one thing he is sure, that Christ will be exalted through the situation he now faces, whether it leads to his release, or his execution. The one element he needs in either situation is

"courage", a courage instilled in him through the ministry of the Holy Spirit and bolstered by the prayers of the church. Thus, he will not be "ashamed"; he will not let Jesus down. Paul knows that Christ will never be put to shame, but rather exalted, and this whether his situation will lead to death, or ongoing life.

**αλλα και** "Yes" - BUT ALSO. The conjunction **αλλα** is not adversative here, but climactic. Paul has just stated that he rejoices, whether the situation is evil or good, because Christ is preached in both situations. He now reinforces his state of joy with a "not only so, but I will rejoice."

**χαρησομαι [χαιρω]** fut. pas. "**I will continue to rejoice**" - I WILL REJOICE. Usually treated as a durative future, as NIV.

## v19

**γαρ** "for" - for. Introducing a causal clause explaining why Paul rejoices.

**οτι** "[I know] that" - [I KNOW] THAT [THIS TO ME WILL TURN OUT FOR MY DELIVERANCE]. Introducing an object clause / dependent statement of perception expressing what Paul knows.

**δια** + gen. "**through**" - THROUGH, BY MEANS OF [THE PRAYERS OF YOU AND]. Instrumental; expressing means.

**επιχορηγιας [α]** "**help given**" - *the* SUPPLY, PROVISION. "Resources", Phillips.

**του πνευματος [α]** "**by the Spirit**" - OF THE SPIRIT. Is this a subjective or objective genitive? i) Objective = "their prayer will help to supply the Spirit", Varner; "the Spirit of Jesus Christ is given me for support", NEB, Williams, Moffatt, ... ii) Subjective = the Spirit does the giving, so NIV, TEV, CEV, ... "the Spirit of Jesus Christ supplies me with all I need", NEB, alt. Possibly descriptive, idiomatic / source, where the "bountiful supply" is sourced from "the Spirit / the Holy Spirit" - the resource being divine in origin.

**Ιησου Χριστου [ος]** gen. "**of Jesus Christ**" - This second genitive is adjectival, of definition, appositional, "the Spirit who is Jesus Christ" / expegetic, but possibly source / origin, "the Spirit comes from Jesus Christ", Varner. Which Spirit? The Spirit who is one with Christ Jesus, the divine Spirit.

**τουτο** pro. "**what has happened**" - THIS. "This state of things, these perplexities and annoyances", Lightfoot. The recent trial, but also possibly the dangerous future.

**μοι** dat. pro. "**to me**" - TO ME. Dative of interest, advantage, "for me."

**αποβησεται [αποβαινω]** fut. mid. "**will turn out**" - will go away, depart. Producing the sense will "result in", "end in" and so + **εις** = "lead to."

**σωτηριαν [α]** "**deliverance**" - SALVATION, DELIVERANCE. Personal safety is possibly Paul's intention here and in particular, his release from prison; "the outcome of this, I know, will be my release", Moffatt. If this is the sense then it

is modified by Paul's "hope", v20, which hope rests on God's will. The other possibility is that the trial he is undergoing will serve an eternal end: i] his shaping toward eternity, "spiritual welfare", Williams; ii] Paul's future eschatological redemption.

## v20

**κατα** + acc. "-" - ACCORDING TO. Expressing a standard; "according to / in accord with my eager expectation and hope." This phrase modifies "what has happened to me will turn out for my deliverance", v19, which deliverance is "in accord with", possibly even "as a result of / on the basis of" "my expectation and hope."

**την αποκαραδοκιαν [α]** "**eagerly expect**" - THE EAGER EXPECTATION, EARNEST DESIRE. With focused attention, deep desire for ... Used in a typical Old Testament sense of a sure confidence that God will act for the welfare of his people according to his revealed word / covenant promises.

**ελπιδα [ις ιδος]** "**hope**" - [AND] HOPE [OF ME]. "Expectation and hope" is probably a hendiadys serving to express Paul's conviction that he will be vindicated; "confident hope", REB / "eagerly expectant as I am", Cassirer.

**οτι "that"** - Introducing an object clause / dependent statement of perception expressing the content of Paul's "confident hope."

**εν ουδενι "in no way"** - IN NOTHING. Adverbial use of the preposition, modal, expressing manner, "I will not be put to shame", NAB, or temporal, "I will never", Barclay.

**αισχυνησομαι [αισχυνω]** fut. pas. "**I will [in no way] be ashamed**" - I WILL BE PUT TO SHAME, DISGRACED. "Disgraced" in regard the realization of the promises of God as they pertain to Paul. The word is set to oppose **παση παρρησια**, "all boldness, courage, confidence / frankness, plainness" with the adversative **αλλα** "but"; "that I shall never fail in my duty, but ..... I shall be full of courage", TEV. The "courage" is probably a boldness of speech, so "frankness". The preposition **εν**, "in [all boldness]", is adverbial, modal / manner. "In a totally free and open way", Reumann.

**αλλ [αλλα]** "**but**" - Strong adversative standing in a counterpoint construction.

**ως .... και ....** "**[now] as [always]**" - [IN ALL COURAGE] AS [ALWAYS] AND [NOW]. "As always so now." Introducing a comparison.

**μεγαλυνθησεται [μεγαλυνω]** fut. pas. "**will be exalted**" - [CHRIST] WILL BE MAGNIFIED, ENLARGED, LENGTHENED, INCREASED. Although passive, an active causative translation makes better sense; "bring honour to Christ", CEV, cf., 2Cor.4:10, 1Cor.6:20. Whatever happens to him, Paul wants Christ magnified, rather than himself.

εἰν + dat. "**in [my body]**" - IN [THE BODY OF ME]. local, expressing space, metaphorical; simply, "in me", REB, "in my person", although Varner suggests an instrumental sense, expressing means, "Christ will be magnified with my body, whether it is through life or death", cf., 1Cor.6:20, 2Cor.4:10.

εἴτε ..... εἴτε "**whether ..... or .....**" - EITHER [THROUGH LIFE] OR [THROUGH DEATH]. A disjunctive correlative construction.

διὰ + gen. "**by**" - THROUGH, BY MEANS OF. Instrumental, expressing means. "Either through living or through dying", Berkeley / "weather I live or die", TEV.

## v21

ii] Paul reflects on the options that are coming his way, whether he will continue to live, or to die, and which of these options is better, v21-24. To die is better for Paul, but to live gives the opportunity of fruitful labour, and this is far better for the church. For Paul, life is about "fruitful labour." It gives us the opportunity of service to Christ on earth, which service prepares us for our reign with Christ in eternity. Yet, at the same time, in the midst of the difficulties of life, Paul is very aware of the advantage that comes when we "depart and be with Christ." Seen in these terms, death is certainly a beautiful option. Paul's words do not imply that we have some pre-resurrection existence with Christ prior to the resurrection of our bodies in the last day. It just illustrates the immediacy of eternal life for a believer. Time no longer has hold over us. As Jesus said to the thief on the cross, "this evening you will be with me in Paradise." In fact, even now God has "seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus", Eph.2:6. Yet, Paul knows well that "it is more necessary for you that I remain." It might be better for Paul to go to be with the Lord, but it is not better for the church. God's people need to be built up and an apostle like Paul is not easily replaced. In fact, it is true of anyone who seeks to serve the people of God; it is better to stay and serve. "Living to me means simply 'Christ', and if I die I should merely gain more of him", Phillips.

γὰρ "**for**" - More explanatory than causal. Christ is exalted in either Paul's living or his dying, v20, "so for me ....."

ἐμοὶ dat. pro. "**to me**" - Emphatic by position, dative of interest, advantage, or ethical, so Wallace, or reference / respect, so Varner; "to me, whatever it may be for others, ...." Reumann.

το ζῆν [ζῶω] pres. inf. "**to live**" - TO LIVE. Articular infinitive serving as the subject of the sentence. The tense is durative, expressing continuation, so "live" in the sense of living life, "to continue to live."

Χριστός [οὐς] "**is Christ**" - CHRIST. Predicate nominative of an assumed verb to-be, understood as "life means Christ", Bruce; "I live only to serve him, only to commune with him, I have no conception of life apart from him", Bengel.

το αποθαινειν [αποθνησκω] aor. inf. "to die [is gain]" - [AND] TO DIE [GAIN]. The infinitive as for "to live." The tense indicating a single action, "die" as in suffering death. Death has profit / advantage because then we will be eternally one with Christ. Again, the verb to-be is usually supplied, and the sense taken as "death means gain." Presumably the gain is for Paul, but possibly the gospel. "I will gain even more", CEV.

## v22

δε "-" - but/and. Transitional, indicating a step in the argument, here to a development of v21; "but then, if it is to be life", Moffatt.

ει "if" - IF, *as is the case*, [this means i am TO LIVE IN FLESH, then THIS FOR ME will mean FRUIT]. Introducing a conditional clause, 1st class, where the proposed condition is assumed to be true. The NIV divides the apodosis to form a new sentence; "Yet what shall .....". The usual indicative verb is missing and so "I am" is often supplied, as NIV. It is possible that the construction is simply expressing indecision. Lightfoot's suggestion that the form implies interrogation. Literally, "what if to live in the flesh is fruit of my work to me? What I shall choose I know not." So, something like "there is certainly a great advantage in death. Yet, what if there is still much I can do for the Lord? What then is best?" The final clause is usually treated as the result of the life / death dilemma; "I'm unsure."

το ζην [ζωω] pres. inf. "to go on living" - TO LIVE. The articular infinitive serves as a substantive, subject of the sentence.

εν + dat. "in [the body]" - IN [THE FLESH]. Local, expressing sphere. Living in the flesh / body expresses natural life, as opposed to spiritual / heavenly / eternal life. "Flesh", often with a negative connotation, is neutral here.

τουτο pro. "this will mean" - THIS. Referencing the articular infinitive, neut. sing. nom., ie., "to live", so "this ongoing life in the flesh." Probably introducing the apodosis of the conditional clause, so "then this." Again, there seems to be an ellipsis requiring a verb, as NIV, "will mean"; "then I will have the chance to go on doing (= "this" = to go on living in the body) useful work", Barclay.

εργου [ου] gen. "[fruitful] labour" - FRUIT [OF LABOUR]. The genitive is adjectival, attributed, so Wallace and BDF, as NIV, although Zerwick suggests it is epexegetical. Referring to the souls gathered by his missionary work.

μοι dat. pro. "for me" - Dative of interest, advantage, "this means there is fruitful missionary work for me still to do", or dative of possession, "the fruit of my labour", AV.

και "yet" - AND. Somewhat adversative and serving to introduce a new sentence in the form of an abrupt indirect question, as NIV.

**αἰρησομαι [αἶρω]** fut. "**[what] shall I choose**" - [WHAT] I WILL CHOOSE. Not that Paul could choose either life or death; this lies in the will of God. The dilemma lies in not knowing which is for the best.

**ου γνωριζω** pres. "**I do not know**" - I DO NOT DECLARE, MAKE KNOWN / UNDERSTAND, KNOW. In New Testament Greek the word usually means "make known", but the less common "understand" is best here. "I am not aware of God's will on this matter"; "I cannot tell", Goodspeed.

## v23

**δε** "-" - BUT/AND. Transitional. Zerwick suggests the conjunction is explanatory here, "that is ..."

**συνεχομαι [συνεχω]** pres. pas. "**I am torn**" - I AM HEMMED IN, CONSTRAINED, HARD-PRESSED / TORN APART, PULLED. Note the two possible meanings which, of course, are reflected in the different translations offered for this verse. We might say something like "I am drawn between the advantages of both life and death and find it difficult to know where the advantage lies." "I am in a dilemma", Moffatt.

**εκ** + gen. "**between [the two]**" - FROM [THE TWO *ideas*]. The preposition here possibly expresses cause, "I am torn because of the two options, either life or death, namely desiring to depart .....v23b, but [desiring] to remain ..... v24."

**εχων [εχω]** part. "-" - HAVING [THE DESIRE]. The participle is adverbial, probably causal. It agrees with the nominative "I" of "I am torn"; "I am torn ..... because [on the one hand] I have the desire to depart ..... **δε** "but [on the other hand] [I have the desire] to remain in the flesh which is more necessary for your sake."

**εις το αναλυσαι [αναλυω]** aor. inf. "**to depart**" - TO BREAK CAMP, PACK UP AND MOVE ON, DEPART. Used literally, or as here, figuratively of death. This construction usually introduces a purpose clause, "in order to depart", but more likely just an object clause / dependent statement of perception expressing what Paul desires. So also the infinitive of the verb to-be; "I desire to leave this life and [to] be with Christ", TEV. It is interesting how Paul maintains both the immediacy of union with Christ upon death, as here, but at the same time he can speak of sleeping in Christ as he awaits the day of resurrection. Again, we see how death transcends time.

**ειναι [ειμι]** pres. inf. "**to be**" - The infinitive as with "to depart."

**συν** + dat. "**with [Christ]**" - Expressing accompaniment / association.

**πολλω μαλλον κρεισσον** "**which is better by far**" - [FOR *this seems*] MUCH MUCH BETTER. A positive, comparative, superlative, construction. A very interesting triple comparative. "A better thing, much more than a better thing", Knox.

v24

δε **"but"** - BUT/AND. Transitional, indicating a step to a contrasting position; "nevertheless", AV.

αναγκαϊοτερον [αναγκαϊος] comp. adj. **"more necessary"** - [TO REMAIN IN THE FLESH *is*] MORE NECESSARY. The comparative adjective carries the verbal sense of this clause / verse, with the infinitive serving as its subject; "to remain *is* more necessary." "For your sake the greater need is ...", REB.

δια + acc. **"for [you]"** - BECAUSE OF, ON ACCOUNT OF [YOU]. Causal.

επιμενειν [επιμενω] pres. inf. **"that I remain"** - TO REMAIN, ABIDE (IN THE SENSE OF CONTINUE TO ABIDE IN THE BODY). The infinitive serves as the subject of an assumed verb to-be. The sense is: remain in this present life. "I should stay here on earth", Phillips.

εν + dat. **"in [the body]"** - IN. Local; expressing space, metaphorical. "To go on living in this world", Barclay.

v25

iii] Paul expects to live through the present difficulties and continue his missionary work, particularly as this relates to the Philippians, v25-26. Given that it is better to live and serve, Paul is convinced that he will visit the Philippians again. When Paul says "I will remain", he is saying he knows that God's intention for him is that he will live longer so that he may continue in his labour for Christ. Of course, there is a purpose for his remaining, and that is "your happy furtherance in the faith." Paul's hope is that he might labour for a growing understanding of divine truth in his new churches. This would naturally be accompanied by joy, the fruit of knowing Christ. So he adds, "your glorying in Christ will abound."

πειθοως [πειθω] perf. part. **"convinced of [this]"** - HAVING BEEN PERSUADED OF. Genitive absolute participle, usually forming a temporal clause, but here probably causal. Either, i] Paul is confidently persuaded that his life will be spared and that he will continue to minister to the church, "I am sure I shall remain", REB; or ii] Paul is sure that his view expressed in v24 is the most advantageous, "I am convinced of this and I know ..", Weymouth.

τουτο pro. **"this"** - Referring back to v24, that it is more needful to remain in the body.

οιδα perf. **"I know"** - I KNOW. "Know" in the sense of personal conviction.

οτι **"that"** - THAT. Introducing an object clause / dependent statement of perception expressing what Paul knows.

παραμενω fut. **"I will continue"** - [I WILL REMAIN AND] I WILL CONTINUE WITH. "I shall stay on and serve you all", Goodspeed.

ὑμιν dat. pro. "[all of] you" - YOU [ALL]. Dative of direct object after the **παρα** prefix verb "to continue with."

εις + acc. "for" - INTO. Here adverbial, consecutive, expressing result; "for your progress and joy, but possibly purpose, "to promote your advancement and enjoyment of the faith", Berkeley.

την ὑμων προκοπην και χαραν "your progress and joy" - THE PROGRESS AND JOY OF YOU. These two nouns joined by **και**, given that only one article is provided, possibly convey a single idea, qualifying both "your" and "faith", ie. a hendiadys; "happy furtherance", Knox / "your joyful progress", Zerwick.

της πιστεως [ις] gen. "in the faith" - OF THE FAITH. There are different ways to understand this genitive.

- "The happy furtherance *of your life* of faith", adjectival genitive, of definition; "your growth and joy, a life of trusting Jesus";
- "The happy furtherance of your life that develops from your faith", genitive of source;
- "Your happy furtherance in the faith", objective genitive - "faith" in the sense of "Christian truth", as NIV.

The second option is usually favoured, ie., Paul knows that staying is the best, as it enables him to build up the church with the knowledge of Christ. Yet, the third option, a genitive of source, seems best, ie., their progress and joy in the Christian life comes from / derives from their faith, a) their belief, confident trust / reliance on Christ, or b) their body of belief, that which is believed = the teachings of Paul.

## v26

ινα + subj. "so that" - THAT [THE BOAST OF YOU MAY ABOUT IN CHRIST JESUS IN ME]. Introducing a purpose clause, as NIV, "in order that", although Varner suggests it is consecutive, expressing result, "with the result that ..." A translation, "so that", leaves the exact translation open.

δια + gen. "through [my being]" - THROUGH [MY PRESENCE AGAIN]. Here "through in time", so temporal: "when I come again to visit you", Knox.

προς "with [you]" - TO, TOWARD [YOU]. Here expressing association; "in company with."

το καυχημα "[your] joy" - THE PRIDE, BOAST. Here "ground for boasting", so something to exalt about.

εν Χριστω Ιησου εν εμοι "in Christ Jesus [will overflow] on account of me" - IN CHRIST JESUS IN ME. The two uses of the preposition **εν** are different. The first is local, expressing incorporative union, while the second is possibly causal, "because of me", or reference / respect, "with respect to me", as NIV, or even benefit, "for me." It is unclear whether Paul, or Christ, is "the ground of

boasting" and so translators follow both possibilities. Probably, "that you may have much more to boast about in Christ Jesus through my presence with you again", cf., JB, RSV, NRSV, Moffatt, ... "I want to visit you again and so to give you the opportunity to have still more Christian pride in me", Barclay.

περισσευη [περισσευω] "**will overflow**" - ABOUND. The ground for boasting will overflow ..... you will have much more to exalt about.

## 1:27-30

### The proposition

#### Struggle together for the truth of the gospel

#### Argument

After Paul details his personal circumstances as a prisoner, 1:12-26, he moves on to outline his thesis about a citizenship which is worthy of the gospel, which reflects a higher calling, a citizenship which is focused on standing together for the truth of the gospel. He calls on his readers to "stand fast" together for the gospel, striving against all opponents, v28, through suffering v29, and conflict, v30.

#### Issues

i] Context: See 1:1-11. The move to a new section of the letter is marked by **μὲν**, "only *one thing*", one thing the Philippians must not fail to do: conduct themselves "worthy of the gospel." This one thing is Paul's proposition / thesis which is then developed in chapters 2 and 3.

ii] Background: See 1:1-11.

iii] Structure: *Struggle together for the truth of the gospel*:

Good citizens, with a higher allegiance, are called to redouble their efforts:

Struggle "side by side on behalf of the faith proclaimed by the gospel", Cassirer, v27-28;

Suffering is an integral part of a believer's struggle, v29-30

iv] Interpretation:

Paul's driving concern, expressed in this short passage, is that the Philippians' grow in steadfastness and unity in the face of trouble. At this point, Paul moves from narrative to imperative; his Philippian friends "must conduct their lives in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ ..... so contending together with one accord for the faith of the gospel." The imperative is singular in focus; the Philippians are to strive for the truth of the gospel in good times and bad.

In this propositional statement, Paul mentions the "struggle" facing the Philippians, of those who "oppose" and cause them to "suffer". Martin argues that the problem facing the Philippians is secular; they face pagan opposition. Given the strength of Paul's *refutatio*, refutation, in chapter 3, it seems likely that the troublemakers in Rome and Philippi are believers,

rather than pagans. The struggle is most likely with members of the circumcision party; See "Background", 1:1-11.

v] Homiletics: *True greatness.*



St. James, Byaburra, a little church I once attended, but now closed and sold off. These days, many little country churches are being closed and sold off. Congregations are dwindling and their once loved church buildings end up on the real estate market. This is particularly so of churches that are village-based rather than regional. With the reduction in

attenders, the little local church struggles to survive. The only positive side to all this is that old churches make for unique homes.

In response to the fear of congregational death, we amalgamate rather than happily sit with Jesus and his two or three disciples. We forget that over the last two thousand years, church buildings have regularly been full, empty, full and now empty again.

From his prison in Rome, Paul reminds us of two truths that are totally unrelated to congregational size:

1. Steadfast in the gospel. The Lord Jesus desires that the fellowship of believers will stand firm for gospel ministry and not end up debilitated by fear. The communication of the gospel to our local community must take pride of place in the life of a Christian congregation.

2. Steadfast in suffering. Every Christian fellowship faces a Christ-like struggle of self-denial, hardship and even persecution. This suffering comes through our conflict with the "spiritual powers in heavenly places." Such suffering is because of our association with Jesus and is common to the Christian walk.

Two or three believers gathered in their local church can be a powerful witness for the gospel in difficult times. Size is no gauge of success.

### **Text - 1:27.**

Unity and steadfastness in Christ: i] Paul begins this passage with an exhortation, v27-28. Together, and as individuals, the Philippians must behave in a worthy manner within society (ie., be good citizens). Despite the difficult circumstances they face they must remain steadfast, united and unmoved for the

truth of the gospel. This behaviour will expose the false motives and the inevitable end of those set on troubling the church.

**μονον** adv "**whatever happens**" - ONLY. Here transitional, serving to draw a particular conclusion from the previous passage; "one thing I do want to say to you", Barclay.

**πολιτευεσθε [πολιτευω]** imp. "**conduct yourselves**" - PERFORM DUTIES AS CITIZENS. The word particularly applies to the duties and obligations of Roman citizens. Philippi was a Roman colony and therefore, the word had weight for Paul's readers. Yet, for believers, citizenship is heavenly and carries its own duties and obligations, so Paul is probably using the word metaphorically rather than of literally, ie., of being good Roman citizens. "Let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel", ESV.

**αξιωσ** + gen. "**in a worthy manner**" - WORTHILY. Modal adverb, expressing manner.

**του ευαγγελιου [ον]** gen. "**of the gospel**" - OF THE MESSAGE. Genitive after the adverb "worthily of" which takes a genitive of persons +.

**του Χριστου [ος]** gen. "**of Christ**" - The genitive is usually classified as verbal, either objective, "about Christ", or subjective, "from Christ", although it could be classified as exegetical, limiting "gospel / important news" by specifying it, a gospel "which concerns the person and work of Jesus Christ", or idiomatic / source, "from Christ"; "the good news about Christ", CEV.

**ινα** + subj. "**then**" - THAT, [WHETHER HAVING COME AND HAVING SEEN YOU OR BEING ABSENT, I MAY HEAR]. Introducing a consecutive clause expressing consequence / result / hypothetical result, "then ..... I will know that you stand ....", or possibly a purpose clause, "in order that"; "so that ... I may know that you are standing fast", Phillips.

**ειτε .... ειτε** "**whether ..... or**" - EITHER .... OR. Forming an disjunctive coordinative construction here supported by three conditional adverbial participles, **ελθων**, "having come", **ιδων**, "having seen", **απων**, "being absent."

**ακουω** pres. subj. "**only hear**" - I MAY HEAR. The NIV, as with most translations, has linked this verb to the third participle in a group of three, "having come, having seen you, or being absent" to form the phrase "only hear about you in my absence." This then leaves the following clause without a verb, which must then be supplied, eg., "I will know." The sense of the three participles is clear without the verb "hear"; "in order that, whether I visit you or not, I may hear / know / learn of the news about you."

**τα** "-" - THE THINGS. The article serves as a nominalizer turning the prepositional construction "about you" into a substantive; "hear about the things concerning you."

περι + gen. "**about [you]**" - CONCERNING, ABOUT [YOU]. Reference; "concerning you." "The things about you" that Paul wants to hear is the "standing firm", so the phrase is often left out, "I will hear that you are standing fast", Barclay.

ὅτι "**I will know that**" - THAT. Here introducing an object clause / dependent statement of perception expressing what Paul hopes he will hear / learn of the Philippians; "that you are standing firm in one spirit / Spirit."

στηκετε [στηκω] pres. "**you stand firm**" - YOU ARE STANDING. "Hold your ground" (a military image), leading to the idea of firmness and uprightness.

εν̄ ενῑ πνευματῑ "**in one spirit**" - This prepositional phrase introduced by εν̄ is adverbial, expressing manner. Possibly referring to the Holy Spirit, but more likely "spirit" in the sense of the element of our being that is sensitive to God; "a united spirit", Phillips; "with one common purpose", TEV.

συναθλουντες [συναθλω] pres. part. "**contending / striving**" - WORKING TOGETHER WITH, STRUGGLING TOGETHER SIDE BY SIDE. The participle is adverbial, modal, expressing the manner in which the action of the verb "you are standing" is accomplished; "I will hear that you are standing fast, one is spirit and one in heart, one in your united contest for the faith of the gospel", Barclay.

μιᾱ ψυχη̄ [η] dat. "**as one man / together as one**" - [ONE] SOUL, SELF, INNER LIFE. Dative of direct object after the συν̄ prefix verb "to work together with", although Varner suggests it is instrumental, expressing means. Most likely in apposition to "one spirit". For Paul and his contemporaries, the soul was the psyche, the substance of a person, their being, and thus the source of their affections and passions. Its seat was a person's stomach, their loins. On the other hand, the "spirit" (not the Holy Spirit), if a distinction can be made, and often it can't, is a person's ideals, principles of a higher life, intuitive morality. As for the "heart", it was the source of intelligent thought, intellect, reason. So, Paul wants his readers to act with a focused ideal / purpose (spirit) and be united in their aims and objectives (soul); "one in spirit, one in mind", REB.

τη̄ πιστεῑ [ις̄ εως̄] dat. "**for the faith**" - IN THE FAITH. Probably a dative of interest, advantage, "for". "The faith", in the sense of teachings or truths, rather than "belief".

τοῡ ευαγγελιοῡ [ον] gen. "**of the gospel**" - OF THE MESSAGE, GOSPEL. If "faith" = "belief", then the genitive could be classified as verbal, objective, "the faith (in the sense of belief) in the gospel", or subjective, so Hawthorne, but better exegetical, "the faith *which is* the gospel", or attributive, "contending for gospel truth." Possibly even idiomatic / source, origin, "the faith *which is based on* the gospel", O'Brien.

v28

"Without being frightened." Against those hostile to the gospel, we must stand without fear. Such a stand evidences two things to those who resist the gospel: it is a sign of their inevitable destruction, and a sign of the salvation of those who believe.

Westcott suggests that v28-30 is an ellipsis and proposes that "what is for them a sign of perdition is your salvation ..." commences a parenthesis made up of 28b + 29, best arranged to follow 28a + 30. This reads well, but is accepted by few translators. Best to follow the NIV and start a new sentence at "this", although its antecedent is unclear.

**πυρομενοι [πυρω]** pas. part. "**frightened**" - [AND NOT] BEING TERRIFIED, STARTLED. The participle, as with "contending", is adverbial, modal, expressing the manner by which the verb "you are standing", v27, is accomplished. A hapax legomenon (once only use in the NT), often used to describe a startled horse. Paul probably has in mind the consequence of fear, namely being debilitated and therefore, wavering. We are always frightened, but don't always let fear get the better of us. "Without being frightened", without wavering "in any way", or literally "not anything." Not wavering from the obligations and responsibilities of a citizen of heaven.

**εν** + dat. "**in [any way]**" - IN [NOTHING]. Adverbial, modal, expressing manner; "in any form of intimidation."

**υπο** "**by**" - Here expressing agency.

**των αντικειμενων [αντικειμαι]** pres. mid. part. "**those who oppose you**" - THE ONE'S OPPOSING. The participle serves as a substantive. Possibly the judaizers (Jewish law-bound Christians who opposed Paul's "by faith alone" theology), or Jews, and / or local heathen opponents.

**ενδειξις [ις εως]** "**a sign**" - [WHICH IS] AN EVIDENCE, INDICATION, PROOF. Predicate nominative. Here, their firm resolve in the face of persecution serves as an evidence of the ultimate punishment of the persecutors under the hand of God, and of the salvation of believers; "this will prove to them", TEV.

**αυτοις** dat. pro. "**to them**" - Dative of interest, advantage; "which is for them a sign."

**απωλειας [α]** gen. "**that they will be destroyed**" - OF *the* = *their* DESTRUCTION, RUIN. The genitive is adjectival, attributive, limiting "sign"; "a sign to them of their doom." Varner classifies the genitive as verbal, objective.

**δε** "**but**" - BUT/AND. Transitional, indicating a step to a contrasting point.

**σωτηριας [α]** gen. "**that [you] will be saved**" - OF SALVATION [OF YOU]. The genitive, as for "of destruction", is adjectival, either attributive, limiting

"sign", or verbal objective. "Salvation" = "eschatological vindication, but possibly suffering now", Reumann.

**απο** + gen. "**from [God]**" - [AND THIS] FROM [GOD]. Expressing source / origin.

## v29

ii] The suffering presently faced by the Philippians is grounded in God's will, v29-30. Paul indicates that two things have been graciously given to us by God because of our association with Christ, they are salvation and suffering. The kingdom comes with glory and pain; such was the experience of Christ, the experience of Paul and the apostles, and now the experience of the Philippian believers.

**ὅτι** "**for**" - BECAUSE. Introducing a clause explaining why "that (this) is by God." The "that" being the standing firm and its sign value.

**το** "-" - THE [THE BENEFIT OF CHRIST WAS GIVEN TO YOU]. The article serves as a nominalizer turning the prepositional phrase "on behalf of Christ" into a substantive, subject of the verb "was given."

**εχαρισθη** [**χαριζομαι**] aor. pas. "**it has been granted**" - IT WAS GIVEN, GRANTED. Paul sees suffering as a high privilege indicating God's favour. The root sense of the verb is "grace". Presumably the agent of the gracious act is God, so "it has been granted by God."

**ὑμιν** dat. pro. "**to you**" - Dative of indirect object / interest, advantage.

**ὑπερ** + gen. "**on behalf of [Christ]**" - Expressing representation / advantage, benefit, "on behalf of Christ", Cassirer, but possibly somewhat causal, "because of your association with Jesus / union with Christ."

**το** ..... **πιστευειν** [**πιστευω**] pres. inf. "**to believe in [him]**" - [NOT ONLY] TO BELIEVE. This articular infinitive, as with **το** ... **πασχειν**, "to suffer", introduces a noun clause subject of the verb "was granted." The present tense indicates continuation rather than a once only act; a reliance upon / toward the person of Jesus. The gift is probably not faith itself, the capacity to believe, but that which faith (Christ's faithful act and our faith response) realizes, namely, salvation.

**εις** + acc. "**on / in [him]**" - INTO [HIM] A common expression used by Paul for belief in Christ; interchangeable with **εν**.

**αλλα** "**but**" - Strong adversative standing in a counterpoint construction.

**ὑπερ** + gen. "**for [him]**" - [AND = ALSO TO SUFFER] ON BEHALF OF [HIM]. Expressing representation / advantage, benefit.

v30

εχοντες [εχω] part. "since you are going through" - HAVING. The "you" of v29 is likely to be the assumed subject of this participial clause. The participle itself is adverbial, best treated as causal, expressing cause / reason, for "to suffer has been granted to you ..... because ....", as NIV "You have to fight the same battle as you once saw me fight, and which, as you hear, I am still fighting", Barclay.

τον αυτον "the same" - Accusative direct object of the participle "having". "With me", TEV. Share in the troubles associated with the gospel.

αγωνα [ων ωνος] "struggle" - A GLADIATORIAL, OR ATHLETIC CONTEST. Paul sees persecution in gladiatorial terms. He reminds them that when he was in Philippi, he too suffered persecution.

οινον pro. "that" - [YOU SAW] SUCH AS. This pronoun serves as the direct object of the verb "to see", "Which you saw in me."

εν + dat. "I still have / I had" - IN [ME]. Local, expressing space, metaphorical; "in my life."

## 2:1-4

### 3. Exhortations, 2:1-18

#### i] An exhortation to unity and steadfastness

##### Argument

Having outlined the central purpose of his letter, namely his call to the Philippians to struggle together for the truth of the gospel, 1:27-30, Paul goes on to encourage the Philippian believers to engage in a determined oneness of intent, 2:1-2, and this in humility, 2:3-4.

##### Issues

i] Context: See 1:1-11. We now come to the body of Paul's argument, the *probatio*, arguments in favour of his proposition, 2:1-30, followed by the negative side of the argument, the *refutatio*, a refutation of the stance adopted by the troublemakers in Rome and Philippi, 3:1-21. Paul has assured his readers that everything is going to work out well, but there is one particular issue that he would like to focus on with the Philippian believers. As for Paul in Rome, so also for the Philippians, both churches face pressures from within caused by "the mutilators of the flesh", 3:2, law-bound nomist believers. This, along with the everyday pressures from without, have the potential to damage the church. Paul does not want them to be "frightened in any way by those who oppose" them. So, in 2:1-18 Paul focuses on encouraging the Philippians to redouble their effort in their walk with Christ. This passage, entitled "An Exhortation to Steadfastness and Unity" by Fee, presents in three parts:

- Being concerned about the interests of others, v1-4;
- A description of Christ's conduct as a model of Christian humility, v5-11;
- A more general, concluding exhortation to Christian obedience, v12-18.

ii] Background: See 1:1-11.

iii] Structure: *Paul's appeal for a unified mind:*

A personal appeal; *Make my joy complete by being like-minded:*

The grounds for Paul's appeal, v1:

The essence of unity, v2;

The expression of unity, v3-4.

Verses 1-4 consist of one sentence in the Greek with the main verb, *πληρωσατε*, "make complete [my joy]" = "make me completely happy", TEV, v2a. The sentence consists of three strophes, the first a correlative

set of four **ει τις**, v1; the second is chiasmic, A, B, B<sup>1</sup>, A<sup>1</sup>, v2; and the third employs parallelism in a counterpoint construction, A, **μηδεν** ..., B, **αλλα** ..., A<sup>1</sup>, **μη** ..., B<sup>1</sup>, **αλλα** ..., v3-4.

iv] Interpretation:

This short passage reminds us that *Division is death* (a principle widely recognized by political parties, but regularly ignored!). In the previous sentence, 1:27-30, Paul sets the theme for his letter / sermon, calling on the Philippians to stand united for the gospel. Building on this theme Paul now calls for unity in the face of congregational division - unity through love is what enables a Christian community, 2:1-4. Paul opens by alluding to four experiences in the Christian life which serve to strengthen fellowship amongst believers, v1:

- Encouragement or comfort, possibly exhortation, which we experience in our Christian walk in union with Christ;
- The impelling love of the Holy Spirit, ie. the inward motivation of the Spirit enabling us to love one another;
- A bonding with the indwelling Spirit of Christ;
- A natural affection, mercy and tenderness toward others.

Paul then goes on to encourage the Philippians toward a mutual love that will fill him with joy. If the Philippians can be of the same mind together, that is, be concerned about the same things, if they can strive at mutual love and common purpose, then Paul will be filled with joy. Believers exhibit a common purpose when thoughts and endeavours are directed toward one thing - the cause of Christ, v2.

Paul will also be filled with joy if the Philippians can avoid acting "out of party spirit, or a cheap desire to boast." Believers are not immune from self-seeking egotism. Such must not exist in the Christian fellowship; better to develop a modest opinion of our own worth and see others as the excellent ones, v3. Paul will also be filled with joy if the Philippians look to each other's interests and not merely their own. Unselfish consideration toward others is the best formula, v4.

So, Paul proposes a singular focus, of living worthily of the gospel, and this achieved by unity and courage in the face of opposition, a unity which is realized through humility.

**Text - 2:1**

Unity and steadfastness in Christ is realized in humility, v1-4: i] The grounds for Paul's appeal, v1. Paul now appeals to the Philippians, which appeal is grounded in the present spiritual experience of the church: encouraged by their

union with Christ; comforted by his love; enriched in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit; and melted by the mercy of God.

**οὖν** "-" - THEREFORE. Inferential, drawing a logical conclusion, possibly referencing v27, "conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ" ..... **therefore** .....

**εἰ** + ind. "**if**" - Introducing a conditional clause 1st class where the condition is assumed to be true; "if, as is the case, ..... then [make my joy complete]." The protasis of the conditional clause is represented by four separate clauses introduced by **εἰ** and covered by the assumed verb "have", "if you have", NIV. The apodosis (the *then* clause) for the four separate clauses is found in v2, "*then* make my joy complete."

**παρακλήσεις [ις εως]** "**encouragement**" - [ANY] CONSOLATION, COMFORT, ENCOURAGEMENT. Here it is best taken to mean "encouragement", rather than "exhortation", but possibly encouragement in the form of exhortation. In our union with Christ, the Spirit serves to persuade us, exhort us forward in the Christian life.

**εν** + dat. "**from being united with [Christ]**" - IN [CHRIST]. Locative, of sphere, incorporative union, "in union with Christ." Possibly instrumental, expressing means, "through / by means of", although unlikely. "In our relation to Christ", Goodspeed.

**παραμυθιον [ον]** "**comfort**" - [IF ANY] CONSOLATION. Although here probably something more motivating, eg., encouragement, addressing others from the basis of love, "speaking in love."

**αγαπης [η]** gen. "**from his love**" - OF LOVE. Usually classified as adjectival, subjective, such that the comfort comes "from love", Christ's love for us; "a solace afforded by love", Cassirer. Possibly speaking of human love, but note how the NIV has opted for divine love with the addition of "his". None-the-less, the genitive may simply be, attributive limiting "comfort"; "loving comfort."

**κοινωνια [α]** "**fellowship / sharing**" - [IF ANY] COMMUNION, FELLOWSHIP, SHARING, PARTICIPATION. "A communion based on common ownership (of the Spirit)", Hansen.

**πνευματος [α ατος]** "**with the Spirit / in the Spirit**" - OF SPIRIT. Presumably the Holy Spirit is intended, rather than the human spirit. Again the genitive causes problems, prompting numerous options: verbal, subjective, "if you are really sharing in the partnership that the Holy Spirit can make possible", Barclay; or objective, "fellowship in the Spirit"; or attributive, "a spiritual fellowship", Bruce; or even adverbial, association, so Varner, as NIV. Note that

πνευματος is anarthrous / without an article. The Holy Spirit and his impelling / compelling, may well be the intended sense.

σπλαγχνα [ον] "**tenderness**" - [IF ANY] BOWELS (the seat for our feelings, affections) [AND COMPASSIONS]. "Kindness", TEV. Silva argues for a hendiadys here, "compassionate mercy."

v2

ii] The essence of unity, v2. Paul looks for a response that will give him joy - "make my joy complete", namely, "be of the same mind." Paul goes on to describe the essence of this unity: joining in a common love for God and each other; sharing in a common life; taking every decision in unity of mind.

πληρωσατε [πληρωω] aor. imp. "**make [my joy] complete**" - MAKE FULL, FULFILL [MY JOY]. The aorist imperative, being punctiliar / perfective, makes the command specific. This verb serves as the main verb of the sentence covering v1-4; "make me completely happy", CEV.

ινα + subj. "**by**" - THAT. The intention of this *hina* clause is somewhat unclear. It is likely to serve instead of an exegetical infinitive, specifying (although not limiting = exegetical substantival ινα clause, Wallace) Paul's command "make my joy complete", "that you be / by being ...."; "*you can do this by being like-minded*", O'Brien, as NIV. It may even stand instead of a hortatory subjunctive which is then followed up by a series of attendant participles. This is a rare usage, but possible in this context; "make my joy complete: be of the same mind, have the same love, be of one accord, of one mind. Do nothing out of selfish ambition ..."

φρονητε [φρονεω] pres. subj. "**being [like-]minded**" - YOU MAY BE THINKING [THE SAME THING]. Expressing a concord, a harmony. This durative present verb is then linked to a series of attendant participles which clarify what makes Paul's joy complete. "By being in perfect harmony of mind", Barclay.

εχοντες [εχω] pres. part. "**having**" - HAVING. Attendant circumstance participle completing the action of the ινα + subj. construction, "that you may think [the same thing]."

την αυτην pro. "**the same**" - THE SAME [LOVE]. "Sharing in mutual love."

συμψυχοι adj. "**being [one in] spirit**" - UNITED, AS ONE. The adjective serves as a substantive. The assumed verbal action picks up on φρονητε, "you think" = "*being* [like-]minded." Literally "one in soul", and therefore of a common purpose / ideal; "united in what you think", CEV.

φρονουντες [φρονεω] pres. part. "**and purpose / of one mind**" - THINKING. Attendant circumstance, as above. The same ideas, the same thoughts.

το "-" - the]. the [one *thing*]. The article serves as a nominalizer turning the adjective "one" into a substantive, "the one *thing*."

v3

iii] The expression of unity, v3-4. Paul will be filled with joy if the Philippians can avoid acting "out of party spirit, or a cheap desire to boast." Churches are not immune from self-seeking egotism. Such must not exist in the Christian fellowship, rather the Philippians need to develop a modest opinion of their own worth - better to see others as the excellent ones.

**"do"** - *doing*. An attendant participle, "doing", is assumed, attendant on **ἵνα** ... **φρονητε**, "that you may think [the same thing]", v2; "[make my joy complete .....] doing nothing according to selfish ambition / self-interest [or] according to vain conceit." Usually handled as a new sentence in English, and as an imperative, as NIV.

**μηδεν** adj. **"nothing"** - NOTHING. Accusative direct object of an assumed verbal component, as above; "Never act", Phillips.

**κατ [κατα]** + acc. **"out of"** - ACCORDING TO. Expressing a standard, "according to, in accordance with"; "from", NRSV, as NIV.

**επιθειαν [α]** **"selfish ambition"** - STRIFE, RIVALRY. "Rivalry / party spirit" ..... is a better translation.

**κενοδοξίαν [α]** **"vain conceit"** - [NOR ACCORDING TO] PERSONAL VANITY, VAINGLORY, SELF-PRAISE, SELFISH AMBITION, EMPTY CONCEIT. "A cheap desire to boast", TEV.

**αλλα** **"but"** - BUT. Strong adversative standing in a counterpoint construction, "not ....., but ....".

**τη ταπεινοφροσύνη [η]** dat. **"in humility"** - IN THE LOWLINESS OF MIND, LOWLY THINKING, HUMILITY. The dative indicates an adverbial phrase expressing manner. Paul is not arguing for low self-esteem, low self-worth, but rather for a knowledge that our eternal standing in the presence of God is a free gift of His gracious kindness rather than a reward for our flawed righteousness.

**ἠγουμενοι [ἠγεομαι]** pres. part. **"consider"** - ESTEEMING, CONSIDERING, REGARDING [ONE ANOTHER]. Another attendant circumstance participle expressing action accompanying the **ἵνα** + subj. construction of v2. Again, usually treated as an imperative. Given the distance from v2, Barclay begins a new sentence at **αλλα**; "If you want to make my joy complete, ....." "Do nothing out of a cheap desire to boast, but rather, humbly consider the welfare of others."

**ὑπερεχοντας [υπερεχω]** pres. part. **"better than"** - ABOVE, SURPASSING, EXCELLING. Some manuscripts have the article **τους** so forming a substantive participle, "the ones who are superior"; "the better man", Moffatt. Yet, it seems likely that the article was added to handle a difficult reading (acc. instead of nom.). What seems more likely is that we have another in the series of attendant participles, although with a less than clear meaning, "controlling / excelling

themselves." The sense "to excel" = "better than" does take a genitive, but see **ἑαυτων** below. If the verbal sense is to control / restrain then Paul is touching on the idea of considering the desires of others ("esteeming another") while restraining / controlling our own desires ("controlling themselves"). Such will make his joy complete.

**ἑαυτων** gen. ref. pro. "**yourselves**" - OF THEMSELVES. The genitive is often classified here as ablative, of comparison, although better adjectival, possessive, see above; "controlling one's own desires."

v4

He will also be filled with joy if they look to each other's interests and not merely their own. Unselfish consideration toward others is the best formula.

**σκοπουντες [σκοπεω]** pres. part. "**look [not] / [not] looking**" - [NOT THE *things* OF THEMSELVES EVERY PERSON] LOOKING AT, CONSIDERING, FOCUSING ON. The last in the series of attendant circumstance participles best taken as an imperative; "make my joy complete: be like minded, ....., look not every person (**εκαστος**, every person) to their own interests." Concentrate", Barclay. The negative covers the whole participial clause although it is often reshaped into a positive; "look to each other's interests and not merely to your own", REB, or "each with an eye to the interests of others as well as to his own", Moffatt.

**ἑαυτων** gen. ref. pro. "**your own**" - OF (THEM)SELVES. The genitive is possessive; "Your own interests", NRSV.

**αλλα και** "**but also**" - The **αλλα** serves as a strong adversative standing in a counterpoint construction, "not ....., but ...." The **και** is a variant reading, but makes sense since it balances the negative of the opening clause; "not just .... but also ....."

**τα** "**the [interests]**" - [BUT EACH PERSON ALSO] THE *things* [OF OTHERS]. The article serves as a nominalizer turning the demonstrative adjective "another" into a substantive.

## 2:5-11

### 3. Exhortations, 2:1-18

#### ii] Humility based on the example of Christ

##### Argument

Paul encourages the Philippians to follow the example of Christ's self-humiliation, adopting an attitude of humility shaped by the example of Christ. It is this humility of servant-hood which will reinforce unity within the fellowship and thus produce steadfastness in the face of trouble.

##### Issues

i] Context: See 2:1-4. This passage sitting within Paul's exhortation to the Philippian church, 2:1-18.

ii] Background: See 1:1-11.

iii] Structure: *The example of Christ:*

Introduction, v5.

The hymn of Christ:

The divine origins of the Christ who played the role of a slave, v6-7b;

The life of Christ in his humanity – birth through to death, v7c-8;

The exalted Christ, lord over all to the glory of God, v9-11.

Numerous structural arrangements are proposed for this passage. Lohmeyer's arrangement of the passage in six three line stanzas (Heidelberg 1928) is as good as any and is accepted by many commentators, cf., Silva. See O'Brien for the development of views on the literary form of v6-11. O'Brien follows Hooker who argues that the hymn falls into two parts, v6-8 and v9-11, with the two finite verbs in each section describing Jesus' self-humbling and the Father's action of exalting him. These notes follow the arrangement of verses proposed by Reumann.

iv] Interpretation:

It is often argued that this passage is not originally from Paul's hand, but that he quotes a poem or hymn. It is of course rather foolish to assume that Paul is incapable of composing high prose / hymn / poetry. None-the-less, it would not be unreasonable for Paul to quote the words of a hymn in a letter. The arguments in favour of v6-11 being a hymn are as follows: i] The passage seems to intrude in the flow of Paul's argument; ii] It is liturgical in style, easily arranged into six stanzas; iii] It contains some six words not commonly used by Paul; iv] Its focus on Christ as the Servant

of God is not a common Pauline theme (note the Servant Song echoes, Isa.52:13-53:12).

A quick survey of the many commentaries on Philippians indicates a variety of interpretations of what is one of the most profound passages in the New Testament. The sticking point seems to be Paul's intention / purpose. Of the many answers provided, we do well to follow Silva when he argues that it all comes down to context: "If the opposition being experienced by the Philippians calls for steadfastness, if steadfastness is impossible without spiritual unity, and if unity can come about only from an attitude of humility, then surely Paul must reinforce the critical importance of humility in the heart of believers. And what better way to reinforce this thought than by reminding the Philippians of the attitude and conduct of him to whom they are united in faith? When admonishing the Corinthians to contribute generously for the sake of the poor in Jerusalem, Paul set before them the example of Christ: *though he was rich, he became poor on account of you, so that through his poverty you might become rich, 2Cor.8:9.*" Similarly, in the passage before us, Paul appeals to the spirit of servanthood that brought Jesus to his death - a death which, incidentally, has overflowed in life for the Philippians.

v] Homiletics: *Imitating Christ's humility.*

Jerusalem bound, that is our destination - to climb Calvary with our Lord, to die to self. And here lies the wonder of it all; Christ has done the climbing on our behalf. He has died, and in his death we die.

In Luke 6:45, Jesus tells us that the heart, the inner self, drives our behaviour. If the images within us are selfish, then we will behave in a selfish way. If, on the other hand, we are able to shape unselfish images in our mind - contemplate Christ's self-denial - then our behaviour will begin to move in a caring direction. This is most likely the point made by the apostle in 2 Corinthians 5:14. The compelling character of Christ's love, when resident in our person, shapes us to love as Christ loved. Daily we are renewed by the indwelling Spirit of Christ, as a gift of grace appropriated through faith.

So then, the practical outworking of this "attitude", this way of thinking, of contemplating, is something like this. A believer, possessing the Spirit of Christ and infused with Christ's character of love, both affirms all that is good and cooperates with Christ's renewing power, and consequently, all that is good begins to take shape in their lives.

The separate elements of this "attitude" are:

- A knowledge of all that is good: humility, love, etc.;

- A belief that this good is ours as a gift of divine grace.

This "attitude" then finds expression in our behaviour as we cooperate with the Spirit of Christ in his work of imaging Christ-likeness in our lives.

## Text - 2:5

Humility, v5-11: i] Driving home the exhortations toward mutual consideration within the Christian fellowship, v1-4, Paul encourages his readers to fully adopt this attitude, an attitude evident in the perfect self-giving of Christ. So, take on the mind of Christ / think Christianly, v5. "Adopt towards one another, in your mutual relations, the same attitude that was found in Christ Jesus", O'Brien.

**γαρ** "-" - FOR. Transitional, indicating a step in the argument, although a Western text variant, usually discounted.

**εν** + dat. "[your] / in [your] relationship with one another" - [YOU MUST THINK THIS] IN [YOU]. Local, expressing association, "with", so "among yourselves", and not as Lightfoot, "in your hearts." The personal pronoun **ὑμιν** is reflective, so "in yourselves (the Christian community at Philippi)."

[**το φρονημα [α ατος]**] "**attitude**" - THE WAY OF THINKING, ATTITUDE, THOUGHTFUL PLANNING. An ellipsis is assumed here by most translations, so Moule etc., "you must think this way of thinking among you."

**φρονειτε [φρονεω]** pres. imp. "**should be**" - YOU MUST THINK. The present tense is durative, so "you must continue to think [this *way of thinking* among yourselves]." "Think" in the sense of setting one's mind / attitude in a certain direction, so "orient", Barth; "your frame of mind ought to be ...", Cassirer.

**τουτο** pro. "**the same as / the same mindset as**" - THIS. This pronoun can refer backward, or forward; here it possibly does both. In verses 1-4 Paul calls for self-giving within the Christian fellowship, and so here he asks his readers to adopt this attitude / way of thinking among themselves. Yet, this attitude / way of thinking is also evident in the life of Jesus Christ, the divine man who is the supreme example of humble self-giving; "have this frame of mind in you, [a frame of mind which is also evident in Christ Jesus]", Zerwick.

**ο και** "**that of [Christ Jesus]**" - WHICH *was* AND = ALSO. The neuter pronoun **ο** refers back to the neuter **τουτο**, "this", so "this *way of thinking*." There is no verb in the second clause so the verb to-be is assumed in most translations, although unnecessary in the Gk.; "which *is* also", present tense???? The conjunction **και** is adverbial, adjunctive.

**εν** + dat. "**[Christ Jesus]**" - IN [CHRIST OF JESUS]. Local, expressing space / incorporative union. Our thinking should be like Christ's. The thinking which is **εν ὑμιν** "in you" should be **και** "also" (the same as) **ο** "which" (this *way of thinking*) **εν** "in" (which exists in) **Χριστω Ιησου**, "Christ Jesus."

v6

ii] Using high prose, Paul proclaims Christ, v6-11. "The Christ-hymn presents Jesus as the ultimate model for Christian behaviour and action, the supreme example of the humble, self-sacrificing, self-giving service that Paul has just been urging the Philippians to practise in their relations one toward another, v1-4", O'Brien. The Hymn: a) The divine origins of Christ who played the role of a slave, v6-7b. Christ, in the form of God, existed in a manner equal to God: he possesses a divine nature; he is a divine being. Divinity was his by right and he did not need to grasp onto it as if he might lose it. Yet, he willingly made himself nothing; he emptied himself.

ὅς pro. "**who**" - Possibly "the one who", subject of the following verbs and participles.

ὑπαρχων [ὑπαρχω] pres. part. "**being**" - EXISTING. The participle is adverbial, possibly temporal, "while being", or concessive, "though being", Moffatt. "Existing" in the sense of to be, subsist, continue eternally, although the idea of eternal existence derives from the context. The word in common use concerns prior existence rather than eternal existence; "he always had the nature of God", TEV.

εν + dat. "**in**" - Here adverbial, expressing the manner of his being.

μορφή [η] "**very nature**" - *the* FORM, APPEARANCE. Possibly "likeness", in the sense of outward display, but more likely "nature / form / essence", in the sense of expressing an inner reality, the essential attributes of something; "he was divine by nature", Moffatt.

θεου [ος] gen. "**God**" - OF GOD. The genitive is adjectival, possessive, identifying the possession of a derivative characteristic; "he shared God's very being."

ουχ .... ἠγησατο [ηγεομαι] aor. "**did not consider**" - DID NOT REGARD, CONSIDER, DEEM, HAVE AN OPINION. Jesus was not of the opinion that .... "he did not regard his equality to God a thing to be clutched to himself", Barclay.

το ειναι [ειμι] pres. inf. "**[equality with]**" - THE TO BE [EQUAL TO GOD]. The articular infinitive introduces a noun clause, the direct object of the negated verb "to consider"; "did not consider equality with God a thing to be grasped."

θεω [ος] "**God**" - Dative complement of the adverb "equal with."

ἀρπαγμαον [ος] "**something to be grasped**" - SOMETHING TO BE PLUNDERED, TAKEN AS SPOIL, A PRIZE TO BE WON / GRASPED. Accusative complement of the object "equality with God" serving in a double accusative construction. The word is uncommon and therefore its exact meaning is unsure. Possibly, as of plunder to be won and held onto at all cost. Yet, it is likely that the sense is "grasped"; "the attitude one will take towards something which one

already has and holds and will continue to have and hold", Wright, so Moule; "exploited", NRSV. "Though he existed in the form of God, yet he did not look upon equality with God as a prize which must not slip from his grasp, rather he emptied himself, taking upon him the form of a slave", Lightfoot.

### v7ab

This clause, expressing Christ's divesting himself and taking the likeness of a slave, is understood in a number of ways:

- He gave up the form of God;
- He placed himself under demonic powers;
- He played the part of the Servant of the Lord;
- He became the righteous sufferer;
- He took the form of a slave;
- He became a slave to God and is the Lordly Example, cf. O'Brien.

O'Brien, Bruce, ... opt for the last option. Christ empties himself by setting aside his divine rights, without setting aside his divinity, in taking to himself the divine vocation of becoming the incarnate servant of the Lord for the salvation of all who believe. As such he stands as the perfect model for those who would similarly serve the Lord.

**ἀλλὰ "but"** - Strong adversative serving within a counterpoint construction; "not ....., but ....."

**κενωσεν [κενωω]** aor. "**made [himself] nothing**" - HE MADE EMPTY, OF NO EFFECT. Usually understood in the sense of divested; "he stripped [himself] of every advantage", Phillips.

**ἑαυτον** reflexive pro. "**himself**" - Accusative direct object of the verb "to empty." Jesus divested himself of divine prerogative, although not of his divinity, in taking the form of a servant. The emphasis on "himself" indicates it was his doing to voluntarily so act; "in his own free will", TEV.

**λαβων [λαμβανω]** aor. part. "**taking [the very nature]**" - TAKING [*the* FORM, LIKENESS]. Attendant circumstance participle expressing action accompanying the verb "he made empty"; "and took upon himself the form of a servant", AV, "and really and truly became a servant", Barclay. Moffatt opts for an instrumental sense "by taking the nature of a servant." "Assuming the form of a slave", REB.

**δουλου [ος]** gen. "**of a servant**" - OF A SLAVE. The genitive is adjectival, attributed, "he stripped himself of all privilege by consenting to be a slave by nature", Phillips, but possibly possessive, so Varner. Jesus takes the form of a slave, metaphorically speaking.

## v7c

b) The life of Christ in his humanity; his birth, suffering, obedience and death, v7c-8. "Born in humanity's likeness, and in appearance perceived as a human being, he experienced humiliation for himself, becoming obedient to the point of death - yes, death on a cross", Reumann.

**γενομενος [γίνομαι]** aor. part. "**being made**" - HAVING BECOME = come into existence, born. Along with **εὑρεθεις**, "having been found", an attendant circumstance participle expressing action accompanying the main verb "he humbled" (v8) - as a man and recognized as a man, he accepted the humiliation of crucifixion; "Born in human guise and appearing in human form, he humbly stooped in his obedience even to die", Moffatt. Of course, if a new sentence / paragraph does not begin here, then it is possible that this participle modifies the verb "he made empty / he made [himself] nothing", v6.

**εν "in"** - IN [LIKENESS]. Probably adverbial, expressing the manner of his birth, born "with" humanity's likeness. "He was born like other human beings", O'Brien.

**ανθρωπων [ος]** gen. "**human**" - OF MEN / HUMANS. The genitive is adjectival, attributive, limiting "likeness"; "human likeness."

**ὁμοιωματι [α ατος]** "**likeness**" - LIKENESS, IMAGE, COPY. Used in the sense of identical to the original, thus referring to Christ's "essential identity with the human race", O'Brien.

**εὑρεθεις [εὑρισκω]** aor. pas. part. "**being found**" - [AND] HAVING BEEN FOUND. Attendant circumstance participle, see above.

**σηματι [α ατος]** dat. "**in appearance**" - IN OUTWARD FORM, APPEARANCE, SHAPE. Dative of respect / reference, "with respect to his appearance." Jesus is the divine man, but appears as a mere man, cf. Isa.53:2,3. "He became like one of us", CEV.

**ὡς "as"** - AS, LIKE. Not as a comparative, Jesus is not like a human, rather the particle serves to indicate a characteristic quality, Jesus is as a human; he was "found to be a human being."

**ανθρωπος "a man"** - A MAN, HUMAN. "a human being", TNIV.

## v8

Not only did the divine Christ empty himself, in that he took upon himself the role of a servant, but he also subjected himself to humiliation. Christ submitted himself to the will of God and so faced the reproach of his fellows, a reproach that ended in shameful death.

**εταπεινωσεν [ταπεινωω]** aor. "**he humbled**" - HE MADE LOW, HUMBLLED, HUMILIATED [HIMSELF]. Main verb, expressing Christ's abasement. It has been

noted that this verb stands in a chiasmic relation with "he emptied himself." "He lowered his own dignity", Knox.

**γενομενος [γινομαι]** aor. part. "**and became [obedient]**" - HAVING BECOME [OBEDIENT]. Possibly attendant circumstance, as NIV, or forming a modal adverbial participial construction expressing the manner by which Christ humbled himself, or even instrumental, expressing the means by which Christ humbled himself.

**μεχρι** + gen. "**to**" - UP TO, UNTIL [DEATH]. A preposition which is adverbial, temporal, in use. "He walked the path of obedience all the way to death", TEV.

**δε** "**even**" - BUT/AND. Transitional, but with ascensive / intensive force, emphasizing the extent of Jesus' humiliation; "yes, even ...."

**σταυρου [ος]** "**on a cross**" - [A DEATH] OF A CROSS. The genitive is adjectival, idiomatic / of place, "a death *which takes place on* a cross", or of produce, "a death *which is enacted by* a cross." Not only did Jesus take on the likeness of a human person, even a slave, even a slave faced with death, but he "even" took upon himself the degradation of public execution as a common criminal.

## v9

c) The exalted Christ, lord over all to the glory of God, v9-11. As a consequence of his humiliation, Christ was exalted by God. The verdict of humanity, led by the powers of darkness, is set aside by God. As for the name Jesus is given, it is the name of God, Yahweh, "Lord", a name which depicts Christ's power, authority, dignity and divinity.

**διο** "**therefore**" - THEREFORE, THAT IS WHY [ALSO]. Inferential; here with a climactic / ascensive **και**, "also". As a consequence of Christ's humiliation, although possibly "this is why", Goodspeed.

**υπερυψωσεν [υπερυψω]** aor. "**exalted**" - [GOD] HIGHLY EXALTED [HIM]. The force of the prefix stresses "exalted", so "highly exalted."

**και** "**and**" - Possibly ascensive, "**even** gave to him the name ...." Silva suggests that the conjunction here is epexegetic.

**εχαρισατο [χαριζομαι]** aor. "**gave**" - GRACIOUSLY GAVE, GAVE FREELY, SHOWED FAVOUR. "Bestowed on him", NEB / REB.

**αυτω** dat. pro. "**him**" - TO HIM. Dative of indirect object / interest.

**το ονομα** "**the name**" - Accusative direct object of the verb "to give, favour." The "name" represents the person, their identity. Some suggest that the bestowed name is Jesus / Jesus Christ, but this seems unlikely; See Moule's flip flop on this in 1st. and 2nd. ed. of IB. Probably the title "Lord" is the name which is bestowed, a title which serves as an allusion to the divine name, God's person, with its associated divine dignity. Jesus' self-humiliation is countered by the

divine bestowal of God's own name, Lord / Yahweh, and with it the prerogative of universal authority / rule.

το "that" - THE ONE. The article serves as an adjectivizer turning the prepositional phrase "above every name" into an attributive relative clause limiting "the name", "which is above every name", as NIV.

ὑπερ + acc. "**above [every name]**" - ABOVE, OVER AND ABOVE, BEYOND, MORE THAN [EVERY NAME]. Spatial, here metaphorical. The name Yahweh is a name which is greater than any other name. "Gave him the name which is above all other names", NJB.

## v10

The ones who bow before the exalted Christ are the totality of rational beings. There are three such groups: spiritual beings / angels; humans; deceased persons.

ἵνα + subj. "**that**" - THAT [..... SHOULD BOW ..... SHOULD CONFESS (v11) ...]. This construction expresses either purpose, "in order that", or consequence, "with the result that." In the NT there is often a blurring of these actions and so hypothetical result, "so that", often seems the best choice.

εν "**at**" - IN. Here adverbial, expressing association, "with", "with the mention of the name", or attendant circumstance, "in connection with the name", even possibly temporal, "when the name is mentioned."

τῷ ονοματι [ονομα] dat. "**the name**" - THE NAME. Possibly that every knee should bow at the mention of Jesus, but more likely, at the glory and dignity associated with the name that Jesus bears, namely Yahweh / Lord.

Ἰησου [ος] gen. "**of Jesus**" - The genitive is adjectival, possessive. Lightfoot argues that "the personal name of Jesus cannot be meant", but the issue has been long debated.

καμψη [καμπτω] aor. subj. "**[every knee] should bow**" - [ALL KNEES] SHOULD BOW / BEND. The whole creation should bow before Jesus; "should kneel in reverence and submission", Barclay.

επουρανιων gen. adj. "**in heaven**" - OF HEAVEN. This genitive, as with "of earth" and "of under the earth", is adjectival, possibly possessive "every knee of those / that belongs to those living in heaven / the heavenly community .....", or idiomatic / of place, "which is found in heaven ....."

καταχθονιων adj. "**under the earth**" - [AND] OF UNDER THE EARTH. The adjective serves as a substantive. Probably a reference to Hades / Sheol, the residence of the dead. The point is, Christ's reign is universal.

v11

Every tongue will confess that Jesus is Lord, even the powers of darkness will confess his lordship.

εξομολογησεται [εξομολογω] aor. subj. "**should confess / acknowledge**"

- [AND EVERY TONGUE] SHOULD CONSENT FULLY, AGREE TO COMPLETELY, OPENLY AND PLAINLY ACKNOWLEDGE. Lightfoot argues that since the word is used primarily in its secondary sense of "offer praise", "thanksgiving" in the LXX, it is most likely that Paul is following the lead of the LXX. Therefore, the meaning here would be "proclaim with thanksgiving."

ὅτι "**that**" - THAT. Introducing a dependent statement of indirect speech expressing what every tongue should confess.

"**is [Lord]**" - [JESUS CHRIST *is*] LORD. The verb to-be is usually supplied so instead of κυριος Ιησους Χριστος, "Lord Jesus Christ", it is usually translated as "Jesus Christ *is* Lord." In the Gk., "Lord", which would serve as the predicate noun with the verb to-be, is placed first in the emphatic position, giving the sense "[the] Lord/Yahweh *is* Jesus Christ", so Reumann - high theology indeed. The reverse order makes the same point, although the suggested order is more startling.

εις "**to [the glory]**" - TO, INTO [*the* GLORY]. This preposition here possibly expresses purpose, "for", but probably better, result; "so that." "The Lordship of Christ is therefore within the ambit of the divine glory and far from masking it actually reveals it", Hawthorne. "All that Jesus did in his self-emptying, self-humbling, and obedient death on the cross, led to the glory of God the Father because the self-giving of Jesus expresses the very nature of God..... All that God did in exalting Jesus and giving him the name *Lord* to be worshipped by all creation,

και "**and [gave]**" - Silva suggests that the conjunction here is epexegetic; "even gave to him the name ..." led to the glory of God the Father because the Lordship of Jesus Christ expresses the very nature of God", Hansen.

θεου [ος] gen. "**of God**" - The genitive may be taken as adjectival, possessive, "the glory that rightly belongs to God the Father", or verbal, objective.

παρος [ηρ ρος] gen. "**the father**" - *the* FATHER. Genitive standing in apposition to "God".

## 2:12-18

### 3. Exhortations, 2:1-18

#### iii] An appeal: Work out your salvation

##### Argument

Following on from the great *Christ Hymn*, 2:5-11, Paul applies the example of Christ's humility to the Philippian believers. Given Christ's humility - his making himself nothing by taking the nature of a servant, humbling himself by obedience even to death - ὥστε, "therefore", "as you have always obeyed ... continue in your practical day-to-day living for Christ to apply the salvation you possess in Christ with fear and trembling." By following Christ's example and holding firm to the gospel, the Philippians will shine like lights in a dark world rather than be debilitated by internal disputes. With this knowledge Paul is well able to boast that his missionary work is not in vain. It is true that Paul is at this moment in prison, yet he continues to share in gospel ministry with the Philippians and to this end they should rejoice together with him.

##### Issues

i] Context: See 2:1-4. This exhortation is part of a larger exhortatory section covering 2:1-18. It is held together by the rubric *Struggle together for the truth of the gospel*, 1:27.

ii] Background: See 1:1-11.

iii] Structure: *Christian fidelity*:

(indicated by three Greek sentences):

An exhortation

Self-humbling in the terms of godly behaviour, v12-13;

A specific exhortation

Unity within the Christian fellowship, v14-16;

Paul's own self-humbling perspective, v17-18;

How "to avoid dissension within the community", O'Brien.

iv] Interpretation:

Is Paul's focus in this passage ethical or soteriological? It is interesting how commentators read Paul's words differently. For example, for Silva the Christ Hymn is "our ethical example", and our passage for study is Paul's ethical application of the hymn. Fee, on the other hand, argues that "at issue is the gospel in Philippi: first of all their own *salvation* (v12), evidenced by continuing obedience - like that of their Saviour (v8) - but as always, second, with an eye toward evangelism, the effect of the gospel in

the world (v16). Thus, Paul returns to his present concern - *obedience* expressed through a common *mindset for the sake of Christ and the gospel* - by applying to their situation what he has just written in 2:6-11" (the underlying is mine).

It seems likely that Paul's intent is primarily ethical. The troubles faced by the Philippians are the same as those faced by Paul, 1:30 - division within the ranks. To this end, Paul encourages his readers to develop a self-humbling perspective within the life of their Christian community. It is though unclear how a self-humbling perspective applies to "the dogs", the "mutilators of the flesh", given that we are unsure to what degree the nomist heresy is disrupting the unity of the congregation. Of course, there is always an underlying soteriological purpose in God's will, but it remains unclear to what degree being "blameless and pure ... without fault in a warped and crooked generation" is a validation of the gospel. For myself, I am uneasy with the notion that we are to love in order to validate the gospel, but at the same time it is clear that love does, of itself, validate the gospel, cf., Jn.13:35. Well we know that a lack of love invalidates the gospel, as is evident with the public outing of paedophile priests.

So, Paul has returned to the theme of conducting ourselves worthy of the gospel, worthy of our standing in Christ, 1:27, of forging a "unity in the struggle for the faith", Silva, so equipping each other in service to Christ "in a warped and crooked generation." Service to Christ is an end in itself, a being what we are. Of course, *being what we are* has its consequences: a light to the nations, v15, a standing proud in the day of Christ, v16

### Text - 2:12

Christian fidelity, v12-18: Work out your salvation with fear and trembling, v12-13. When Paul first visited Philippi, a small group of people responded in obedience to his preaching of the gospel and so found in it salvation, eternal life. They responded positively to Paul's preaching of the gospel back then, and now absent from them, he calls on the Philippian believers to respond even more positively. Paul calls on them to work out that salvation in their day-to-day life, allowing God to work his work within them, thus fulfilling his good purpose.

**ὥστε** "**therefore**" - drawing a logical conclusion. Establishing a link between the Christ Hymn and its practical application; "so then."

**καθως** "**as**" - [BELOVED OF ME] AS [ALWAYS YOU OBEYED]. Comparative; "in like manner as you have always obeyed *me*." "Obeyed" is without an object, but presumably in the sense of obeyed Paul, so Bruce; "you have always obeyed

me", Phillips. "Obeyed God" has been proposed, so Michaelis, but this seems unlikely.

ὥς "- - [NOT] AS. Here not a comparative, "like", but expressing a characteristic quality, "as"; "not only as a person living in my presence."

εν + dat. "in" - IN [THE PRESENCE OF ME ONLY]. Adverbial use of the preposition, temporal; "not only while in my presence." So also "but now much more while in my absence." The NIV treats this temporal construction as a parenthesis connected to "you have always obeyed *me*", although as Bruce notes the negation μη is properly linked to the imperative "work out" rather than the indicative "obeyed"; "As you have always obeyed me, continue to work out your salvation in fear and trembling, not only in my presence, but much more in my absence." Beare suggests that "presence" and absence" means "during my life" and "after my death."

αλλα "but" - Strong adversative standing in a counterpoint construction.

νυν adv. "now" - Temporal adverb.

πολλω μαλλον "much more" - MUCH MORE [IN THE ABSENCE OF ME]. The comparative adverb μαλλον, "more", is made emphatic with the addition of the adjective πολλω, "much".

κατεργαζεσθε [κατεργαζομαι] pres. imp. "continue to work out" - WORK OUT, BRING ABOUT, PRODUCE, CREATE. The present tense being durative / imperfective, may give the sense "continue to work out", as NIV; "keep on toiling", Barclay.

σωτηριαν [α] "[your] salvation" - The 3rd. pers. gen. reflexive pronoun ἐαυτων is serving as a 2nd. pers. pro. Presumably "work out your salvation" realizes what is entailed in obeying him. Is this personal salvation, or eschatological salvation, either of the individual members, or the Christian community itself? Is the word just being used in the sense of health, well-being, "the restoration of the health and the spiritual well-being of the community"? TH, ie., in sociological terms, rather than soteriological terms, so J.H. Michael, 1920. Bruce argues that the "salvation" in mind is that which is realized through a faith-response to the gospel, worked out practically in the Christian life and perfected in the day of Christ, and that the church as a whole must pay attention to it for its health and well-being. So also O'Brien who puts it this way: "*Work out your salvation* is an exhortation to common action, urging the Philippians to show forth the graces of Christ in their lives, to make their eternal salvation fruitful in the here and now as they fulfill their responsibilities to one another as well as to non-Christians."

μετα + gen. "with" - WITH [FEAR AND TREMBLING]. Here the preposition is adverbial, forming a modal phrase expressing manner, as NIV.

### v13

With the postpositive **γαρ**, introducing a causal clause, Paul explains why the Philippians are able to apply / act out their salvation in their day-to-day living for Christ: **because** God, out of his good pleasure / grace, works in them through the indwelling impelling Spirit, so enabling them to act.

**ὁ ενεργων [ενεργεω]** pres. part. "**who works**" - [FOR GOD IS] THE ONE WORKING [IN YOU]. The participle serves as a substantive, predicate nominative. The present tense, being durative / imperfective, may give the sense "always at work", TEV.

**εν "in [you]"** - Locative, expressing sphere; "in the sphere of your corporate life", ie., "you" = the church, so Fee.

**και .... και "and"** - AND .... AND. Correlative construction; "**both** to will **and** to act."

**το θελειν [θελω]** pres. inf. "**to will [and to act]"** - The substantive articular infinitives, "to will" and "to act", together serve as the direct object of the participle "working". The accusative is possibly an accusative of respect, as Cassirer below. Barclay offers a dynamic translation "the will to desire and the power to achieve."

**ὑπερ** + gen. "**according to / in order to fulfill**" - ON BEHALF OF. Possibly expressing representation / advantage, "on behalf of" / "for the sake of", or purpose, as NIV11, or reference / respect, "concerning / with reference to", as if **περι**, even possibly a moving cause or reason, "for / because of his good purpose", so BDAG. Fee and O'Brien suggest it expresses a standard, "in accordance with / according to", as NIV, contra Hawthorne who argues for purpose / end-view, to "introduce that which one wants to attain", cf., BDF #231,2; "It is God himself who is at work within you, as regards both will and deed, **in pursuit of his gracious design**", Cassirer.

**της ευδοκίας [α]** "**his good purpose**" - THE = HIS GOOD PLEASURE. The article is usually read as a possessive pronoun, "his", but it could particularize, a particular "good pleasure", namely, the divine good pleasure / grace. Presumably "God's good pleasure", although unstated. Referring to God's innate gracious kindness toward human beings, "his gracious will / loving purpose", "his benevolent purpose", Hawthorne; "the will of God to confer grace on those he has chosen", E. Vogt. The phrase is not suggesting that God is pleased with the goodness evident in our lives, rather he is pleased to act graciously on our behalf - none is good, no not one.

## v14

ii] Live as God's blameless children, v14-16. The Gk. sentence consists of all three verses. Presumably "grumbling and disputing" within the Christian fellowship rather than "complaining and arguing" against God, although the allusion to Israel's wilderness generation with the word "grumbling" cannot be overlooked. Paul, in his first letter to the Corinthians, made a direct link between the Corinthian believers and that grumbling generation in the wilderness. God disowned that generation, so beware, cf., 1Cor.10:10. Yet, Paul's addition of the word **διαλογισμος**, "controversies, disputations", indicates that the problem concerns disputes within the congregation. It seems more than likely that the call to negate grumbling and disputing is all about "cleaning up the conversation in the community", Hansen.

**παντα** adj. "[do] **everything**" - ALL *things* [DO]. Accusative direct object of the verb "to do"; emphatic by position.

**χωρις** + gen. "**without**" - WITHOUT [GRUMBLING AND ARGUMENTS]. Expressing separation, "apart from" = "without."

## v15

To what end does Paul call on the Philippians to clean up their conversation? We are best to follow O'Brien when he argues that the admonition is **ινα**, "so that", "no one would be able to lay any accusation of blame against them because they were pure and sincere." Paul "wants his readers to be God's perfect children as they live and witness in the midst of the entire unbelieving world", O'Brien.

**ινα** + subj. "**so that [you may become]**" - THAT [YOU MAY BE BLAMELESS AND PURE]. Here serving to introduce a purpose clause. "Blameless" = "innocent", while "pure" has the sense "unmixed", uninfected by the world, so "sincere", Phillips. "Go out into the world uncorrupted, a breath of fresh air in this squalid and polluted society. Providing people with a glimpse of good living and of the living God", Peterson.

**θεου [ος]** gen. "**[children] of God**" - CHILDREN OF GOD [WITHOUT FAULT]. The genitive is adjectival, possessive / relational. The adjective "without fault" has sacrificial overtones, of a "spotless / perfect" offering, but the TEV "perfect children", or REB "faultless children" probably goes too far. Phillip's "wholesome" maintains the sacrificial image and is theologically appropriate. Cf., Matt.5:45, "that you may be sons of your Father in heaven."

**μεσον** + gen. "**in**" - IN MIDDLE OF. Spatial.

**διεστραμμενης [διαστρεφω]** gen. perf. mid./pas. part. "**a warped [and crooked generation]**" - [A CROOKED GENERATION AND] HAVING BEEN PERVERTED. The participle is adjectival, attributive, standing with the attributive

adjective "warped". This language, "perverse and crooked generation", is used in the OT. of faithless Israel, but here Paul uses it of the world. "You live in an age when life is twisted and perverted", Barclay.

**εἰς** + dat. "[then you will shine] among [them]" - IN [WHOM YOU SHINE]. Local, expressing space; in the sense of "among". The antecedent of the plural relative pronoun "whom" is the singular collective "generation"; "among whom you shine as lights in the world", ESV.

**ὡς** "like [stars]" - Comparative. The noun **σώστηρ**, "stars", refers to "luminaries" in the LXX, the sun, moon and stars, the heavenly lights. Shining "in the world" is somewhat awkward, so "shine like stars in a dark world", is better than NIV or NIV11. Cf., Dan.12:3.

**εἰς** + dat. "in [the universe / the sky]" - IN [*the* WORLD]. Local, expressing space.

## v16

The Philippians should clean up their conversation **ἵνα**, "in order that", they might be "blameless with regard to their observable behaviour, so that they might be recognized for what they are, *the children of God*", Fee. To this Paul adds another purpose, his eternal boast; "Carry the light-giving Message into the night so I'll have good cause to be proud of you on the day that Christ returns", Peterson.

**επεχοντες** [**επεχω**] pres. part. "as you hold firmly to" - HOLDING. The participle is adverbial, possibly modal, as NIV, or temporal, "while you hold", although better, as Varner suggests, instrumental, expressing means, "by holding." The sense of the verb is either "to hold forth" = "to offer", or "to hold to" = "to adhere". So, shining like lights is realized by either "offering them the word of life", Barclay, so Bruce, NEB, JB, or "holding firmly to the word of life", Varner, so NAB, NRSV, Moffatt. Proclaiming the word of life is certainly supported by the context, but the primary meaning of the word is "hold firmly" and this is most likely Paul's intended meaning, so Hanson; "the Philippians can fulfill their task of behaving as God's children in the world ..... by holding fast to the gospel, the word that brings life", O'Brien. Yet, as Fee argues, evangelism is still at the forefront of Paul's thinking. This is indicated by word order, "shine like lights in the world by holding firmly to the word of life." Gospel truth both shines in the world against its darkness so separating light from dark, but at the same time it serves to enlighten the world. So a believer is both "distinguishable from, and in opposition to the world around them, while they are also to be God's messengers, bringing the word of life to the dying", Fee. Again, we see how difficult it is to identify exactly what Paul has in mind, either ethics or evangelism, or both.

ζωης [η] gen. "[word] of life" - The genitive is adjectival, idiomatic, "the word / message which brings / leads to life", "the word that brings life", O'Brien = the gospel, possibly epexegetic / appositional, "which is life."

εις + acc. "then [I] will be able [to boast]" - INTO [A BOAST]. The NIV opts for a conditional use of the preposition, a kind of "if you hold firm ... then I will boast ...", cf., TEV, Barclay. The RSV opts for purpose / end view, "for a boast to me" = "that I can boast"; "in order that / so that I may be proud of you on the day of resurrection."

εμοι dat. pro. "I" - TO ME. Dative of interest, advantage, or possession.

εις + acc. "on" - INTO. O'Brien suggests a temporal use of the preposition, as NIV.

Χριστου [ος] gen. "[the day] of Christ" - [the DAY] OF CHRIST. The genitive is adjectival, possessive, or idiomatic / temporal, "the day *when* Christ returns."

ὅτι "that" - Introducing an object clause / dependent statement of indirect speech expressing the content of Paul's boast, namely, "I did not minister in vain", or possibly serving to introduce a causal clause, "because it (your shining) will show that I did not run ...." / "for I shall know then that I did not spend my energy in vain", Phillips.

εις κενον "[labour] in vain" - [I RAN NOT] TOWARD EMPTINESS [NOR LABOURED] TOWARD EMPTINESS. The prepositional phrase is likely to be adverbial, so "vainly." "I will be able to proudly claim that I did not run a loser's race, and that all my toil has not gone for nothing", Barclay.

## v17

iii] The partnering of Paul's own offering, v17-18. Paul has obliquely referred to the Philippians' life of gospel ministry in the terms of a pure and blameless offering, and now, with more overtly sacrificial language, he speaks of his own libation added to their sacrificial offering, and the joy that this brings to him, and should bring to them as well. Paul's libation is often viewed as his martyrdom, but it is more likely his ministry now exercised in prison.

αλλα "but" - The NIV has gone with an adversative use, although dropped by many translations, given that an adversative / contrastive meaning doesn't seem to make sense. We probably have another example here of Pauline short-talk. Following on from the statement "I did not run or labour in vain", v16, Silva proposes, "*Yes, I have laboured hard, but even death cannot take away my joy.*" Nicely encapsulated by Cassirer's "And indeed, ...."

ει και "even if" - Introducing a 1st. class conditional clause, although O'Brien argues that the presence of και makes it concessive in nature, "even though, *as is the case .... then ...*"; "And indeed, even though my blood is to be

poured out as a libation upon the sacrificial offering of your faith, I rejoice and share my joy with you all", Cassirer. Note how Cassirer, as ESV etc., has assumed that Paul is speaking of a future libation, namely his martyrdom. The NIV rightly gives weight to the present tense "I am poured out", ie., "what is currently happening", Hawthorn. The point is that although Paul finds himself in the same boat as the Philippians, he is glad to be in it with them.

ἐπι + dat. "on" - [ALTHOUGH I AM POURED OUT *as an offering*] UPON. Spatial.

θυσία και λειτουργία dat. "the sacrifice and service" - Varner suggests we have a hendiadys here, "sacrificial service"; "the sacrificial offering", ESV, ie., their gospel ministry.

της πιστεως [ις εως] gen. "coming from [your] faith" - OF THE FAITH [OF YOU]. The word is used in the sense of "their life of faith", Bruce = "their Christian profession and life", O'Brien, possibly "their faith in Christ", Hanson. The NIV opts for a subjective genitive, "the sacrificial offering / ministry that springs from your faith", Hawthorne, so also Lightfoot, a genitive of source, the faith of the Philippians being "the source of the impulse to make the offering", Beare. Yet, it is more likely expegetic / appositional; "a sacrificial offering *which consists of* your faith", so O'Brien. Possibly, but unlikely, an objective genitive where Paul is the one ministering to the faith of the Philippians, "on behalf of your faith / resulting in your faith", see Silva.

ὑμιν dat. pro. "[all] of you" - [I REJOICE AND REJOICE WITH] YOU [ALL]. Dative of direct object after the συν prefix verb "to rejoice with." This clause serves as the apodosis of the conditional clause; "even though ....., then I rejoice and share my joy with you."

## v18

However Paul's gospel ministry may turn out in prison, he too like the Philippians is shining God's grace into a dark world, and so he calls on his readers to rejoice in that fact, rejoice together with him.

δε "-" - BUT/AND. Transitional, a minor step in the argument; singular person to plural.

το ... αυτο "so" - *in* THE SAME way. The article το serves as a nominalizer, turning the pronoun αυτο into a substantive, "the same way." Technically an accusative of reference / respect, which, as Moule notes in his *Idiom Book*, "is practically adverbial", so "in the same way"; "likewise", ESV.

ὑμεις pro. "you" - Emphatic by use and position.

και "too" - AND = ALSO [REJOICE]. Adjunctive; "also".

μοι dat. "with me" - [TOGETHER WITH] ME. Dative of direct object after the συν prefix verb "to rejoice together with."

## 2:19-30

### 4. Personal information.

#### The forthcoming visit of Timothy and Epaphroditus

##### Argument

Paul moves on to deal with some personal issues. Although he hopes to visit the Philippian church sometime in the future, his plan is to send Timothy to them as soon as his present legal problems are sorted out. In the meantime, he will send Epaphroditus with the hope that the congregation will receive him warmly.

##### Issues

i] Context: See 2:1-4. This Pauline *travelogue* has caused commentators difficulty due to its placement at this point in the letter. It would seem more appropriate to place it toward the end of the letter after the central argument, 2:1-3:21. Silva argues that in this *thank-you* letter, Paul gives prominence "to informing the church in Philippi concerning his affairs and plans." For this reason, Silva entitles this section a *Resumption of Paul's Missionary Report*. So, rather than personal information haphazardly in-dispersed throughout the letter, we have pastoral warnings, exhortations and issues nestled in a *thank-you* letter concerning Paul's affairs and plans. Possibly an even better theory is that proposed by Funk in *The Apostolic Parousia*, 1967. He argues that the placement of the *travelogue* here is a feature letter-writing in the Greco-Roman world where the author seeks to convey their authority to the reader. This works well as the letter moves into *refutatio*, a refutation of the Judaizers.

ii] Background: See 1:1-11.

iii] Structure: *Further Missionary Matters*:

Matters concerning the visit of Timothy, v19-24;

Matters concerning the visit of Epaphroditus, v25-30.

iv] Interpretation:

Paul reminds the Philippians that he still wants to visit the church again, and hopes that he will soon be able to do just that, v24. In the meantime, Paul does have a plan to send Timothy to minister to the church on his behalf. It seems likely that the Philippians are aware of this plan and so Paul is at pains to explain how important Timothy is to him in the present circumstances, but that none-the-less he still intends to send Timothy to them some time in the future. Paul is implying that he can't send Timothy to them just yet, but will do so in the future. In the meantime, he will send Epaphroditus as his representative. If, as seems the case, the

Philippians were expecting a visit from Timothy, rather than Epaphroditus, then Paul's positive words concerning him and his request that they "welcome him in the Lord with great joy", will help pave the way for his visit.

The example of Christ's humility fleshed out in 2:5-11 empowers Paul's proposition, 1:27-30. Yet, it is also reflected in the personal information covering 2:19-30. Paul presents three examples of service. There is his own willingness to have his martyrdom credited to the Philippians' account, there is Timothy's dedicated service, and there is Epaphroditus' devoted gospel service. All three men display Christ's humility. By this means Paul's reasserts his authority and power.

### Text - 2:19

Paul's missionary report continues, v19-30: i] Matters concerning the visit of Timothy, v19-24. Paul's point in simple enough: "I hope ... to send timothy to you as quickly as possible ..... (v23) as soon as I see how things go with me."

**δε** "-" - BUT/AND. Transitional, indicating a step in the argument.

**εν** + dat. "**in [the Lord Jesus]**" - [I HOPE] IN [THE LORD JESUS]. Local, sphere, "the sphere in which Paul and his colleagues act and think", Bruce, possibly incorporative union, "in union with the Lord Jesus." This phrase heads toward the idiomatic sense here, eg., "as a Christian / as a Christian *brother*", or "if the Lord wishes it to be so", TH, so O'Brien.

**πεμψαι [πεμπω]** aor. inf. "**to send**" - [SOON] TO SEND [TIMOTHY]. Introducing an object clause / dependent statement of perception expressing what Paul hopes.

**ὑμιν** dat. pro. "**to you**" - Dative of indirect object.

**ταχως** adv. "**soon**" - Modal adverb; "as quickly as possible."

**ινα** + subj. "**that**" - THAT. Introducing a final clause expressing purpose, "in order that / so that."

**γνους [γινωσκω]** aor. part. "**when I receive news**" - [I ALSO MAY BE ENCOURAGED] KNOWING. The participle is adverbial, taken as temporal by NIV

**τα** "-" - THE THINGS. The article serves as a nominalizer turning the prepositional phrase "about you" into a substantive, "the things concerning you" = "your affairs", Fee. Possibly an accusative of respect, "knowing about the things concerning you" = "so that, having news of you ("of how things are going with you", Barclay), I may be cheered in heart", Cassirer.

**περι** + gen. "**about [you]**" - CONCERNING [YOU]. Reference / respect.

## v20

Expressing the deep friendship Paul has with Timothy and the likeminded affection Timothy has for the Philippians.

**γὰρ** "-" - FOR. Introducing a causal clause explaining why Paul intends to send Timothy to visit the Philippians, namely, because "I have nobody else with a genuine interest in your well-being", Phillips.

**ἰσοψυχον** adj. "**like him**" - [I HAVE NO ONE] LIKE-SOULED, EQUAL IN SOUL. The adjective serves as a substantive, "a likeminded person", accusative complement of the accusative direct object "nobody", standing in a double accusative construction; "in sympathy with your outlook", Caird. "My thoughts are his thoughts", TH = "we are best mates."

**γηνσιως** adv. "**genuine concern**" - [OF SUCH A KIND WHO WILL] GENUINELY, SINCERELY [CARE FOR]. "He is the one man who will take a genuine interest in your affairs", Barclay.

**τα περι ὑμων** "**your welfare**" - THE THINGS CONCERNING YOU. See above.

## v21

Paul observes that Timothy, unlike many believers in Rome, is not self-obsessed. "Too many put their own interests before those of others", Bruce.

**γὰρ** "**for**" - Introducing a causal clause explaining why Timothy will show genuine concern for the Philippians' welfare, because unlike many others, he has proved himself.

**οἱ** "**everyone**" - THE [ALL]. The article nominalizes the adjective "all, every", so "everyone"; subject of the verb "to seek." "Everyone else is concerned only with their own affairs", TEV. The "everyone" ("all of them in contrast to part of them", Fee) is not identified; a rather sweeping statement.

**τα** "-" - [SEEK] THE THINGS [OF THEMSELVES, NOT] THE THINGS [OF JESUS CHRIST]. The article serves as a nominalizer turning the reflective adjective into a substantive. Repeated with the genitive "Jesus Christ" = the things of Jesus Christ.

**ἑαυτων** gen. reflex. pro. "**their own [interests]**" - The genitive is adjectival, possessive.

**Ἰησου Χριστου [ος]** gen. "**of Jesus Christ**" - The genitive may be taken as adjectival, possessive, "the cause of Jesus Christ", TEV, or descriptive, idiomatic, source, "the things *which come from* Jesus Christ"..

## v22

Timothy was a member of the missionary team that brought the gospel to Philippi. This, with his support for Paul's gospel ministry, proves his worth.

δε **"but"** - BUT/AND. Transitional indicating a step in the argument, "as for Timothy, you know that he has proved himself .....", but possible a step to a contrast, as NIV.

ὅτι **"because"** - [YOU KNOW THE WORTH OF HIM] BECAUSE. Introducing a causal clause explaining why they know Timothy's worth, because they have witnessed his devoted service to Paul and the gospel. "You know how he has stood the test (proved his worth)", Moffatt.

ὡς **"as [a Father]"** - LIKE, AS [A CHILD WITH A FATHER]. Here as a comparative; "working with me for the gospel like a son (*works loyally*) with a father", Phillips. "He has worked with me just like a son would work with his father", TH. There is a sense where Paul sees himself as Timothy's spiritual father; here they work together for the gospel, just as a father and son work together at a trade.

σὺν + dat. **"with [me]"** - [HE SERVED] WITH [ME]. Expressing accompaniment / association.

εἰς + acc. **"in the work of"** - INTO. Here possibly just, reference / respect, "with respect to the gospel", or better, advantage / benefit, "for the sake of the gospel", TEV. Other possibilities include: in place of a local εἰν, as NIV; or purpose / end-view, "in order to *promote* the gospel." Panikulam, *Koinwnia*, argues that εἰς + acc. often "indicates a dynamic activity in progress", so "for the *spread of the gospel*", Zerwick, "*advancement of the gospel*", Barclay, "*furtherance of the gospel*", Fee, "*promoting the gospel*", O'Brien; cf., 1:5.

τὸ εὐαγγέλιον [ος] **"the gospel"** - THE IMPORTANT NEWS. Regularly used of God's important news / communication with humanity, namely the announcement of the inauguration / realization of God's long-promised kingdom. Often paraphrased "good news", but it is only good for those who repent and enter the kingdom.

## v23

Paul again confirms that he will be sending Timothy to the Philippians. We are best to follow the NIV rendering of the Gk. which implies that as soon as Paul gets an inkling (αφιδω) of how his trial is going he will then send Timothy to them. Hawthorne, also Silva, suggest the sense is "as soon as I see about my affairs", implying that Timothy is at present rendering important assistance to Paul and can't be spared.

μὲν ..... δε "-" - *on the one hand* [THIS ONE THEREFORE I HOPE TO SEND IMMEDIATELY WHENEVER I SEE THE THINGS CONCERNING ME *will turn out*] (v24) BUT *on the other hand* [I HAVE CONFIDENCE IN LORD THAT INDEED I MYSELF WILL COME QUICKLY]. Adversative comparative construction.

οὖν **"therefore"** - Inferential; drawing a logical conclusion.

**πεμψαι [πεμπω]** aor. inf. "**to send**" - The infinitive introduces an object clause / dependent statement of perception expressing what Paul hopes, namely, to send Timothy to the Philippian congregation once there is a resolution of his imprisonment.

**τουτον** pro. "**he**" - Emphatic by position, i.e., it heads the Gk. sentence.

**ως αν** + subj. "**as soon as [I see]**" - WHENEVER [I SEE]. This construction expresses indefinite future time, as NIV. The verb **αφιδω** means "to look away from toward", a kind of "wait and see" approach; I will send him to you once I get an inkling of how my trial is going to work out"

**τα** "**how things go [with me]**" - THE THINGS [CONCERNING ME]. The article serves as a nominalizer turning the prepositional phrase "concerning me" into a substantive. The preposition **περι** + acc. expresses reference / respect.

**εξ αυτης** adv. "-" - A shortened form of **εξ αυτης της ωρας**, "from which time" = "soon thereafter." Serving as a slight qualification. Paul will send Timothy once he gets an inkling of how things are going, not necessarily immediately, but certainly "soon thereafter."

#### v24

"And then I am hoping and praying to be right on his heals", Peterson.

**εν κυριω [ος]** dat. "**in the Lord**" - As in v19, cf., 1:14. Local, space / metaphorical, as in resting upon. An idiomatic sense seems likely, e.g., "I have full confidence, *placing my trust in* ("on", ??) the Lord, that I shall likewise be coming to you before long", Cassirer.

**οτι** "**that**" - THAT [INDEED I WILL COME MYSELF]. Introducing an object clause / dependent statement of perception expressing the content of Paul's confidence, namely, that he will be coming to visit the Philippians soon.

**ταχως** adv. "**soon**" - QUICKLY. Modal adverb; not "right away", but "quickly" in the sense of "at once after I see how things go with me", Fee.

#### v25

ii] Matters concerning the visit of Epaphroditus, v25-30. Paul intends to send Epaphroditus, an emissary from the Philippian church and now an emissary from Paul, back to Philippi before he knows the outcome of his trial, and so before he sends Timothy to them.

**δε** "**but**" - BUT/AND. Transitional, indicating the next step in the argument and so left untranslated, rather than serving as an adversative, as NIV; "I have thought it necessary .....", ESV.

**αναγκαιον** adj. "**[I think it is] necessary**" - [I CONSIDER TO SEND EPAPHRODITUS TO YOU, THE BROTHER AND FELLOW-WORKER AND FELLOW-SOLDIER OF ME, BUT APOSTLE OF YOU AND SERVANT OF THE NEED OF ME] A

NECESSITY. Emphatic by position. The adjective "necessary" serves as a substantive, "a necessity", complement of the infinitival construction, "to send ...", which serves as the direct object of the verb "to consider" (so introducing a dependent statement of perception), serving in a double accusative construction. Varner treats "a necessity" as the direct object of the verb and the infinitival construction as epexegetic, specifying / explaining "a necessity"; "I consider *it* a necessity, namely, to send to you ...." Cf., 2Cor.9:5 for a similar syntactical construction.

τον αδελφον [ος] "[my] brother" - As with "fellow-worker", "fellow soldier", "apostle" and "servant", the noun stands in apposition to "Epaphroditus". Note the servant and military descriptives used of Christian ministry. The "apostle" here is most likely "messenger", as NIV. Epaphroditus is not being identified as one of the apostles; he is their messenger, not their apostle. The word λειτουργον is used of one who serves or ministers, but not necessarily in a cultic setting. Here obviously as NIV.

της χρειας [α] gen. "[whom you sent to take care] of [my] needs" - [SERVANT] OF THE NEED [OF ME]. The genitive is usually treated as verbal, objective, as NIV; "who has been ministering to my needs."

## v26

Paul now explains why he is sending Epaphroditus back to Philippi - he is homesick. It seems likely that the Philippians expected Epaphroditus to stay with Paul and to minister to his needs, which is probably why Paul mentions his illness, his anxiety to get him home and his desire that the church welcomes him back.

πειδη "for" - BECAUSE. The causal conjunction serves to introduce a causal clause explaining why Paul is sending Epaphroditus home.

επιποθων [επιποθεω] pres. part. "he longs for" - HE WAS [YEARNING AFTER YOU ALL AND BEING HOMESICK]. The present participle with the imperfect verb to-be, forms a periphrastic imperfect construction. So also αδημονων, "being heavy = very distressed." This construction is probably emphasizing durative aspect / imperfective; "he was homesick to see you all", Barclay.

διоти "because" - Causal conjunction.

οτι "that" - [YOU HEARD] THAT [HE WAS SICK]. Introducing a dependent statement of perception expressing what they heard.

## v27

"He was certainly ill, Paul adds; indeed, his illness nearly proved fatal", Bruce. Hanson thinks that Paul is wanting to clarify the report the Philippians

had received regarding the ill-health of Epaphroditus. It seems they may have minimized its seriousness.

γάρ "-" - FOR. More reason than cause; explanatory.

και **"indeed"** - AND. It is not clear how the conjunction functions here, possibly emphatic, as NIV, but see BDF #452.3.

παραπλησιον adj. **"almost"** - COMING NEAR. This adjective, "near", when neuter, as here, serves as a preposition + dat., here adverbial, as NIV; "nearly died."

θανατω [ος] dat. **"died"** - TO DEATH. Dative after the improper preposition "near to."

αλλα **"but"** - BUT [GOD HAD MERCY ON HIM, AND NOT *on* HIM ONLY] BUT [AND = ALSO *on* ME]. Adversative, as NIV.

ινα μη + subj. **"to"** - THAT NOT = LEST [I SHOULD HAVE SORROW UPON SORROW] Introducing a negated purpose clause, "in order not ....", or result, "so that ..." The sorrow that Paul would have felt had Epaphroditus died.

επι + acc. **"upon"** - Spatial, expressing "in addition to = upon."

## v28

Whether or not the Philippians intended Epaphroditus to stay some time with Paul, he has decided to send him home sooner than expected. We can only guess at Paul's motive, eg., "since he (Epaphroditus) had been deathly ill and was now miraculously well, Paul was *more eager* to send him home", Hansen. "Paul himself would be the more relieved to think of the mutual joy that Epaphroditus and his friends in Philippi would experience when they were safely reunited", Bruce.

ουν **"therefore"** - Inferential; drawing a logical conclusion.

επειμνα [πειμνω] aor. **"to send [him]"** - I SENT [HIM MORE HASTILY]. Epistolary aorist; "I am sending", Cassirer. The modifying comparative adverb σπουδαιοτερωσ takes the sense "more hastily", Hawthorne; "more hastily *than I would have done otherwise*", Varner, "with special urgency", BDAG.

ινα **"so that"** - Here serving to introduce a purpose clause; "in order that ..."

ιδοντες [οραω] aor. part. **"when you see [him]"** - HAVING SEEN [HIM AGAIN]. The participle is adverbial, best treated as temporal, as NIV.

καγω **"and I"** - [YOU MAY REJOICE] AND I [MAY BE]. Crasis, και + εγω.

αλυποτερος comp. adj. **"less anxiety"** - FREER FROM PAIN. Predicate comparative adjective; The adjective takes the sense "free from anxiety", BDAG, with the comparative being "less anxious", Varner. "And my sorrow will disappear", TEV.

## v29

Paul, getting to the point, calls on the Philippian believers to welcome Epaphroditus, and to do so joyfully; "most warmly", Phillips. The service being offered in carrying Paul's letter is certainly not extraordinary, but as Jesus taught his disciples, the lowliest service deserves the greater honour.

**οὖν "so then"** - THEREFORE [WELCOME HIM]. Inferential; drawing a logical conclusion. Note that the imperative "welcome" takes the present tense which, being durative, gives the sense "be welcoming."

**ἐν κυρίῳ [ος] "in the Lord"** - IN LORD. Local, expressing sphere, or adverbial, modal, expressing manner, ..... See v24. "*As a fellow brother in the Lord*" = "as a believer."

**μετὰ + gen. "with [great joy]"** - WITH [ALL JOY]. Expressing association / accompaniment, "in company with" = "accompanied with joy", or adverbial, "with joy" = "joyfully".

**ἐντιμούσ adj. "honour"** - PRECIOUS. Accusative complement of the accusative direct object "such ones", standing in a double accusative construction.

**τοὺς τοιοῦτους pro. "people like him"** - [HAVE, HOLD] SUCH ONES [PRECIOUS]. The pronoun serves as a substantive, accusative object of the verb "to have, hold."

## v30

"He risked his life to do for me in prison what distance prevented you all from doing", Phillips. The Philippian congregation was not able to come to Rome and minister to Paul in prison, but a representative could do that on their behalf. Epaphroditus, on their behalf, gave himself in service to Paul in the cause of Christ, even to the point of death.

**ὅτι "because"** - Introducing a causal clause explaining why Epaphroditus deserves to be joyfully welcomed and honoured, "because ...."

**μέχρι + gen. "[he almost died]"** - [HE CAME NEAR] UP TO [DEATH]. Temporal preposition. Unnecessary, given the verb "to come near to."

**διὰ + acc. "for"** - BECAUSE OF, ON ACCOUNT OF. Here expressing advantage; "for the sake of the work of Christ."

**Χριστοῦ [ος] gen. "[the work] of Christ"** - Varner classifies the adjectival genitive as verbal, subjective, "the work done on Christ's behalf", Cassirer, "he has earned this honour by working so hard in the service of the Master", Junkins, or objective, "working for Christ", "his loyalty to Christ", Phillips, or possessive, "for the sake of Christ's work", Barclay, or idiomatic, "the work / service *which* Christ *has called him to perform*."

παρaboλευσαμενος [παρaboλευομαι] aor. mid. part. "**he risked**" - HAVING RISKED = HAVING GAMBLLED WITH. Attendant circumstance participle expressing action accompanying the verb "he came near to", "he came to the brink of death and endangered his life", Berkeley, or adverbial, best treated as instrumental, expressing means, "by risking his life", Moffatt.

τη ψυχη [η] dat. "**his life**" - THE = HIS LIFE. Dative of direct object after the παρa prefix participle "having risked."

ινα + subj. "**to [make up for]**" - THAT [HE MIGHT FILL UP]. Serving to introduce a final clause expressing purpose; "in order to make up for / complete the service you were not able to render to me."

της .... λειτουργιας [α] gen. "**the help**" - [WHAT IS LACKING OF YOU] OF THE SERVICE. The genitive is usually classified as verbal, objective, "to make up for the service", Berkeley, but possibly adverbial, "so that he might, by his service to me, makeup as much as was in his power for that which was still lacking ...", Cassirer.

υμων gen. pro. "**you yourselves**" - OF YOU. The adjectival genitive may be classified as verbal subjective, "the service which you yourselves could not give", Barclay, or possessive, "your deficiency" = "your limited opportunity for service to me."

προς "[**could not give me**]" - TOWARD [ME]. Spatial, direction; "what is lacking in your service to me", ESV.

## 3:1-4a

### 5. Warnings and appeals, 3:1-21

#### i] Paul gives a warning concerning the Judaizers

##### Argument

Paul begins his dissertation on the heresy of sanctification by obedience / nomism by warning his readers that the heretics, "those mutilators of the flesh", have no part in God's chosen people.

##### Issues

i] Context: See 1:1-11. Some commentators argue that chapter 3 is an interpolation, possibly extracted from some other Pauline document, now lost, and placed in Philippians by an editor. Chapter 3 does seem to be out of place, but note the comment in "Context", 2:19-30. Particularly jarring is the "as for the rest, my brothers, rejoice in the Lord", v1a. This may serve as the conclusion of 2:19-30, but it probably serves to introduce chapter 3. Some commentators argue that it serves as an intended end to the letter, so Bruce, Silva, ... Having signed off his letter Paul then decides (possibly the next day) to press on and deal with an issue always on his mind, namely, the heresy of sanctification by obedience, a doctrine peddled by the Judaizers, members of the circumcision party.

It does seem likely that Paul now sets out to address the issue of sanctification by obedience, but it is no afterthought. This chapter presents as a further development of the proposition, 1:27-30. Paul has presented the positive side of his argument in chapter 2, known in rhetoric as the *probatio*, and now he develops his *refutatio*, an argument against those who undermine the gospel, those who do not conduct themselves worthy of the gospel of Christ. So, the passage before us introduces a larger section where Paul warns the church about false teachers, 3:1-21. These members of the circumcision party, based in the Jerusalem church, have been following up on Paul's missionary work, seeking to correct his supposed overemphasis on grace and depreciation of law-obedience. For these nomist believers, submission to the law of God is a necessary requisite for the gaining of holiness and thus access to the full blessings of new life in Christ, v1-4/4a. Yet, if anyone is going to be rewarded for their righteousness, then Paul is certainly a candidate - a righteous Israelite through and through, v4a/b-6. None-the-less, Paul has found a righteousness that is apart from the law, a righteousness found in Christ through faith, a righteousness that brings with it the full blessings of God's promised new life apart from law-obedience, v7-9. Paul defines these consequences in v10 as:

- knowing Christ, in the sense of becoming at one with the divine;

- experiencing the complete transforming power of the risen Christ;
- identification with the suffering Christ in his death for the ultimate victory over sin and self.

All this, of course, is encapsulated in the resurrection of the dead, v11. In the rest of the chapter Paul seeks to apply his teachings to the Philippian situation.

ii] Background: See 1:1-11, *The troublemakers in Philippi*. It is most likely that "the dogs, the evil workers who mutilate the flesh", v2 (and probably "the enemies of the cross of Christ", v18), are the judaizers, members of the circumcision party. So, the problem underpinning Paul's words in chapter 3 is likely to be the same one referred to in 1:15-17, namely nomism - sanctification by obedience. The problem of nomism is addressed in detail by Paul in Romans and Galatians, but given the evangelistic work of the circumcision party, the problem had spread into many of Paul's mission churches.

Nomism (pietistic Christianity), the heresy promoted by the members of the circumcision party, is the belief that, although a person is justified (set right before God, judged covenant compliant) on the basis of Christ's faithfulness appropriated through faith, it is still necessary to add law-obedience in order to restrain sin and shape holiness (sanctify) for the full appropriation of God's promised blessings.

FAITH = RIGHTEOUSNESS + **WORKS** = BLESSINGS.

Paul's argument against this heresy is that the full entitlement of covenant blessing is ours in Christ apart from the law. To return to the law is to undermine grace.

FAITH = RIGHTEOUSNESS = **BLESSINGS** = WORKS.

iii] Structure: *A Warning concerning the Nomist Heretics*:

An exalted exhortation, v1a;

An introduction / statement of intent, namely, to again deal with an important subject, v1b;

A warning - beware of the mutilators of the flesh, v2;

A reason for the warning - the heretics have no part with God's children (the true circumcision), v3;

If the law blessed, Paul would be extra blessed, v4.

iv] Interpretation:

We are probably best to follow Fee who argues that 3:1-4a should be treated as a single literary unit serving to introduce the chapter as a whole. The opening phrase, "further", *το λοιπον*, is best taken as transitional, not "finally", but "as for the rest (of what needs to be spoken to)". Paul frames "the rest" with an essential spiritual quality, namely, to "rejoice in the

Lord", cf., 2:18. The issue, one that has dogged Paul over his entire ministry and may well be troubling the Philippians at this very moment, finds its appropriate place in the great scheme of things when the focus of our life is our delight in the Lord. It is no great burden for Paul to raise the issue again, and he happily does so for the security of his readers. To this end he urges them to have nothing to do with the teachings of the "mutilators of the flesh" (Judaizers, members of the circumcision party, nomist believers peddling the heresy of sanctification by obedience). The reason is simple enough: it is the Philippian believers who are the true circumcision, the true children of God; it is they who have received the full appropriation of the promised blessings of the covenant, namely, the Spirit; and it is they who learnt long ago not to put any reliance on the Torah / Law to progress their standing as believers.

### Text - 3:1

A warning about the workers of iniquity, v1-4a. "Hang with the Lord rather than the Law. I know, I've worked this subject with you before, but it's my bag, I can't drop it, and anyway, it's to help you stay on track."

το λοιπον adj. "**further**" - THE REST. Here the neuter articular adjective serves as an adverb, "as for the rest (of what needs to be spoken to)", Fee.

εἰς + dat. "[**rejoice**] in [**the Lord**]" - [BROTHERS OF ME, REJOICE] IN [LORD]. As already indicated, "rejoice" is probably not a concluding exclamation to the letter, a kind of "good-by". Paul is calling on his reader to be infused with delight, a delight "in the Lord." Again, we are confronted with a phrase that can have any number of meanings. The preposition may be local, incorporative, "delight / rejoice in union with the Lord"? Bruce thinks not. It is possibly causal / basis; "because of your union with the Lord", ie., Christ is the source / ground of rejoicing. Hawthorne opts for a combination of both, indicating "both the true basis of Christian joy and the sphere in which it thrives." Possibly the preposition indicates the object of rejoicing. Hanson opts for all three possibilities, "the Lord is the source, object and sphere of joy." The repetition of the phrase "in the Lord" throughout this letter indicates that it has become an idiomatic statement encapsulating the general idea of being a believer, of being a person who has responded to the gospel and is now in an eternal relationship with the Lord, daily walking with his compelling Spirit. What we need to do is delight in this reality rather than be brought down by life (in particular, those pesky nomist heretics).

μὲν .... δε "..... **and ...**" - *on the one hand* [THE SAME THINGS TO WRITE TO YOU *is* NOT TROUBLESOME FOR ME] *BUT on the other hand* [*it is* A SAFEGUARD FOR YOU]. An adversative comparative construction

ἐμοὶ "**for me**" - Dative of interest, advantage.

γραφειν [γραφο] pres. inf. "**to write**" - The infinitive serves as the subject of an assumed verb to-be. "I don't mind repeating what I've written before", TEV.

τα "**the same things**" - THE SAME. The article serves as a nominalizer turning the pronoun into a substantive, the accusative subject of the infinitive "to write."

ὕμιν dat. pro. "**to you again**" - TO YOU. Dative of indirect object.

ὕμιν dat. pro. "**[it is a safeguard] for you**" - Dative of interest, advantage. "Better safe than sorry", Peterson.

## v2

The Gk. imperative for "see", **βλεπετε**, is repeated three times and used with three words commencing with the Gk. letter Kappa, **κ**. The alliteration formed by this arrangement intensifies the exhortation. "Stay clear of the barking dogs, those religious busybodies who run around imposing their piety on everyone else."

**βλεπετε** [βλεπω] pres. imp. "**watch out for**" - WATCH OUT. Often the imperative carries the sense "consider, take note of", but here the stronger sense "beware" is likely, so Varner.

**κυνας** [ων ονος] "**dogs**" - THE DOGS, [WATCH OUT THE EVIL WORKERS]. Accusative direct object of the verb "to see." A strong descriptive of a person; "be on your guard against those curs", Phillips. Probably just a derogatory statement in its own right, although Jews would often refer to Gentiles as "dogs", which would serve to increase the insult when applied to people with Jewish heritage.

**την κατατομην** [η] "**those mutilators of the flesh**" - [WATCH OUT] THE MUTILATORS. Accusative direct object of the verb "to look at, see." The mutilation in mind is surely circumcision; "the snippers, cutters." For the members of the circumcision party, circumcision was the rite which evidenced a person's standing as one of God's chosen people and thus their right to access the promised blessings of the covenant. "All they are interested in is appearances - knife-happy circumcisers", Peterson.

## v3

As it turns out, believers are the true circumcision, the true children of God and thus the inheritors of the promised blessings of the covenant. They are so because they serve God, not by striving to follow the Law, but by following the leading of the Spirit. God's special people, his chosen people, are those who have put their confidence in Jesus' faithfulness, not their own.

**γαρ** "**for**" - Here more reason rather than cause, explaining who are the true circumcised, certainly not the mutilators.

ἡμεῖς "we" - Emphatic by use and position.  
ἡ περιτομή [ἡ] "**the circumcision**" - [ARE] THE CIRCUMCISION. Usually translated "the *true* circumcision"; "it is we, not they, who have received the true circumcision", TEV.

οἱ ... λατρευοντες [λατρευω] pres. part. "**we who serve God**" - THE ONES SERVING [BY *the* SPIRIT OF GOD, the ones BOASTING IN CHRIST JESUS AND *the ones* HAVING CONFIDENCE NOT IN *the* FLESH, ARE THE CIRCUMCISION]. The participle serves as a substantive standing in apposition to the pronoun "we" rather than the predicate nominative "the circumcision"; "for we, who worship by God's Spirit ..... are the truly circumcised", Berkeley. There is some confusion in the translation of the word "worship". The two words which may prompt this translation are λατρευω, which means something like "to give worthy service", and προσκυνεω, which means "to express reverential fear, to adore, to wonder at". The NIV11 rightly translates the word here as "serve" rather than the NIV "worship". The addition of "God" follows Lightfoot who argued that the word, when used in a cultic setting, carries the implied object "God". Yet, the word is primarily a service word in its own right and doesn't require an object, so Koester, NTS 8, "[we are those] who work as missionaries in the Spirit of God."

οἱ πνευματι [α ατος] dat. "**by the Spirit [of God] / by [his] Spirit**" - The NIV takes the dative as instrumental expressing means. Local is possible, as Koester above, NASB, although Moule argues that the following local εν Χριστω implies that the dative here is instrumental, "by means of" = "under the guidance of God's Spirit", Cassirer.

θεου [ος] gen. "**of God / his**" - The genitive may be taken as adjectival, possessive, or idiomatic / source. Missing in some manuscripts, so possibly, although unlikely, "whose service is spiritual." Some take "God" as the genitive of direct object of "serving", "the ones serving God", but λατρευω is usually followed by a dative, not a genitive. So best, "we serve by means of God's Spirit."

καυχωμενο [καυχαομαι] pres. mid. part. "**who boast**" - *the ones* BOASTING / GLORYING. The participle serves as a substantive, standing in apposition to the pronoun "we". The sense here may express either self-confidence or joy, "we rejoice", TEV. Most translations opt for self-confidence, pride; "our pride is in Christ Jesus", Barclay, CEV, ...

εν + dat. "**in [Christ Jesus]**" - Again we struggle to pin down any particular sense to this phrase; cf., 3:1 and 2:19. We may opt for goal / object, expressing the goal toward which the action is directed, as Barclay above, so Bruce. We may opt for cause / basis, "we rejoice because of / on the ground of our relationship with Christ Jesus", cf., TH.

**πεποιθότες [πειθεω]** perf. part. "**who put [no] confidence**" - *the ones* HAVING CONFIDENCE. The participle serves as a substantive standing in apposition to the pronoun "we". The perfect tense is used with a present meaning. **εν** + dat. "**in [the flesh]**" - [NOT] IN THE FLESH. Probably as for "in Christ Jesus", local / cause, ground, basis. The negation **ουκ** negates "in flesh"; the negation **μη** is used with participles. The use of the word "flesh" here is not neutral. It can mean "all that in which human beings place their trust", O'Brien, or more particularly a confidence before God which rests on blamelessness in fulfillment of the law. When it comes down to it, Paul probably has in mind "works of the law." Possibly just "we put no trust in external ceremonies", TEV, but probably more is intended. "We don't boast in what we have done", CEV, is surely better. A believer's confidence lies in Christ and in his indwelling compelling Spirit guiding our daily lives "according to the Spirit", Rom.8:4. The Judaizers argued that a believer's spiritual life / sanctification progressed by works of the law, by obedience, faithfulness. They had set aside their confidence in the Lord for a confidence in the flesh; cf., Fee. "The circumcision of the flesh, as preached by the Judaizers, became for Paul the symbol of a total mindset that is opposed to the Spirit and leads to death (Rom.8:5-8, Gal.5:16-21", Silva.

#### v4a

If it were possible to have confidence before God on the basis of personal godliness then Paul is well in line for innumerable rewards; "if an orthodox pedigree and upbringing, followed by high personal attainment in the religious and moral realm, ensured good standing in the presence of God ..... *then* Paul needs fear no competition", Bruce. Commentators divide on whether 4a should be included with this section or with Paul's privileges and personal achievements in v4-6.

**καιπερ** + part. "**though**" - EVEN THOUGH. This conjunction with a participle forms an adverbial concessive clause which concedes a point for argument sake; "we ... put no confidence in the flesh (v3), although if anyone has a reason to find some value in it, I do."

**εγω** "**I myself**" - I. Emphatic by use and position, as NIV; "as far as I am concerned", Cassirer.

**εχων [εχω]** pres. part. "**have reasons for**" - *could be* HAVING. The participle is adverbial, concessive with **καιπερ**; "although I have grounds for." The syntax expresses "have as one's own", not "I might have confidence", cf., JB, TEV...

**πεποιθησιν [ις εως]** "**such confidence**" - CONFIDENCE. "Actual present confidence, not merely grounds for confidence", Varner. "Although, so far as I am concerned, I am the very man to have confidence also about outward matters", Cassirer.

καὶ "-" - AND = ALSO. Adjunctive. Possibly ascensive, "even in the flesh", NJB, but better adjunctive, "also". Paul is a person who has confidence in Christ, but also "in", grounded on the basis of (ἐν, local, basis / ground) σαρκί, "*the* flesh." He has good reason to be confident in his religiosity, but he doesn't base his confidence there, but rather on Christ.

ἐν σαρκί [σαρξ ὄς] "-" - IN *the* FLESH. Paul uses the phrase quite often and with different meanings, ranging from the physical flesh to the whole of existence without God. As already noted, existence "in the flesh" is not evil, but in that it is devoid of God, not "in the Spirit", evil is easily nourished. Here, prompted by the previous references to circumcision, the phrase serves as an alias for "the Law": the moral and cultic regulations of religious Israel, as derived from the scriptures, and used to confirm and progress the righteous standing of a child of God.

## 3:4b-11

### 5. Warnings and appeals, 3:1-21

#### ii] Seek the prize of knowing Christ

##### Argument

The particular passage before us is part of a larger section where Paul warns the church about false teachers, 3:1-21. Unlike the members of the circumcision party who continually trouble the church with their work-based piety, Paul has willingly abandoned his reliance on law-obedience to access the fullness of God's promised new life, and now looks to God's grace in Christ, and this through faith.

##### Issues

i] Context: See 3:1-4a.

ii] Background: See 1:1-11.

iii] Structure: *Seek the prize of knowing Christ*:

Paul's personal achievements, v4a-6;

Spiritual credentials apart from Christ are worthless;

The essence of Pauline theology - the real source of worth, v7-11.

Everything is mere refuse compared to gaining Christ, v7-8;

The blessing of gaining Christ, v9-11

iv] Interpretation:

Paul has just criticized the members of the circumcision party / the judaizers, and has done so using the strongest of language, v2-4a. These believers from the Jerusalem church have been following up on Paul's missionary work, correcting his supposed overemphasis on grace, as opposed to law. For these nomist believers, submission to the law of God was a necessary requisite for progressing holiness in order to access the full blessings of new life in Christ.

Using himself as an example, Paul "draws back the curtain on his past religious life so as to permit the Philippians to understand, not abstractly, but concretely, what it means to consider oneself no longer religious except through the Spirit, no longer able to boast except in Christ Jesus, and no longer able to rely on human privilege or achievement to gain favour with God", Hawthorne, v4b-6.

Having stated that he, of all people, has reason to boast "in the flesh" ("human achievements", Barclay, as they relate to law-obedience, both cultic [circumcision] and moral), Paul goes on to point out that he has found a righteousness that is apart from the law, a righteousness found in

the faithfulness of Christ appropriated through faith, a righteousness that brings with it the promised blessings of the covenant, namely, new life, v7-9. These verses encapsulate the essence of Pauline theology; in them "Paul describes the total reorientation of his life that has occurred because of Jesus Christ", O'Brien. In v10 Paul describes this new life in Christ as:

- knowing Christ, in the sense of becoming at one with the divine;
- experiencing the complete transforming power of the risen Christ;
- identifying with the suffering Christ in his death for the ultimate victory over sin and self.

All this, of course, encapsulated in the resurrection of the dead, v11.

For the Judaizers / members of the circumcision party / nomists / the Jerusalem church pietists, who constantly interfered in Paul's missionary churches, the full appropriation of the promised blessings of the covenant could only be attained by a strict adherence to the Law (the Torah, probably + the ethic of Jesus). The heresy of sanctification by obedience seems logically sound; a believer wipes the slate clean through faith in Christ and then presses forward in the Christian life for divine blessings by means of faithful obedience:

FAITH = RIGHTEOUSNESS + **WORKS** = BLESSINGS

For Paul, the full appropriation of the promised blessings of the covenant were already his in Christ through faith apart from works of the Law. Nothing needs to be added to the righteousness which is through faith (Christ's faithfulness + our faith response) to appropriate the promised blessings of the covenant, the fullness of new life in Christ:

FAITH = RIGHTEOUSNESS = **BLESSINGS** = WORKS

v] Homiletics: *The gift of surpassing greatness.*

*All I want is to know Christ in the power that is evident in his resurrection.*



When Tony Hancock, a greatly loved English comedian of the 1960's, came to Australia, it was the end of the road for a brilliant man. He took his life in a motel room and left a note to all those who loved him; "things seem to go wrong too many times". He had reached the end. He could never surpass his brilliant pieces like the "Radio

Ham"; it was all downhill from there. Life seems to have this shape to it. We all have a moment of beauty, of brilliance, and from this height we slip into regret. Yet, for a believer, there is a different perspective to life. Regret but reminds us of a brilliance which is eternal in its realization; a brilliance found in knowing Christ.

What a wonderful word is "know". The Bible often uses it of marriage where "a man knows his wife." How amazing it is that our relationship with Christ is described in the terms of such an intimate union! And so, "as the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you my God."

We know Christ when we participate in his death. We have died with Christ. Our old life is hid with him, on the cross, on the tree. Our sinfulness is no longer counted against us by God; the curse of sin no longer hangs over us. God no longer sees the stains of our sin when we are hidden in Christ.

We know Christ in the power that raised him to life. So many in the church today seek power: power to heal, power to witness, power to work miracles. Yet, Christ's resurrection power is experienced in the indwelling Spirit, renewing and enlivening our very beings. As we look to our risen Lord, so his life-giving power gives life to our mortal bodies, life now and eternal - we begin to be the person we are in Christ.

Let us, like Paul, long to know Christ, accessing the power of his resurrection, sharing in the benefits of his suffering.

### **Text - 3:4b**

Seek the prize of knowing Christ, v4b-11: i] Paul's credentials; his standing in God's people Israel, his inherited privileges and achievements, v4b-6. Having warned the Philippians to keep clear of the "mutilators of the flesh" (members of the circumcision party, law-bound believers), Paul points out that if anyone has the right to claim any status in the presence of God it is he himself.

**ει "if"** - IF, *as is the case*, [ANY OTHER PERSON THINKS TO HAVE CONFIDENCE IN *the FLESH*, *then* I MORE]. Introducing a conditional clause 1st. class, where the condition is assumed to be true; "if, *as is the case*, ..... *then* ...."

**πειθεινα [πειθω]** perf. inf. "[thinks] **they have reasons to put confidence**" - TO PLACE CONFIDENCE IN. The infinitive, following a cognitive verb, introduces a dependent statement of perception expressing what they "think / assume / consider."

**εν + dat. "in [the flesh]"** - Adverbial, reference / respect; "with respect to the flesh (Law)."

**μολλον** adv. "[I have] **more**" - MORE / RATHER. Here with the sense of "more" - "[I have] to a greater degree."

## v5

In v5-6 Paul goes on to detail the quality of his legalistic righteousness: his race (Israel), religion (temple worship), law-obedience, ritual and legal purity (Pharisaic traditions).

**περιτομή [η]** "**circumcised [on the eighth day]**" - TO CIRCUMCISION [AN EIGHTH DAY *one*]. The dative is probably adverbial, reference / respect; "with respect to / as to circumcision." Circumcised when he was a week old, i.e., he was circumcised in strict conformity with the law. Lev.12:3.

**εκ** + gen. "**of [the people]**" - OF [RACE, OF ISRAEL]. Expressing source / origin. Paul is an Israelite by birth.

**Ισραηλ** gen. proper. "**of Israel**" - The genitive is adjectival, probably attributive / idiomatic, "the people who are descended from Israel", or epeexegetic, so Varner.

**φυλής [η]** gen. "**of the tribe**" - If **εκ** + gen. is assumed, ablative, source / origin, "from".

**Βενιαμιν** gen. "**of Benjamin**" - The assumed genitive is again adjectival, as for "Israel", limiting "tribe"; "of the tribe which is named after Benjamin."

**Εβραιος εξ Εβραίων** "**a Hebrew of Hebrews**" - Meaning, a Hebrew **εκ**, "out of, from" = "son of" Hebrew parents.

**κατα** + acc. "**in regard to [the law, a Pharisee]**" - ACCORDING TO [LAW A PHARISEE]. Here expressing reference / respect; "with respect to / with reference to the law" = "with regard to the law." Although there is no definite article before "law", the Torah is intended. The way Paul approached the law, and particularly the way he strove to keep it, was according to the ethical and ceremonial purity of the sect of the Pharisees. That is, his standard of "righteousness" was high.

## v6

**κατα** + acc. "**as for**" - ACCORDING TO. Again, expressing reference / respect; "with respect to / with reference to." Of course, as such, the preposition with "zeal" forms the adverbial phrase "with regard to zeal", which may be treated as an adverbial periphrastic construction with the sense "zealously"; "I zealously persecuted the church."

**ζηλος [ος]** "**zeal**" - ZEAL, JEALOUSY. The positive sense is intended here, "ardour" instead of "envy". When it came to the traditions of Israel, Paul's zeal went as far as persecuting those who undermined Israel's traditions.

**διωκων [διωκω]** pres. part. "**persecuting**" - We could treat the participle as a substantive, "with regard zeal, a persecutor of the church", predicate nominative, so Varner, but its verbal aspect seems prominent. Zerwick suggests

the participle is used to express iterative action - repeated and habitual action; "zealously persecuting the church."

την εκκλησιαν [α] "the church" - The assembly / congregation of believers." Accusative direct object of the participle "persecuting".

κατα δικαιοσυνην "as for [legalistic] righteousness / as for righteousness [based on the law]" - ACCORDING TO / IN RELATION TO / WITH RESPECT TO THE RIGHTEOUSNESS. There is some debate as to what type of "righteousness" Paul has in mind. The word "righteousness" has many meanings depending on the context: uprightness, justice, what is right, what God requires, ritual purity, or Paul's favourite, standing in a right-relationship with God / covenant compliant. Possibly "uprightness", the upright behaviour of a child of God achieved by means of attention to the demands of the law. Of such, Paul is exemplary (as far as Pharisaic standards are concerned). Yet, he is probably using the word "righteousness" in his typical sense of covenant compliant, but qualified by "based on the Law", which qualification means he is not covenant compliant / right with God / "rectified", Martyn.

την "-" - THE. An anaphoric use of the article, i.e., referencing forward; "with regard to righteousness, the righteousness ....."

εν + dat. "based on [the law]" - IN [*the* LAW]. The preposition is probably local, expressing sphere, "the righteousness that is achieved in the sphere of the law"; "I did everything the Law demanded", CEV. As noted above, Paul is not claiming his obedience to the law made him righteous before God.

γενομενος [γίνομαι] aor. part. "[faultless]" - HAVING BECOME [BLAMELESS]. The participle with the adjective *αμειπτος*, "blameless", probably serves to form the substantive phrase "a faultless *man*." Paul is not saying he is sinless, but rather that as to the legalistic requirements of the law as understood by the Pharisaic party, he was faultless; "I don't think anyone could have found fault with me", Phillips.

v7

ii] The essence of Paul's theology, v7-11. Paul now speaks of "the great reversal in his life because of the risen Christ", Reumann, of the privileges and blessings that are now his, *gains* which transcend all that he had before.

a) Everything is mere refuse compared to gaining Christ, v7-8. Yet, Paul states that he regards his religious purity, encapsulated in his obedience to the law, as nothing and this because of his association with Christ. He regards this "confidence in the flesh", v4, as mere refuse / valueless, for the sake of Christ.

αλλα "but" - Strong adversative. A possible textual variant; "however, nevertheless ..."

**ἅτινα** pro. "**whatever**" - WHAT THINGS. Subject of the verb to-be; "But all such assets", REB.

**μοι** dat. pro. "[**was**] **to my**" - [WERE GAINS] TO ME. Dative of interest, advantage; "what was once an advantage for me."

**κερδη [ος]** "**profit / gains**" - Predicate nominative. An accountancy term; Paul now regards the advantage of his law-keeping as no advantage.

**ἤγημαι [ἤγεομαι]** perf. "**I now consider [loss]**" - HAVE CONSIDERED, REGARDED, COUNTED [A LOSS]. The perfect here expressing a state or condition.

**δια** + acc. "**for the sake of Christ**" - BECAUSE OF / ON ACCOUNT OF CHRIST. This preposition, followed by the accusative, is causal, "because of", ie., because of what Christ has done for the provision of free grace, Paul now sees no advantage in the law; "because of Christ", NRSV. The NIV, along with the RSV and others, reads it as "for the sake of", "for Christ's sake." This translation is still causal, explaining what has motivated Paul, but the advantage has shifted from Paul to Christ, here his desire to affirm Christ. "Because of" is to be preferred.

v8

In fact, as a believer, Paul regards "everything" of little value in comparison with the far greater worth / the supreme advantage of knowing Christ - "knowing" in the sense of understanding and experiencing him. It is not just his religious purity that Paul regards as refuse, but "even of esteem and friendship and enjoyment and rest and relations", Greijdanus (Dutch theologian, 1871-1948). Paul casts away everything, because first of all, to gain Christ is of far greater value.

**μενουυγε** "**what is more**" - [BUT] ON THE OTHER HAND [AND = ALSO]. The **αλλα** is not adversative here but presents an accessory idea, made more emphatic by **μενουυγε και**, cf., BDF 448.6, as NIV.

**ἤγουμαι [ἤγεομαι]** pres. "**I consider**" - The present tense has durative / imperfective force; "I continue to consider", O'Brien.

**παντα** pro. "**everything**" - ALL THINGS. Accusative direct object of the verb "to consider", but at the same time serving as the accusative subject of the infinitive of the verb to-be. In v7 it was "whatever" (which things), referring to the religious inheritance of Israel as interpreted and applied by the strict sect of the Pharisees. The "everything" (all things) most likely applies to everything else that gives Paul standing / self-worth, namely, Roman citizenship, status in society, wealth....

**εἶναι [εἰμι]** pres. inf. "**[a loss]**" - TO BE [A LOSS]. Introducing a dependent statement of perception after a cognitive verb; "I consider that everything (that provides status, power, wealth, ....) is a dead loss."

δια + acc. "**because of**" - BECAUSE OF, ON ACCOUNT OF. Causal. As in v7, "because of" is better than "for the sake of."

το ὑπερεχον [ὑερεχω] pres. part. "**the surpassing greatness / worth**" - THE RISING ABOVE, THE EXCELLENCY. The participle here is best read as a substantive, "matchless greatness / ultimate value / supreme advantage", indicating the worth of that for which Paul gave everything up. "Compared to the supreme value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord", Moffatt.

της γνωσεως [ις εως] gen. "**of knowing**" - OF THE KNOWLEDGE. The genitive is adjectival, possibly appositional, limiting "matchless greatness" which means that the surpassing greatness is the knowledge, i.e., they are one and the same thing, but possibly better attributed, "the surpassing knowledge", so Wallace. "Knowledge" is a highly charged word with many possible meanings and it is obviously important to identify Paul's intended sense because in comparison with it, everything else is "rubbish". Obviously not just intellectual information about God, possibly mystical union with the divine, although better, the Old Testament sense of "knowing", best illustrated in marriage where a man knows his wife. "Knowing" is an intimate personal union where the other is both understood and experienced. We know God in his gracious kindness and mercy toward us, a grace which we access through repentance and faith.

Χριστου Ιησου gen. "**Christ Jesus**" - OF CHRIST JESUS. Most commentators opt for an objective genitive, i.e., Christ is the object of the knowledge, he is the one who is known, although it could be subjective, i.e., Christ does the knowing, and therefore, here Paul is expressing the wonder of being known by Christ. None-the-less, it is more likely that the genitive "of Christ Jesus" is expegetic, limiting "the knowledge" by defining it; "the surpassing knowledge *which is all about* Jesus Christ."

μου gen. pro. "**my [Lord]**" - THE LORD OF ME. The genitive is adjectival, possessive. The genitive "the Lord" probably stands in apposition to "Christ Jesus". "This Lord, the knowledge of whom is of ultimate value, is my Lord." Paul expresses an intimate acquaintance with Christ which is quite unique in his writings.

δι [δια] + acc. "**for [whose sake]**" - BECAUSE OF, ON ACCOUNT OF [WHOM ALL THINGS I SUFFERED LOSS]. Causal; "on account of whom I experienced loss of everything", Reumann.

και "-." - AND [I CONSIDER]. Coordinative; "I have willingly given up all this and consider it rubbish", Berkeley.

σκυβαλα [ον] "**rubbish**" - GARBAGE, REFUSE. Accusative complement of the assumed direct object "them", "[I consider] *them* refuse", standing in a double

accusative construction. A stronger sense may be intended, "excrement", so possibly "and of no more value than a heap of dung."

**ἵνα** + subj. "**that**" - THAT [I MAY GAIN CHRIST]. Introducing a purpose clause, with the aorist indicating a complete gain in the future. This statement indicates the motive for counting "everything a loss." Paul goes on to say, "and be found in him (Christ), not having a righteousness ....." v9. It seems likely that the **καί** is epexegetic; "that is, be found in him ....." The subjunctive **κερδησω**, "I may gain", is interesting. The word means to gain by one's activity, or investment - to earn, to gain, to make a profit\*. Obviously, Paul is continuing with the accountancy profit / loss imagery. Paul once strove to earn many things, now he recognizes only one worthwhile earner. Of course, the image should not be pushed to argue that we gain Christ through our own effort.

**v9**

b) The blessing of gaining Christ, v9-11. What we have in these three verses is an explanation as to what it means to "gain Christ." To gain Christ is "to be found in him", united to him, righteous before God, v9. There is one's own kind of imperfect covenant compliance / righteousness which relies on law obedience and there is God's kind of covenant compliance / righteousness which relies on the faithfulness of Christ. Paul wants to be found in (in union with) Christ and so possess a perfect covenant compliance / righteousness, and with it, God's promised covenant blessings - life.

**εὑρεθω** [**εὑρισκω**] aor. subj. "**to be found**" - [AND] TO BE FOUND. Still controlled by **ἵνα**, v8, so forming a purpose clause; "in order to be found." "To be found in him and to be justified are the same", Bonnard, so here taking the "eschatological meaning of vindication at the divine court by possessing an acceptable righteousness", Martin.

**εν** + dat. "**in him**" - Local, sphere / incorporative union; "in union with him."

**μη εχων** [**εχω**] pres. part. "**not having**" - The participle is adverbial, probably causal, "because I have ...", O'Brien, although possibly concessive "although I have ....", or modal, as NIV, or result, so Varner.

**δικαιοσυνην** [**η**] "**a righteousness**" - [MY OWN] RIGHTEOUSNESS. Accusative direct object of the participle "having". Probably "old covenant righteousness", Fee, covenant compliance / right-standing before God, qualified by "of my own making" (self-righteousness)" and "that which comes from the law", cf., "righteousness", v6. The problem with a covenant compliance established by law-obedience is that it is not a perfect covenant compliance, it is a self-made, limited / compromised compliance and is therefore not recognized by God.

**εμην** possessive adj. "**of my own**" - Expressing the form of the righteousness that Paul does not want to have, i.e., self-righteousness.

**την** "**that**" - THE ONE. The article serves as an adjectivizer, turning the prepositional phrase "from the law" into an attributive modifier of the noun "righteousness"; "a righteousness of my own *which comes* from the law."

**εκ** + gen. "**comes from [the law]**" - OUT OF / COMES FROM [LAW]. Probably expressing origin / source; "that comes from law", NRSV, so NIV, imaging "from God." Best expressed as "based on observance of the law", NAB. "Law" = "the law of Moses", "the Torah."

**αλλα** "**but**" - Strong adversative standing in a counterpoint construction.

**την δικαιοσυνην [η]** "**[having] the righteousness**" - *the* RIGHTEOUSNESS. "New covenant righteousness", Fee, of being "set right before God", Bruce; see Excursus.

**δια** + gen. "**through**" - THROUGH, BY MEANS OF. Instrumental, expressing means; "by means of."

**δια πιστεως Χριστου** "**faith in Christ**" - FAITH / FAITHFULNESS OF CHRIST. "The faithfulness of Christ (subjective / possessive genitive), OR that which is through faith in Christ (objective genitive). Subjective / possessive seems best, expressing the faithful obedience of Christ to the Father's will upon which we rest in faith and which thus serves as the basis of our justification; see Excursus. "Mediated through the faithfulness of Christ."

**εκ** + gen. "**from**" - OUT OF / COMES FROM [GOD] - The preposition expresses separation, "away from", or origin / source, possibly author, of the righteousness that Paul wants to have, as opposed to "my own" source. This certainly supports the idea of "gift". See Excursus. "Which has God as its source", Cassirer.

**επι** + dat. "**by [faith] / on the basis of [faith]**" - [THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD] UPON [FAITH]. Here probably expressing basis / ground: "on the basis of / which is based on faith", i.e., the TNIV is to be preferred. "Faith" as above, Christ's faithfulness upon which we rest in faith.

## v10

This verse expands on what it means to be "found in Christ" and so further explains what it means to "gain Christ": to be found in Christ means to know him - experience an intimate association with Christ. We experience this *knowing* of Christ in the following ways: First, through his power; We experience the power that raised Christ from the dead, a power that aids us in our struggle with the realm of darkness; Second, through participation in Christ's suffering on our behalf; We experience forgiveness of sins. Paul then expands on the idea of a believer's identification with Christ in the terms of dying with him, "becoming

like him in his death, and rising with him, "attaining to the resurrection of the dead."

του γινωσκει [γινωσκω] aor. inf. "**I want to know [Christ]**" - OF THE TO KNOW [HIM]. A genitive article followed by an infinitive may be read a number of ways. It may be an exegetical infinitive, further explaining the meaning of "to gain Christ", v8, or more immediately "to be found in him." The construction would normally form a final clause, expressing purpose; "in order that we may know Christ". The construction can also be read to express consequence, or result; "we believe with the result that we know Christ." It is probably best to read the construction as paralleling the *hina* clause "to gain Christ": "I consider everything lost .... in order to gain Christ, .... in order to be found in him, ..... and in order "to know him ...". The 2nd. clause expands on the 1st., and the 3rd. expands on the 2nd; "to gain Christ, that is, to be found in him ..... to know him."

και "and / yes, to know"" - It is generally felt that και should not be read here as coordinative, but rather exegetical; Christ is known in the power of his resurrection and in the sharing of his sufferings. Both Goodspeed and Moffatt suggest "I want to know him in the power of his resurrection" and also in participating in his sufferings." So, TNIV.

την δυναμιν [ις εως] acc. "**the power**" - THE POWER. The first object of "to know" was "him = Christ", the second is "power"; "to know the power ...."

της αναστασεως [ις εως] gen. "**of [his] resurrection**" - OF THE RESURRECTION [OF HIM]. The genitive, as usual, causes trouble. The genitive may be appositional, i.e., power and resurrection are the same; "the power that is his resurrection"? Possibly idiomatic / source; "the power *that emanates from* his resurrection"? Christ's resurrection is then a source of power that attaches to a believer and empowers their life. The genitive could also be taken as a simple idiomatic descriptive; "the power *that is evident in* his resurrection." Of course, the power is God's power, the power that raised Christ to life, and it is this power that Paul wants to "know". Paul wants to understand and experience the life-transforming, renewing, enlivening... power that was operative in the resurrection of Christ, a power that is accessed through identification with (in) Christ in his resurrection. cf. Eph.1:19-20.

και "and" - Coordinative, as NIV.

την κοινωνιαν [α] "**the fellowship of sharing / participation**" - THE FELLOWSHIP. Here the third object of "to know"; "and to know the fellowship of sharing ....."

των παθηματων [μα ατος] gen. "**in [his] sufferings**" - OF THE SUFFERINGS [OF HIM]. The genitive is usually treated as objective such that the genitive substantive "sufferings" receives the action of the verbal noun "participation", as

NIV. Yet, it is possible that the genitive "of sufferings", in the phrase "the fellowship of his sufferings", is descriptive, idiomatic / source (verbal, subjective); "the fellowship *created by* Christ's sufferings", so the German commentator Lohmeyer. The definite articles with "power" and "resurrection" carry over to "fellowship" and "sufferings", indicating a close link between both phrases, although not necessarily suggesting that they are one in the same. The link, of course, is the death and resurrection of Christ. Participation in Christ's sufferings does not mean suffering for the gospel as Christ suffered, but rather identification with Christ in his death on the cross. We die with Christ, we rise with Christ, cf., Rom.6:8.

**συμμορφιζομενος** [συμμορφιζω] pres. pas. part. "**becoming like him**" - BEING CONFORMED. The participle is probably adjectival, expegegetic, explaining / specifying / amplifying what is meant by "sharing in his sufferings", although Varner opts for attributive. Fee suggests it is adverbial, modal, expressing manner; "being conformed to his death" - the present tense giving the sense "being continually conformed to his death." Possibly temporal, "while being conformed." Paul is speaking about our identification with Christ in his death, Rom.6:6.

**τω θανατω** [ος] dat. "**in [his] death**" - TO THE DEATH [OF HIM]. The dative may be taken as local, expressing incorporation, such the whole participial phrase serves as a "metaphor of incorporation", O'Brien, but also it serves as a dative of direct object of the **συν** prefix verb "to confirm with" / participle "being confirmed."

## v11

The ultimate blessing - the triumphant consummation of all things in the resurrection of the dead, v11.

**ει πως** "**and so, somehow,**" - IF SOMEHOW, IN SOME WAY, PERHAPS. This conditional construction serves to unite v11 with the final cause of v10, "being conformed to his death", so Meyer. The enclitic particle **πως** here expresses deference, not doubt, forming "an expression of expectation", BDF; The conditional conjunction **ει**, "if", is best taken as "introducing a clause of purpose where the attainment of the purpose is not altogether within the subject's power", Bruce, p119, NIBC. Note Paul's use of this construction in Romans 1:10, 11:14. "In the hope of attaining", Goodspeed.

**καταντησω** [κατανταω] aor. subj. / fut. "**attaining**" - I MAY OBTAIN / I SHALL OBTAIN. "And so achieve the resurrection from the dead."

**εις** + acc. "**to**" - INTO. Expressing the direction of the action and arrival at, here particularly goal.

την ἐξανάστασιν [ις εως] "**the resurrection**" - Paul has possibly created this word himself by adding ἐξ, "out of", to the normal word for "resurrection". This serves to underline the fact that he is now speaking about the resurrection from the dead in the last day, rather than our identification with Christ in his resurrection.

την "-" - THE. The article serves as an adjectivizer turning the prepositional phrase "from the dead" into an attributive modifier of the noun "the resurrection"; "the resurrection *which is* from the dead."

ἐκ + gen. "**from [the dead]**" - Expressing source / origin, or separation, of being removed from the realm of the dead.

## 3:12-16

### 5. Warnings and appeals, 3:1-21

#### iii] Seek the high calling in Christ Jesus

##### Argument

In this passage, Paul encourages his readers to press on toward the goal of knowing Christ, of experiencing the power of his resurrection and sharing in his sufferings. Paul wants to underline the truth that he has not yet attained this goal, but that both he and his readers must see themselves as straining toward it. Paul declares, "I press on toward the goal", a goal which, in Christ, he has already reached, but within his life experience, still lies in the future.

##### Issues

i] Context: See 3:1-4a.

ii] Background: See 1:1-11.

iii] Structure: *Pressing toward our high calling in Christ:*

Paul's ambition, his hope, v12-14;

Paul's exhortation that we be what we are in Christ, v15-16.

iv] Interpretation:

Paul now points out that despite the "surpassing greatness" that is his in Christ, he has not yet fully realized this goal / prize. So, he presses toward it, v12-14, and calls on the Philippians to take on his way of thinking about the Christian life and in like manner, press on toward the goal / prize as he does, v15-16. So, the passage serves as a straightforward exhortation: I strive to be what I am in Christ, and you should strive to be what you are in Christ - *Be what you are*.

As is typical of Paul's letters, having established the indicative, he moves on to the imperative. This move is indicated in the passage before us, an imperative fleshed out in v17-21. In Jesus we are God's new creature, perfect and acceptable to God, found in Christ, having a "righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith", v9. Such grace, without law, may give the impression of lawlessness, that we can go on sinning so that grace may increase, Rom.6:1. Yet, the opposite is the case, grace makes us gracious. So, although Paul has, in a sense, gained the prize already, he presses on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of him, v12. "All of us, then, who are mature", should take such a view of things", v15, and "live up to what we have already attained", v16.

v] Homiletics: *Press on toward the finish-line*

Paul's hope, expressed in Philippians 3:10, is even now an eternal possession on the basis of Jesus' death and resurrection. The believer is:

- fully reconciled with God in Christ, a friend for eternity;
- a righteous, godly new person;
- free from the power and curse of sin.

Yet, it is true to say that the reality of our perfection, as a gift of grace appropriated through faith in Christ's saving work, in no way matches our present experience. In our life's journey we:

- struggle to experience union with Christ;
- constantly falls short of the righteousness of Christ;
- are regularly overtaken by habitual / recurrent sin.

Although our performance never matches our standing, it never undermines that standing. None-the-less, we are encouraged to push our performance toward our standing.

Paul doesn't take us through the reasons why we should strain toward what is already ours, yet, consider the four following reasons:

- The struggle of life, under the guiding hand of the Spirit, prepares us for our rule with Christ in eternity, 2Tim.2:21-22.
- To comply with the indwelling compelling of the renewing work of the Spirit is comfortable, but to oppose the Spirit's work of renewal is frustrating, Gal.5:16-18.
- The desire to affirm our relationship with God through Christ motivates behaviour pleasing to Christ, 2Cor.5:9,10.
- Pressing toward the good produces positive results, Heb.4:12.

So, "Let us live up to what we have already attained", ESV.

### Text - 3:12

Our high calling in Christ: i] The prize / goal of the Christian life still lies ahead, v12-14. Paul has found in Christ a righteousness apart from the law, a righteousness that comes through faith and with it the promised blessings of the covenant, v8-11, all that remains is to live out that reality. To this end Paul strives for complete knowledge / union with Christ, holiness and victory over sin.

**Ουχ "not"** - We probably have an ellipsis here, so "*I do not say*", Reumann. Paul is correcting any idea of perfectionism that might have been mistakenly read into his proceeding words.

**ὅτι "that"** - THAT. Introducing a dependent statement of indirect speech, expressing what Paul is not suggesting.

**ελαβον [λαμβανω]** aor. "**I have obtained all this**" - [ALREADY] I OBTAINED, RECEIVED. Paul uses the aorist tense to express the action as completed

(constative). The object "all this" is supplied and refers to the blessings listed in v10 and summed up in the word "the prize", v14. It is possible that the "all this" / "the prize" / possibly "the goal", is "the resurrection from the dead", v11, but is more likely the three elements referred to in v10, or simply, the promised blessings of the covenant. These elements are disputed. "I do not claim that I have already succeeded", TEV.

ἢ "or" - OR. More comparative than disjunctive, serving to link two similar ideas.

τετελειωμαι [τελεω] perf. pas. "**have [already] been made perfect**" - HAVE BEEN PERFECTED, COMPLETED, FULL-GROWN, MATURED [ALREADY]. Paul now uses the perfect tense to locate the reception of all the goals of v10 up to and beyond the present. His point is that he has not yet achieved this goal / prize in the fullest sense, i.e., he is eliminating any notion of perfectionism in what he has already said. Reumann's "that I have already been justified", is unlikely, rather "that I have already been perfected."

ἤδη adv. "**already**" - NOW, ALREADY. Temporal adverb.

δε "**but**" - BUT/AND. Indicating a step to a contrasting point.

διωκω pres. "**I press on**" - I PURSUE, FOLLOW, PRESS FORWARD, GRASP. "I keep on running and struggling to take hold of ("capture", JB; "win", Moffatt) the prize", CEV. The object "prize", v14, is often supplied.

ει + subj. "-" - IF [AND = INDEED]. Possibly introducing a conditional clause, 3rd. class, where the condition has the possibility of coming true; "if, *as may be the case*, [I lay hold of that which ....], *then* [I pursue]", although better taken to express an uncertain expectation, even an indirect question; "I am pressing on to see if I can capture it, because I have been captured by Jesus Christ", Goodspeed. Touching on the imperative / indicative reality of the Christian life, of pressing toward a prize which is already ours in Christ.

εφ [επι] + dat. "**for [which]**" - UPON [WHICH AND = ALSO]. Possibly serving to introduce a final clause expressing purpose, "for a particular reason"; "the purpose Christ Jesus had in mind when he won me to himself", TH. Lightfoot opts for purpose. Yet, more likely a causal clause, so "because of [which]", "because I was indeed (και) grasped by Christ", O'Brien, cf., Rom.5:12, 2Cor.5:4.

υπο + gen. "**[Christ Jesus]**" - [I WAS LAID HOLD OF] BY [CHRIST JESUS]. Here expressing agency.

κατελημφθην [καταλαμβανω] aor. pas. "**took hold of me**" - I WAS LAID HOLD OF [BY CHRIST JESUS]. "For which Christ grasped me", Phillips.

### v13

Having not yet attained "the goal", forgetting the failures of the past, Paul strains / presses toward the prize for which God has called him, namely, perfect union with Christ, glorification, Christ likeness, and a total control over self, v13-14. This then is the eternal prize awaiting us all.

**εγω εμαυτον "I"** - I [DO NOT CONSIDER] MYSELF. Both are emphatic by use and position in the Gk., although "I" serves as the subject of the verb "consider" while the accusative "myself" serves as the subject of the infinitive "to have laid hold of."

**ου λογιζομαι** pres. "**do not consider**" - DO NOT CONSIDER, THINK. "I do not regard", Barclay.

**κατειληθεναι [καταλαμβανω]** perf. inf. "**to have taken hold of it**" - TO HAVE LAID HOLD OF *the prize*. The infinitive may be treated as complementary, completing the sense of the verb "to consider", but better viewed as introducing a dependent statement of perception, after a cognitive verb, expressing what Paul knows; "I know that I have not yet taken hold of it." The object "it" = "all this" = v10 = the prize, v14. The object is supplied. "That I have already won it", TEV.

**δε "but"** - BUT/AND. Indicating a step to a contrasting point; "but one thing I do say".

**εν** adj. "**one thing I do**" - ONE *thing*. The adjective serves as a substantive, so "one thing". The "I do" is supplied, but given that Paul is *considering* at this point it is probably better to supply "I say"; "one thing I do say", Reumann, so REB.

**μεν ..... δε ... "..... and ...."** - ON THE ONE HAND, [FORGETTING THE THINGS BEHIND] BUT ONE THE OTHER HAND, [STRETCHING FORWARD TO THE THINGS BEFORE]. Adversative comparative construction.

**επιλανθανομενος [επιλανθανομαι]** pres. part. "**forgetting**" - FORGETTING. This participle, as with "straining forward", is adverbial, probably modal, expressing the manner by which the action of the verb "I pursue / press on", v14, is accomplished. The present tense is durative indicating ongoing action, "keep forgetting", in the sense of paying no heed to what was in the past, so "being unconcerned about the things that lie behind", Reumann.

**τα ... οπισω "what is behind"** - THE THINGS BEHIND. The article **τα** serves as a nominalizer turning the adverb into a substantive; "the things which are behind."

**επεκτεινομενος [επικτεινομαι]** pres. mid. part. "**straining toward**" - STRETCHING FORWARD (like the runner about to hit the line). Here, striving to realize v10; "stretching out toward things that lie ahead", Reumann. "Strain every nerve to reach", Barclay.

τοις dat. "what is [ahead]" - THE THINGS [BEFORE, IN FRONT OF]. The article serves as a nominalizer turning the adverb εμπροσθεν, "before", into a substantive, as NIV; "the things which are before", AV. Dative of direct object after the επι prefix verb, "to stretch out toward."

#### v14

κατα + acc. "[I press on] toward" - ACCORDING TO. Here spatial, direction; "up to, toward."

σκοπον [ος] "the goal" - the GOAL, MARK, TARGET. If athletic imagery is intended, which seems obvious, then the line, or mark, upon which the athlete fixes their eye is the tape at race end; "I run straight toward the finishing line."

εις + acc. "to win" - [I PURSUE] INTO = FOR. Here expressing purpose; "in order to win the prize."

το βραβειον [το] "the prize" - THE PRIZE (given to the winner of the race). Lightfoot says it is "our heavenly rest." It is certainly "heavenward", or literally "above" and is the fulfillment of our "calling", v10.

της ... κλησεως [ις εως] gen. "for which [God] has called me" - OF THE [HIGH / UPWARD] CALLING. The genitive is adjectival, of definition / expegetic, limiting by specifying the prize, that which consists of the heavenly life hoped for in v10.

του θεου [ος] gen. "God" - OF GOD. The genitive is adjectival, usually classified as verbal, subjective.

ανα adv. "heavenward" - HIGH, UPWARD. The local adverb, modifying the verbal noun "calling, possibly means high in quality, but more likely high, as in heavenly.

εν + dat. "in" - IN [CHRIST JESUS]. Local, expressing space / sphere, incorporative union, "the high calling of God realized in union with Christ", but here possibly instrumental, expressing means, "through Christ Jesus."

#### v15

ii] Paul now calls on the Philippians to be what they are in Christ, v15-16. Paul now addresses those who are spiritually mature. Although they have εφθασαμεν, "attained, reached" the prize, their task now is to στοιχειν, "to press toward" it on a straight path. Some in Philippi may not yet accept this fact, but Paul knows that God will inevitably make this truth plain to them.

ουν "therefore" - Drawing a logical conclusion / inferential; "as many then / therefore who are mature / perfect."

τελειοι [ος] "who are mature" - [AS MANY AS would be] PERFECT, COMPLETELY GOOD.... / FULL-GROWN, MATURE. Predicate adjective. The assumed "who are" seems better than "would be." "Called perfect", JB is a

possibility, but the sense of having reached maturity in the Christian life is more likely. "All of us who are mature Christians", Barclay.

**φρονῶμεν [φρονεῶ]** pres. subj. "**should take such a view [of things]**" - LET US THINK [THIS] (= take on this way of thinking, take on this attitude). Hortatory subjunctive. Think about the Christian walk as Paul thinks about the Christian walk, its imperative / indicative, ie. be what we are. "This must be how all of us ... feel about life", Barclay.

**εἰ** + ind. "**if**" - IF, *as is the case*, [YOU THINK ANYTHING DIFFERENT, *then* AND = EVEN THIS GOD WILL REVEAL TO YOU]. Introducing a conditional clause, 1st class, where the condition stated in the protasis is assumed to be true. "If at any time such different thinking occurs, God will provide a revelation about it", Reumann. Paul recognizes that many will think differently, but ultimately truth will out.

**τι** pro. "- " - A CERTAIN *thing*. Indefinite pronoun; "if on a certain point you should think otherwise / differently."

**ἕτερος** adv. "**differently**" - DIFFERENT, OTHERWISE. Hapax legomenon - once only use in the NT as an adverb. Lightfoot suggests that here the word may mean "amiss". So, "if on some issues our attitude is amiss .....", "if at present you cannot see this", Phillips.

**καὶ** "**that too**" - AND THIS *certain thing*. Adjunctive; "this also". "Time will come when God will reveal the truth to you", Cassirer.

**ἀποκαλύψει [ἀποκαλύπτω]** fut. "**will make clear**" - REVEAL, UNVEIL. Possibly here "remove", so if on some points we are amiss (our thinking and behaviour is otherwise than it should be) God will "remove" the failing; "remove any remaining inadequacies or inconsistencies in the Christian outlook", Bruce, rather than remove any associated guilt. Yet, possibly just in the sense of "clarify"; "this also God will make plain to you", REB.

**ὑμῖν** dat. pro. "**to you**" - Dative of indirect object.

## v16

Paul now sums up his exhortation. Although we have realized this goal, we must still press on to the finishing line. Note the textual problems caused by the elliptical nature of this verse (words seemingly left out for brevity), and attempts to rectify the problem by copyists. Lit. "nevertheless / whereunto, to what we attained, *we are* to walk with the same" = "let us mind [think] the same thing", AV. Possibly; "Now that we're on the right track, let's stay on it", Peterson, or as advertisements for *Mortein Fly Spray* put it (an Australian product), "When you're on a good thing, stick to it."

**πλὴν** "**only**" - NEVERTHELESS, BUT. This adverb, used here as a conjunction, often takes an adversative sense, "but", sometimes, as possibly here, a condition,

so NIV. Possibly introducing a concluding statement, a summing up, a kind of "but I would make this point"; "this one thing I say", Barclay.

**στοιχειν [στοιχειω]** inf. "**let us live**" - TO WALK IN A STRAIGHT LINE AS IN MARCHING ORDER, TO CAREFULLY FOLLOW A DIRECTION OR PRINCIPLE, TO LIVE... Most likely an imperatival (commanding) infinitive standing in for a hortatory subjunctive, rare in the NT. An exhortation to press on toward the finish line, "the goal."

**τω αυτω** dat. "**up to**" - We may classify this dative as a dative of rule, "by the same, in conformity with", although technically **στοιχειω** takes a dative, so a dative of direct object after the verb "to walk with."

**εις ο** "**to what**" - The preposition + the accusative of reference; "with reference / respect to what we have attained."

**εφθασαμεν [φθανω]** aor. "**we have already attained**" - WE ARRIVED AT, COME TO REACH. Although "anticipate / precede" is not the usual NT meaning, the word does carry this meaning and may suit the present context. Yet, it is more likely that Paul is pointing out that we have gained the prize, v10 (arrived), and now we must actualize it - be what we are; "Let us live up to what we have already attained", ESV.

## 3:17-21

### 5. Warnings and appeals, 3:1-21

#### iv] Stand firm in the Lord

##### Argument

The passage before us is part of a larger section in Paul's letter which serves to warn the Philippians about the false teachings of the Circumcision Party who, in their teachings, undermine "the righteousness which comes from faith in / faithfulness of Christ", 3:1-21. In the passage before us Paul calls on his readers to not imitate these "enemies of the cross of Christ", but rather, imitate their founding apostle and so realize the fullness of new life in Christ, now and into eternity.

##### Issues

i] Context: See 3:1-4a.

ii] Background: See 1:1-11.

iii] Structure: *Stand firm in the Lord*:

Exhortation, v17:

"join in imitating me."

Explanation,

The characteristics of the false teachers, v18-19;

The characteristics of true believers, 3:20-21.

Some commentators argue that Paul concludes with an appeal to his readers that they remain steadfast in their relationship with the Lord, 4:1, although this appeal may well serve to introduce the next section on pastoral matters.

iv] Interpretation:

Paul begins by asking his readers to imitate him, their founding apostle, v17, and goes on to explain why, namely, because the many whose "walk" does not conform to the truth face destruction, v18-19, while those whose "walk" does conform to the truth will be blessed - theirs is "the eschatological prize", Fee, v20-21.

*Who are the enemies of the cross of Christ?* Not all commentators hold the view that the "enemies" in v17-21 are the same as v1-16. For example, Beare thinks Paul is addressing "the danger of antinomianism, the casting aside of all restraints, the degeneration of freedom into license." This was

Lightfoot's view, arguing that Paul directs his criticism toward those "who professed the Apostle's doctrine but did not follow his example" - they were libertines, antinomian. We are probably on safer ground if we follow Koester who, writing in NTS 8, 1961, argued that "they believed that a complete fulfillment of the Law was possible - they had achieved it already and could boast about it! - and brought about the possession of the eschatological promises in full, that is, the Spirit and spiritual experiences of such heavenly gifts as resurrection and freedom from suffering and death." Paul is still focused on law-bound believers, the Judaizers, members of the circumcision party. "Their god is their stomach" = eat not, touch not .....; "their glory is in their shame" = circumcision; "their mind is set on earthly things" = *insect law*, the tradition of the elders, the finer points of the Law, ....., v18.

Although it is not clear from this passage that the law-bound are acting lawlessly, Silva is surely right when he notes that there is a "compatibility" between "the fulfillment of the Jewish law and a less than commendable lifestyle." Nomists are easily blind-sided by their self-righteousness - "they devour widow's houses and for a show make lengthy prayers", Mk.12:40. So, Paul sets out to expose this evil pattern of behaviour, v17-19, before moving on in 3:20-4:1 to encourage his readers to stand firm in the knowledge that the full appropriation of the promised covenant blessings are already theirs in Christ.

### Text - 3:17

Standing firm in the Lord, 3:17-21: i] Paul exhorts his readers to follow his example, v17. Paul encourages his readers to follow the example of Christian living set by himself and his team. Given the context, this example is a life of faith that strive to "hold true to what we have attained", 3:16.

γίνεσθε [γίνομαι] pres. imp. "-" - BECOME, BE. "Make a united effort to follow the example I have given you", Barclay.

συμμιμηται [ης ου] "**join with others in following [my] example**" - FELLOW IMITATORS, IMITATORS TOGETHER. This compound word, "fellow-imitators", is a hapax legomenon, a once only use in the NT. The idea is of putting into practice / imitating one's teacher under the Lord as they themselves imitate the Lord. "Do your best imitation of me in your lives", Junkins.

μου gen. pro. "**my**" - OF ME. Possibly a genitive of association, "fellow imitators with me", so Wallace, or adjectival, possessive, as NIV, or verbal, subjective, "the example set by me", or objective, "be united in imitating me", O'Brien, so Varner.

αδελφοι [ος] "**brothers / brothers and sisters**" - Vocative. "Brothers and sisters, join with ....."

σκοπειτε [σκοπεω] pres. imp. "**take note of**" - KEEP AN EYE ON, PAY ATTENTION TO, TAKE NOTICE OF. "Mark well", Cassirer.

τους περιπατουντας [περιπατεω] pres. part. "**those who live**" - THE ONES WAKING ABOUT = CONDUCTING ONESELF. The participle serves as a substantive, as NIV. Reflecting OT language, "walk in the way of the Lord". "Who behave", Berkeley.

καθως adv. "**according to**" - AS, JUST AS. Comparative.

τυπον [ος] "**the pattern / model**" - [YOU HAVE US] AN EXAMPLE, TYPE, PATTERN, MODEL. Complement of the accusative direct object ήμας, "us", standing in a double accusative construction. "Let my example be the standard by which you can tell who are the genuine Christians", Phillips.

## v18

ii] The characteristics of the false teachers, v18-19. Paul now provides the negative reasons as to why the Philippians should follow his example rather than those whose "walk" leads to death. This "many" refers to the Judaizers in general, some of whom are obviously active in the Philippian congregation. Whether these "enemies of the cross" are in the congregation or not, Paul is determined to warn the Philippian believers of the ever-present danger of this heresy, cf., v19.

The Greek sentence covering v18-19 is somewhat complex. "Whose destiny is destruction" and "whose god is their stomach" are probably not standing in apposition to "the enemies of the cross", but serves as adjectival relative clauses modifying / limiting πολλοι, "many", "many ..... whose end *is* destruction, whose god *is* the belly." Similarly, the nominative participial construction "the ones thinking earthly things", v19, is not an independent nominative, but is also adjectival, attributive, modifying / limiting πολλοι, "many", "many .... who think on earthy things." The accusative direct object of the verb περιπατουσιν, "walk", is the accusative pronoun ούς, introducing the relative clause "whom often I was saying to you", with its accusative complement τους εχθρους, "the enemies", introducing the noun clause "the enemies of the cross of Christ", serving to form a double accusative construction. The NIV sorts out this complexity nicely.

γαρ "**for**" - FOR. Introducing a causal clause explaining why the Philippians should follow Paul's example, "because there are many whose *walk* is the exact opposite", Fee.

πολλακις adv. "**[as I have] often**" - MANY TIMES, OFTEN.

ελεγον [λεγω] imperf. "**told**" - I WAS TELLING, SAYING. The imperfect is iterative expressing repeated action; "mentioned".

ὁμιν dat. pro. "you" - TO YOU. Dative of indirect object.

δε και "and [now tell you again] even" - BUT/AND [NOW I SAY] AND = ALSO.  
A transitional δε and an ascensive or adjunctive και.

κλαιων [κλαιω] pres. part. "with tears" - WEEPING. The participle is adverbial, modal, expressing the manner of his communication, "tearfully"; "with tears in my eyes", CEV.

πολλοι adj. "many" - MANY. The "many" being "the dogs", "the mutilators of the flesh", judaizers, those who have adopted the heretical nomism promoted by the circumcision party, as noted above. Paul's language at times implies that these enemies are outside the Philippian congregation, but at other times, within the congregation. This fact is often used to support the argument that Paul is speaking of different groups of people in this passage. If we are dealing with a Judaizing influence upon the Philippian congregation, then those who promote the nomistic heresy (probably from the Jerusalem church) are obviously visitors, outsiders, but their "converts", those who have adopted their teaching, are obviously inside the Philippian congregation.

περιπατουσιν [περιπατω] pres. "live" - WALK = CONDUCT THEMSELVES. This word is often used of living the Christian life and so supports the view that these "enemies of the cross" are members of the Christian church, rather than Jews or secular persecutors.

τους εχθρους [ος] "enemies" - AS THE ENEMIES. Taking the accusative after οὗς, "whom .... I say the enemies of the cross of Christ".

του σταυρου (οV) gen. "of the cross [of Christ]" - The genitive is adjectival, limiting "the enemies", usually treated as verbal, objective, but it can be taken as attributive / expegetic. The genitive "Christ" is also adjectival, possessive, although often classified as verbal, subjective. The cross of Christ has its enemies. This is the first of five descriptors for these "false teachers." Presumably they are enemies of the cross in that by their teaching they undermine the redemptive power of the cross.

## v19

The Judaizers are now described in some detail:

- Their end is ruin; lost spiritually. Their false doctrine will result in the loss of their standing in Christ.

- They are legalistic law-keepers - "their god is their stomach". That is, they are into the minutiae of the law as a means of progressing their Christian life for the appropriation of God's blessings. For them it is "touch not and taste not; eat and eat not."

- Their pride is in their circumcision - "their glory is in their shame (nakedness)". They despise those who are uncircumcised.

- "Their mind is on earthly things", i.e., pietistic regulations.

**ὧν** gen. "**their**" - OF WHOM = WHOSE. The genitive is adjectival, possessive. Forming the first of two relative clauses, functioning adjectivally by limiting πολλοί "many", "many whose end [is] destruction, whose god [is] their *stomach* and glory [is] in their *shame*".

**το τέλος [ος]** "**destiny**" - END, GOAL [*is* DESTRUCTION]. Taking the nominative case in agreement with πολλοί, although some suggest an anacoluthon, i.e., Paul has lost track of his syntax, so Reumann. The sense "goal" is probably intended. The nomists seek to progress their Christian lives by submission to the law, thus moving themselves toward holiness, but all they are doing is moving themselves toward "destruction". This is the second descriptor for the "false teachers". "They are doomed to destruction", Barclay.

**ἡ κοιλία [α]** "**stomach**" - [WHOSE GOD *is*] THE BELLY. This third descriptor is allusive to say the least. Possibly:

- "physical satisfaction", Bruce ("the flesh", as opposed to "the Spirit", O'Brien, Silva), "appetite", Phillips. Although certainly understood this way by many commentators and translations, it seems unlikely that Paul sees a libertine / hedonistic problem in the Philippian congregation such that they "have failed to accept the death of the old life", O'Brien;

- Deuteronomic food laws. If these "enemies of the cross" are the judaizers then the "appetite" possibly has to do with strict adherence to food laws; their god is law-obedience. Taking Paul's cryptic comment as a reference to food laws, dietary laws, has both ancient and modern precedence, eg., Augustine, Barth, Melick, Hawthorne, Muller, cf., Rom.16:17-18. This seems the best way to understand what Paul is saying;

- Sexual appetite. There is the suggestion that the word can be used to mean "lust", the problem then being "sexual license", Bruce, Martin, Fowl; iv] Circumcision. The word is sometimes used in the LXX for the male sexual organ and thus both κοιλία and αισχυνη may be serving as euphemisms for the circumcised male organ. This view is not widely held;

- General. At least we can say "these people have set their minds on earthly things", Fee, "that sphere of things which is opposed by Christ and which is passing away", Houlden.

**εἰν** + dat. "**in**" - [AND THE = THEIR GLORY *is*] IN. Local; expressing space, metaphorical.

**αὐτῶν** gen. pro. "**their**" - [THE SHAME] OF THEM. The genitive is adjectival, possessive, or verbal, objective.

**τῆ αισχυνῆ [ῆ]** "**shame**" - As with "stomach", Paul's intended sense is unclear. Similar arguments are developed for this word as for "stomach", but it does seem likely that Paul is alluding to circumcision. This serves as the fourth

descriptor. They see their Christian lives progressed by their scrupulous observance of the Mosaic law; they have come to glory in their own rectitude rather than the righteousness / faithfulness of Christ.

**οἱ .... φρονούντες [φρονεω]** pres. part. "**who mind [earthly things] / [their mind [is set on earthly things]]**" - THE ONES THINKING, CONSIDERING [EARTHLY THINGS]. The participle serves as a substantive, standing in apposition to **πολλοι**, "many", v18. The fifth descriptor. The nomists are concerned with values which pass away, values that are without eternal qualities. "These men of earthly mind", Moffatt.

## v20

iii] The characteristics of true believers, v20-21. Paul now provides the positive reasons why the Philippians should follow his example, and does so by explaining the substance of a "walk" that leads to life. Unlike the earthly-minded enemies of Christ whose walk leads to death, Paul's walk leads to the reward of heavenly citizenship, namely, sharing in Christ's glory. "What better reason is available than the reminder that their true citizenship is a heavenly one?" Silva. The point that Paul is making, in contrast to the "enemies of the cross", is that for Paul, and those of us who follow his example / his thinking, we are already saved and possess in full God's promised blessings. In short, these two verses detail what constitutes the true Christian hope. Note: those who argue that 2:6-11 was originally derived from a Christian hymn / poem also argue that v20-21 derive from the same hymn.

**γαρ "for / but"** - FOR. Most likely transitional here, indicating a step to a contrasting point, even argumentative; "on the other hand", Zerwick #472. "As for ourselves however", Cassirer.

**ἡμῶν "our"** - Emphatic by position. Possessive genitive.

**το πολίτευμα [α]** "**citizenship**" - SOCIETY, COMMUNITY, COMMONWEALTH, STATE. Nominative subject of the verb "to exist." "The state as a constitutive force regulating its citizens, Lincoln", but particularly here of membership in a heavenly commonwealth / "civic association", Reumann; "we are citizens of heaven", CEV, so NAB.

**εν + dat. "in"** - [EXISTS] IN [HEAVEN]. Locative; expressing space, "in". "Heaven" = the dwelling place of God.

**και "and"** - [FROM WHERE] AND = ALSO. Probably adjunctive; "from there we also eagerly await ...."

**απεκδεχομεθα [απεκδεχομαι]** pres. "**we eagerly await**" - "We never stop anticipating the return of the Master", Junkins.

**σωτηρα [ηρ ηρος]** "**a Saviour**" - A SAVIOUR [LORD JESUS CHRIST]. Accusative direct object of the verb "to eagerly await." Moule suggests a version

of Colwell's rule applies here where the article is assumed; "the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ." So, Paul is probably using "Saviour" as a title, rather than a function, although as Saviour, Christ saves.

ἐξ + gen. "from [there]" - OUT [OF WHICH]. Expressing source / origin; out of heaven, not out of the heavenly commonwealth. "From there", NRSV.

## v21

This heavenly citizenship involves a dramatic transformation. The lowly body will be transformed into a glorious body; the lowly body, broken by sin, weak and subjected to decay, will be transformed into a perfect spiritual body. This does not mean that human createdness is abandoned. Christ rose in human form and he has taken that humanity to the very throne of God. What we are, reflects much of what we shall be. Our transformation is into Christ-likeness. Paul deals with this transformation more fully in his first letter to the Corinthians, 1Cor.15:42-44, 49, 51-54. As for the means of this transformation, it is through the power of the risen Christ, the power that brings everything under his control. This power is the divine power that creates, transforms, and is now at work uniting all things in heaven and on earth.

ὅς "who" - WHO [WILL TRANSFORM THE BODY OF HUMILIATION OF US INTO CONFORMITY WITH THE BODY OF THE GLORY OF HIM]. Nominative subject of "will transform", the antecedent being "Christ".

κατα + acc. "by" - ACCORDING TO. The NIV (as do many translations) opts for a causal sense, "by = because." With the accusative, it primarily means "in accordance with", sometimes leaning toward "because of", cf., BAGD. "Effectively exercising that power which he has to make everything subject to himself", Bruce.

του δυνασθαι [δυναμαι] pres. pas. inf. "[the power] that enables" - [THE WORKING] TO THE ABILITY, POWER [OF HIM]. The genitive articular infinitive usually introduces a purpose clause, but sometimes it is adjectival, epexegetic, and even rarely just a simple infinitive. Here epexegetic, explaining the substantive "power"; "in accord with the power that enables him."

και "-" - AND = EVEN / ALSO. Here either ascensive, "even", or adjunctive, "also"; "in accord with the power that enables him even / also to subject everything to himself."

ὑπαταξαι [ὑποτασσω] aor. inf. "to bring" - TO SUBJECT, SUBDUE, SUBORDINATE, PUT UNDER. The infinitive is complementary, completing the verbal sense of the infinitive "to be able".

αυτω dat. pro. "his [control]" - [EVERYTHING, ALL THINGS] TO HIMSELF. Dative of indirect object / interest. Taking a reflective sense, "to himself."

μετασχηματισει [μετασχηματιζω] fut. "**will transform**" - TRANSFORM, REFASHION, CHANGE. Obviously transform into the resurrection body as possessed by Christ.

της ταπεινωσεως [ις εως] gen. "[**our**] **lowly** [**body**]" - [THE BODY] OF HUMILIATION [OF OURS]. The genitive is adjectival, attributive, limiting "body", "insignificant / humble / lowly body"; "the body that belongs to our lowly estate", Moffatt.

συμμορφον acc. adj. "**so that they will be like**" - *into* CONFORMING, SHARING. Predicate adjective. "Similar in form", BAGD. This adjective modifies το σωμα, "the body", so "the body that belongs to our lowly estate, *a body* similar in form to / with the body of his glory." Probably Paul intends "exactly like", Barclay, rather than "resemble", Goodspeed. Christ's glorious body is obviously his resurrected body.

δοξης [α] gen. "**glorious**" - OF GLORY. The genitive is adjectival, attributive, limiting "body".

τω σωματι [α ατος] dat. "**body**" - The dative is instrumental, expressing association / accompaniment, although συμμορφον can naturally take the sense of "conforming to, sharing with", in which case it takes a dative of direct object; "*a body* which is similar in form to/with his glorious body."

## 4:1-3

### Practical pastoral issues 4:1-9

#### ij] A personal appeal for unity

##### Argument

Paul personally addresses two female members of the Philippian congregation and encourages them to come to a common mind as fellow Christians. To this end he encourages an unnamed associate to help in this regard.

##### Issues

i] Context: See 1:1-11. Partition theories abound for Philippians and these have prompted the argument that this passage originally followed on from 3:1a, and that 3:1b-4:1 is part of a separate letter. All this is very interesting, but little more than conjecture. What we now come to is the *Peroratio*, a concluding recapitulation and application of the main themes. This presents as a word of encouragement, v1, a particular reference to a number of individuals, v2-3, general concluding exhortations, v4-9, and a word of appreciation v10-20.

ii] Background: See 1:1-11.

iii] Structure: *A personal appeal to unity*:

Exhortations:

steadfastness, v1;

unity, v2-3;

joy and peace, v4-7;

good living, v8-9;

A word of appreciation, v10-20.

iv] Interpretation:

Nothing is known of Euodia and Syntyche, but they were obviously members of the Philippian congregation and were at odds with each other. Mentioning them in a general letter to the church indicates that their disagreement is no longer personal, but is now affecting the unity of the church as a whole. Paul obviously has a high regard for them, referring to them as fellow-workers "in the cause of the gospel." They, along with Clement, are mentioned only here in the New Testament as recorded in "the book of life." The idea that the name of a child of God is indelibly recorded in heaven finds its origin in the Old Testament and is further developed in the New Testament, cf., Ex.32:32-33, Ps.69:28, Dan.12:1, Lk.10:20, Rev.13:8, 17:8.

As for the unnamed "true companion", we can only speculate as to whom Paul has in mind. He may well be the person who receives the letter on behalf of the church; this would make him its "bishop", or even better, Paul's representative in the church, so Fee. Bruce speculates that he is Luke, the author of Luke-Acts, so also Fee, contra Delling who opts for Silas. Lightfoot suggests Epaphroditus, while O'Brien posits Syzygos. Clement of Alexandria even argued for Paul's wife (why not??). From the Acts "we" passages, it is possible to infer that Luke "was in Philippi for part or most of the time between the first evangelization of the city and Paul's brief visit to it before setting out on his last journey to Jerusalem", Bruce. For this reason, Luke is the best contender, although it is all rather speculative.

Silva notes that these two verses illustrate the important principle of "corporate responsibility" within the Christian fellowship. In Australian Pub culture (a "pub" is where a person goes to have a drink of beer) if two blokes are having an argument at the bar the last thing you do is get involved and try to break it up since it's very likely they will both turn on you. The same *best-not-to-go-there* attitude prevails in church culture, but here Paul is telling the church to get involved and sort out the problem. In v3 it is not clear who is to sort it out; it may just be Paul's "true companion." The point is clear though, for the life of the Christian community, problems are best sorted out.

#### **Text - 4:1**

A personal appeal, v1-3: i] An appeal to remain steadfast in the Lord, v1. It is unclear whether this verse is intended to conclude the exhortation commenced in 3:17, or introduce the next passage. Reumann suggests that the whole of 4:1-9 draws on the consequences from what precedes, namely 3:2-21.

**ὥστε** "therefore" - THUS, SO THAT, IN ORDER THAT. A consequential sense seems best; "well then", Moffatt.

**ἐπιποθῆτοι** adj. "long for" - [BROTHERS OF ME BELOVED AND] LONGED FOR, CHERISHED, DEEPLY DESIRED. Hapax legomenon; once only use in the NT. The adjective serves as a substantive.

**χαρά και στεφάνος μου** "my joy and crown" - *the* JOY AND CROWN OF ME. Obviously expressing a source of pride, so "how proud I am of you", TEV.

**οὕτως** adv. "that is how" - IN THIS WAY, THUS. Comparative; "on the basis of what I have told you", Danker.

**στηκετε [στηκω]** pres. imp. "you should stand firm" - STAND *firm*. "This, my dear friends, is how you must demonstrate your unswerving loyalty to the Lord", Barclay.

**εν** + dat. "**in**" - IN [THE LORD, BELOVED]. Local; expressing sphere, but the sense is somewhat unclear. Paul is encouraging his readers to be steadfast, either "in your obedience to the Lord", or "as those who live in union with their Lord", O'Brien. "In the Lord's name", Cassirer; "keep on being faithful to the Lord", CEV.

## v2

ii] An appeal for unity, v2-3.

**φρονειν** [**φρονεω**] pres. inf. "**to be of [the same] mind**" - [I APPEAL TO EUODIA AND I APPEAL TO SYNTYCHE] TO THINK [THE SAME THING]. The infinitive serves to introduce a dependent statement of indirect speech expressing the content of Paul's appeal; "that you agree in the Lord."

**εν** + dat. "**in [the Lord]**" - IN [LORD]. Local, sphere / incorporative union, although as already noted in this letter, the use of this phrase seems to have taken on an idiomatic sense within first century Christianity, cf. 1:14, 2:24, 29, 3:1; "I urge Euodia and Syntyche to sort out their differences as believers", i.e., as sisters in a relationship with the Lord Jesus.

## v3

**και** "**and [I ask you]**" - [YES, I] AND = ALSO [ASK YOU]. Possibly adjunctive, "also", rather than connective, "and".

**γνησιε συζυγε** voc. "**my true companion**" - GENUINE FELLOW WORKER. "True comrade", BDAG.

**αυταις** dat. pro. "**[help] these women**" - [ASSIST] THEM. Dative of direct object after the **συν** prefix verb "to assist, help."

**αιτινες** pro. "**since**" - WHO. Since a simple **αι** would be expected for the relative pronoun "who", the NIV has opted for a causal sense, so O'Brien; "because they ...." Fee argues that here it is qualitative, used to express belonging to a certain class; "assist them, inasmuch as they belong among those who have laboured side by side with me in the gospel ..", Fee.

**μοι** dat. pro. "**at my side**" - [WORKED TOGETHER WITH] ME. Dative of direct object after the **συν** prefix verb "to work together with."

**εν** + dat. "**in the cause of [the gospel]**" - IN THE GOSPEL. Local, sphere. The NIV has taken "gospel" here, not just as the message itself, but as the activity of communicating the message. So, the thought is of involvement in / participation in the ministry of the gospel. This seems to be the likely sense.

**μετα** + gen. "**along with**" - WITH [BOTH CLEMENT]. Expressing association / accompaniment; "along with, in company with." Lightfoot argued that Clement and the rest of Paul's co-workers are to assist "my true companion" in helping "these women", but this is over-stretching the Gk. Only the "true companion" is

to directly help these women; Clement + stand with the "true companion" as those who have contended in the cause of the gospel.

καὶ .... καὶ "and" - Correlative; "both Clement and ..."

συνεργῶν gen. adj. "[**the rest**] of [**my**] co-workers" - [AND THE REST] OF THE CO-WORKERS. The genitive is adjectival, partitive / wholative.

μου gen. pro. "my" - OF ME. The NIV takes the genitive as adjectival, possessive, but Varner suggests it is adverbial, of association, "co-workers with me" (usually expressed with μετα + gen.).

ᾧ gen. pro. "**whose**" - WHOSE [NAMES]. The genitive is possessive.

εν + dat. "in" - *are* IN. Local, expressing space. Applying to all those mentioned, so Bruce, Silva, O'Brien, Fee, ... although Hendriksen argues that the statement only applies to the co-workers.

ζωῆς [ἡ] gen. "**[the book] of life**" - The genitive is adjectival, expegetic, limiting by specifying the book in mind. As per references above, the faithful who "have their names recorded in the heavenly *book of the living*, the book that has recorded in it those who have received divine life and are thus destined for glory", Fee.

## 4:4-9

### 6. Practical pastoral issues, 4:1-9

#### ii] Christian virtues

##### Argument

Paul is about to conclude his letter, but before he does he leaves the Philippian believers with some general exhortations. We could title these exhortations *The Seven Steps to Peace*: keep a joyful heart; be reasonable to all; stay conscious of the Lord's presence; avoid over-anxiety; live a prayerful life; think beautiful thoughts; and practise Christian understanding.

##### Issues

i] Context: See 4:1-3.

ii] Background: See 1:1-11.

iii] Structure: *Christian virtues*:

Exhortations:

steadfastness, v1;

unity, v2-3;

joy and peace, v4-7;

good living, v8-9;

A word of appreciation, v10-20.

iv] Interpretation:

This passage consists of seven short Gk. sentences with connectives **αλλα** and **και** used only in v6 and v7. Each sentence provides a general exhortation to the Philippian congregation.

Verse 6 is of particular interest. Some commentators argue that this verse promotes the idea that Jesus will deal with all our concerns in a practical way when we bring them to him in prayer. The problem is, it doesn't quite say this. Paul's exhortation is that we should not be burdened by the cares of this world, cf., Matt.6:25-34. To achieve this state, "in everything", ie., in all circumstances, we should make our requests to Jesus concerning the circumstances, and do so with an awareness of his mercy toward us in the past. Prayer must be "according to the will of God". As children of our heavenly Father, we have the right to seek his aid in times of need, but his aid is always framed by his will, not ours. So, the prayer of faith must always address the promises of God, all of which are outlined in the scriptures.

## Text - 4:4

Christian virtues, v4-9: i] Joy, gentleness and prayer, v4-7; a) Rejoice in the Lord. This letter contains quite a number of references to joy, 1:4, 18, 2:17, 18, 3:1. Paul's exhortation to the Philippians is that in all circumstances they should rejoice. The enabling of such joy comes through Christ. It is possible for a believer, in an intimate relationship with Jesus, to be filled with joy, no matter what the circumstances. Of course, joy is not a requirement, and in any case, it is possible to experience heart-felt joy in the midst of a stream of tears.

**χαίρετε** [**χαίρω**] pres. imp. "**rejoice**" - REJOICE (enjoy a state of happiness and well-being\*). There are no linking conjunctions, or causal links to the imperatives that follow and so it is best to see the injunction "rejoice", as with the following injunctions, as an independent exhortation.

**εν** + dat. "**in**" - IN [*the* LORD]. Local, expressing space, incorporative union, "in your relationship with the Lord", but possibly the object of their rejoicing, rather than source, or even both, Varner, but note 4:2. "Delight yourselves in the Lord", Phillips.

**παντοτε** adv. "**always**" - "At all times", O'Brien; "never lose your Christian joy", Barclay.

**παλιν** adv. "**again**" - "I have said it once and I will say it again, rejoice!", O'Brien.

**ερω** [**ειπον**] fut. "**I will say**" - I WILL SAY [REJOICE]. The future tense probably serves as a hortatory subjunctive, as NIV.

## v5

b) Let your gentleness be evident to all. Paul encourages a show of goodwill toward all people. The word "gentleness" means something like: goodwill, fairness, friendliness, forbearance. It is the opposite of claiming one's rights over another. The exhortation is supported by the truth that Christ will soon return. The term, "the Lord is near", could mean that Jesus is nearby watching us, but it is more likely a reference to the parousia.

**γνωσθητω** [**γνωσκω**] aor. pas. imp. "**let [your ....] be evident**" - LET BE KNOWN. "Obvious", NJB.

**το επιεικες** adj. "**gentleness**" - THE REASONABLENESS, PATIENCE [OF YOU] (pertaining to being gracious and forbearing\*). The adjective serves as a substantive, nominalized by the article **το**, subject of the verb "let be known." Not retaliating, demanding, but being gracious and kind as God is both gracious and kind, Ps.86:5. Possibly in the sense of a legalistic / pharisaic attitude, "you must make it common knowledge that you never insist on the letter of the law", Barclay.

πασιν ανθρωποις [ος] dat. **"to all"** - TO ALL MEN / MANKIND. Dative of indirect object / interest, advantage. Expressing "the way in which Christians and non-Christians should live together", Bauder, cf., Reumann. "To all sorts of people."

ὁ κυριος [ος] **"the Lord"** - Nominative subject of an assumed verb to-be. Obviously referring to Christ.

εγγυς adv. **"near"** - *is* NEAR. The predicate use of an adverb. Either with a spatial or temporal sense. Most commentators opt for a temporal sense where the second coming of Christ serves as a motivation for faithful discipleship. This always seems a crude weapon to use against our inclination toward selfishness. There is much to be said for a spatial sense, as it is never easy to drag Jesus into our sin. The adverb, with a supplied verb to-be, forms the predicate of the sentence; "the Lord is near. Probably best treated as an imperative; "never forget the nearness of your Lord", Phillips.

## v6

c) Do not be anxious about anything, rather pray and God's peace will guard you, v6-7. The cares of this age can very easily affect the stability of a person's life. Jesus even warned that the cares of this age ("life's worries, riches and pleasures") can choke the life-giving Word from a believer's life. For this reason, Paul calls on his readers to pass those cares onto the Lord and leave them in his keeping. They can then respond with thanksgiving in the knowledge that the Lord will carry their load. Paul defines the business of prayer in the terms of: "by prayer" - by supplication or request to God; "petition" - asking; "with thanksgiving" - with a grateful acknowledgment of past mercies.

μεριμνατε [μεριμνατω] pres. imp. **"do [not] be anxious"** - BE ANXIOUS FOR. The present tense is durative, so "do not continue to be anxious." In the face of life's circumstances, we should not have an overly anxious concern about the chaos of life, given that God is bringing all things into subjection to himself. "Do not be fretful", Beare.

μηδεν **"not ... about anything"** - NOTHING. Accusative of inner object; "not at all / not in any way", BAGD.

αλλα **"but"** - Strong adversative standing in a counterpoint construction; "instead".

εν παντι **"in everything"** - The sense may be temporal, "always", or local, "in all things / situations", "in every circumstance of life tell God ...", Barclay. It is possible that the "in everything" = "in all prayers and petitions", "in all your prayers ask God for what you need", TEV.

τη προσευχη και τη δεησει **"by prayer and petition"** - IN PRAYER AND IN PETITION. The dative is instrumental, expressing means, so "by", as NIV. The

different aspects of prayer are possibly intercessions and supplications, and this with thanksgiving.

**μετα** + gen. "**with [thanksgiving]**" - Usually expressing association, "in company with", but possibly adverbial here, modal, expressing the manner by which the prayers and petitions are offered; "always asking him with a thankful heart", TEV.

**γνωριζεσθω** [**γνωριζω**] pres. pas. imp. "**present [your requests]**" - LET BE KNOWN [THE REQUESTS]. The present tense may be read as durative; "let your requests be constantly known", Reumann.

**υμων** gen. pro. "**your**" - OF YOU. The genitive is adjectival, possessive, as NIV, although possibly descriptive, idiomatic / source, "from you", Varner.

**προς** + acc. "**to [God]**" - TOWARD [GOD]. Possibly relational, "in the presence of God", O'Brien, or simply directional.

v7

**και** "**and**" - This conjunction is often consecutive when following an imperative, "and as a consequence, if we do this ...."; "so shall", Moffatt.

**η ειρηνη** [**η**] "**the peace**" - When we respond in trust to the Lord, we then receive the gift of his peace. A sense of ease covers us and overrides all our complicated musings, ideas, plans, fears..... It is because we are "in Christ" (in an intimate relationship with him) that this sense of ease continues, protecting us from the "cares of the world". The peace which God gives is a peace of mind. Lightfoot puts it this way, "God's peace shall stand sentry, shall keep guard over your hearts." Kennedy writes, "The peace of God is a garrison of the soul in all the experiences of its life, defending it from external assaults of temptation and anxiety..."

**του θεου** gen. "**of God**" - As is so often the case, the genitive may be taken a number of ways:

- source / origin, "God is the source of peace";
- verbal, objective, "our being at peace with God";
- verbal, subjective, "the peace that comes to us from God";
- descriptive, "the tranquillity that eternally belongs to God";
- attributive, "the peacemaking God";
- idiomatic / of production, "the peace produced by God."

O'Brien opts for both the third and fourth option; Hawthorne and Wallace the fourth; Reumann the third, "the peace that God has and gives"; Fee suggests the first option. It seems best to follow Fee who notes that God, who is the God of peace, is usually identified by Paul as the source of peace, which is probably the intention of the genitive here, a once only use by Paul of this construction. So, adjectival, descriptive, idiomatic / source.

ἡ ὑπερεχουσα [ὑπερεχω] pres. part. "**which transcends**" - SURPASSING [ALL UNDERSTANDING]. The participle is adjectival, attributive, limiting the noun "peace". A difficult participle phrase to translate, particularly as there is no direct object. Commonly translated as NIV, expressing the idea that the peace is such that "no one can completely understand [it]", CEV. Possibly meaning that God's peace is better at removing anxiety than any human scheme; "surpasses all our dreams", Moffatt.

φρουρησει [φρουρω] fut. "**will guard**" - WILL GUARD, KEEP, PROTECT. In a military sense of soldiers keeping guard for the purpose of protection.

τας καρδιας "**hearts**" - THE HEARTS [OF YOU]. Accusative direct object of the verb "will guard." The seat of reason and moral intent.

τα νοηματα [α ατος] "**minds**" - THE MINDS, THOUGHTS [OF YOU]. Accusative direct object of the verb "will guard." "Thoughts", JB

εν + dat. "**in [Christ Jesus]**" - As with "in the Lord", see 4:2. Local, expressing sphere, probably the idea of union with Christ, relationship with, rather than, under the subjection of or influence of, "in obedience to his authority and the submission of his will", Martin (Tyndale). "God's peace will stand guard over the hearts and minds of those who are in union with Christ Jesus", O'Brien.

## v8

ii] At this point, "the apostle urges his readers to let their minds dwell on those qualities which are good in themselves and beneficial to others", O'Brien, v8-9. "In conclusion, if there is anything that is good and if there is anything worthy of praise [and of course there is], then think continually on those things that are true and honourable and just and pure and lovely and reputable."

το λοιπον adj. "**finally**" - *as for* THE *things* REMAINING BROTHERS. The articular adjective serves here as an adverb, as NIV; "In conclusion", TEV.

όσα pro. "**whatever [is]**" - AS MANY THINGS AS, WHATEVER [IS = ARE]. Nominative subject of the verb to-be.

αληθη adj. "**true**" - TRUE. "Sincere."

σεμνα adj. "**noble**" - [WHATEVER] REVEREND, HONOURABLE. "Worthy", Moffatt; "honourable", Phillips.

δικαια adj. "**right**" - [WHATEVER] JUST, righteous.

άγνα adj. "**pure**" - [WHATEVER] PURE (being without moral defect or blemish and hence pure\*)

προσφιλη adj. "**lovely**" - [WHATEVER] LOVELY. "Lovable", NEB.

ευφημα adj. "**admirable**" - [WHATEVER] WORTHY OF PRAISE, WELL-SPOKEN OF. "Reputable", Bruce; "decent" NAB.

ει "if" - IF, *as is the case*, [there is ANY VIRTUE] AND IF, *as is the case*, [there is ANY PRAISE, then THESE THINGS TAKE ACCOUNT OF]. Introducing two parallel 1st. class conditional clauses where the condition is assumed to be true. The indicative verb "to be" εστιν must be supplied. When expressed in English a conditional clause indicates doubt, but there is no doubt in Paul's mind that there is excellence and things that are worthy of praise; "if, as we rightly assume, there is any excellence." "Don't ever stop thinking about what is truly worthwhile and worthy of praise", CEV.

αρετη [η] "excellent" - MORAL EXCELLENCE. "Good", TEV.

επαινος [ος] "praiseworthy" - PRAISE. "Admirable", NEB.

λογιζεσθε [λογιζομαι] imp. "think about [such things]" - [THESE THINGS] CONSIDER, CALCULATE. Think on, in the sense of meditate on, absorb and apply. "Your thoughts must continually dwell on", Barclay.

## v9

Paul encourages his readers to put into practice all that he has taught them, both by example and teaching. The result of such is not only the peace of God, but the God of peace will touch them personally; he will manifest himself to them

ὅ pro. "whatever" - WHICH THINGS [AND = BOTH YOU LEARNED, AND YOU RECEIVED, AND YOU HEARD, AND YOU SAW]. Accusative direct object of the four following verbs, each of which is introduced by a correlative και. Many commentators regard v8 as a list of pagan virtues worth following, and so Paul now reminds his readers to add them to the particular Christian virtues revealed to the Philippians by Paul and his missionary team. Other commentators argue that the "those things which" refer to the "whatever things which" listed in v8 and that Paul is simply asking his readers to note that these qualities were evident in the life of the missionaries. So, the relative pronoun "which things" may be taken to refer either to the "whatever things" of v8, or the things heard from Paul, v9. The particle can be taken as "and" or "also", depending on which line of interpretation is adopted.

παρελαβετε [παραλαμβανω] aor. "you have ... received" - RECEIVED, TAKEN. A technical term, here to receive and appropriate instruction.

εν + dat. "in" - IN [ME]. Local, expressing sphere, obviously here relational; "in your association / relationship with me." Probably applying to all four verbs.

πρασσετε [πρασσω] pres. imp. "put into practice" - [THESE] PRACTISE, ACCOMPLISH. The present tense probably underlines continued effort, "you must keep putting into practice", Barclay.

της ειρηνης [η] gen. "of peace" - [AND THE GOD] OF PEACE. Probably an adjectival genitive, descriptive, idiomatic, either of source, "from", or product, in that God is the one who produces the peace. This God will be "with" the

Philippians, which is probably the best way to understand the peace that God produces. This "peace", the tranquillity that eternally belongs to God and radiates to his people, is ours when he is "with" us, and it is this divine presence residing in us that "guards" us, v7.

μεθ [μετα] + gen. "**with [you]**" - [WILL BE] WITH [YOU]. Expressing association / accompaniment.

## 4:10-20

### 7. A word of appreciation, 4:10-20

#### God provides all our needs

##### Argument

Paul concludes his letter to the Philippians with a grateful recognition of the gift they have sent him by the hand of Epaphroditus. The passage is, in a sense, "the apostle's formal receipt", Hawthorne, ie., an *απεχω*. Paul first speaks of his contentment in all circumstances, v10-13; then how much he appreciates the church's gift, v14-18; and finally, he addresses the subject of God's sufficiency in every need, v19-20..

##### Issues

i] Context: See 1:1-11.

ii] Background: See 1:1-11.

iii] Structure: *Paul's word of appreciation:*

A situation assisted, v10-14:

appreciation, v10;

contentment v11;

adaptability, v12;

dependency, v13.

Appreciation offered, v14-17.

Blessings all round, v18-19.

Doxology, v20.

iv] Interpretation:

The passage forms an inclusion between "the God of peace be with you", v9, and "to our God and Father be glory for ever and ever, Amen", v20. Fee adopts a simple linguistic structure which develops the content of Paul's rejoicing; "I rejoice greatly in the Lord *ὅτι* that ...", v20. Paul's joy rests on:

- An acknowledgement of the Philippians renewed concern for him in his needs, v10-13. This acknowledgment comes with two qualification:

- the Philippians' past inactivity was due to a lack of opportunity, and

- Paul's needs are primarily in the hands of Christ, v11-13;

- An acknowledgement of the Philippians' partnership in his afflictions, v14-17. Paul reminds them of their past kindness, v15-

16, then qualifies his acknowledgement by reminding them that he has never sought any material gift from them, v17;

- An acknowledgement that the Philippians "fragrant, sacrificial offering" has fully supplied Paul's material needs, v18-19. Paul qualifies this acknowledgement by noting that they will not be disadvantaged by their generosity because God, in return, will meet all their needs, v19.

- Paul concludes with a doxology, v20.

*Paul's thankless thanks:* It seems strange that Paul should leave his *thank you* to the end of the letter. Hawthorne gives three possible reasons and opts for the third: first, it is a separate document attached to the letter proper; second, it is a personal *thank you* added to the letter in Paul's own hand; and third, it represents a nervousness on Paul's part, given his reticence to accept financial support - note how Paul stresses his independence in v11-13, 17. Paul was "clearly sensitive about money matters in general", O'Brien (As Fee notes, the three dangers facing any minister is pride, money and sex. Paul is no fool when it comes to Satan's barbs).

None-the-less, Paul's reticence to offer a wholehearted thanks for the gift is certainly interesting. Paul may want to affirm his independence, but then maybe he is aware of some opposition toward him in the congregation. It's quite possible that all we have here is an issue of rhetorical style where "verbal gratitude in written form was not a social expectation, except when writing to someone who was socially superior", Peterman, *Paul's Gift from Philippi*, 1997, cf., Hansen. Reumann, who provides a full survey of the suggested reasons behind Paul's *thankless thanks*, opts for a legal, business-like explanation for the style of this part of the letter. Yet, O'Brien, drawing on the work of Marshall, *Enmity in Corinth*, notes that the so-called accounting commercial words and phrases (cf. 4:15, "giving and receiving") are actually "contemporary idiomatic expressions denoting friendship." Silva may be right in arguing that Paul's *thankless thanks* simply evidences his desire that the Philippians send him no more money, but it seems more likely that he is trying to shift the purpose of their giving from personal patronage to gospel partnership and to do this while expressing gratitude for their gift.

*The issue of divine reward:* In v17 (cf., also v19) Paul articulates the notion of accumulated treasure in heaven, a notion touched on by Jesus and reflected throughout both the Old and New Testament (particularly James) - here of fruit put to the credit of believers, an investment that will pay rich

dividends, so Hendriksen. This credit can then be assessed and drawn down in the last day, although there is no reason why it can't be drawn down now, cf., v19. Paul elsewhere draws out the theological principle that a believer will reap, both spiritual and material, as they have sown, 1Cor.9:11, 2Cor.9:6, Gal.6:8, cf. Prov.19:17 and Matt.6:4, 19:21, .....

O'Brien's take is that "the καρπος advantage that accrues to them as a result of their generous giving is God's blessing in the parousia." Nevertheless, in facing the dilemma of divine reward for deeds done we must first recognize that the righteousness that is ours in Christ rules out any idea of eternal reward based on a believer's level of righteousness, their accumulated fruit / treasure. In Christ, perfection is already ours, and that perfection comes with its eternal reward. Even if our eternal standing depended on a profit and loss accounting of our lives, which it doesn't, we would always be in the red. Some suggest that a believer's reward for their "fruit" is God's "well done good and faithful servant." Yet, God's "well done" comes by looking at what Jesus has done, not by his looking at our compromised half-done. Dr. Who fans may argue that life prepares us for our Tardis, the size and power of which is determined by how well we have handled the training course of life. If this is the case, then my Tardis is going to be very small. Maybe the account is for us to carry throughout eternity and so remind us that we could have done better, a memory to prod us to do better in eternity.

When it's all said and done, the best we can say is that the gift from the Philippians is an investment in the work of God, and that somehow it is an investment in their own future under God, both in this age and the age to come.

#### **Text - 4:10**

The gift from Philippi, v10-20. i] Paul acknowledges the renewed concern shown him by the Philippians, while at the same time expressing his contentment in the circumstances he presently faces, v10-13. Paul begins this section with an observation about his own life. He has learnt to be content in all circumstances, whether good or evil, because he has taken hold of Christ's sustaining power. First, he notes with joy the gift sent from Philippi and carried by Epaphroditus. Paul is overjoyed that his converts haven't forgotten him, and assumes that a simple lack of opportunity had hindered them from acting earlier.

δε "-" - BUT/AND. Transitional, introducing a new section, so best left untranslated, as NIV.

**εχαρην [χαίρω]** aor. pas. "**I rejoice**" - The aorist is possibly epistolary, so Hawthorne, or dramatic, or even a true past tense; "I rejoiced when you again showed concern for me", Reumann.

**εν + dat. "in"** - IN [*the* LORD GREATLY]. See 3:1, 4:2. "Lord" is probably "the Lord Jesus Christ", but in Old Testament parlance the title is used of God. The preposition could be causal, "because of the Lord", or instrumental, "by the Lord", but is more likely local, expressing sphere, so in the mutual relationship / fellowship / unity that believers possess with Jesus - "they together belong to the Lord and thus to one another", Fee.

**ὅτι "that"** - Introducing an object clause / dependent statement of indirect speech, expressing the content of Paul's rejoicing, but also possibly causal expressing the ground of Paul's rejoicing, "because you have at last ....."

**ἤδη ποτε "at last"** - NOW ONCE. Temporal; "after all this time", Phillips.

**αναθαλετε [αναθαλλω]** aor. "**you have renewed**" - YOU FLOURISHED, BLOSSOMED ANEW. Hapax legomenon; once only use in the NT.

**το ... φρονειν [φρονεω]** "**your concern**" - TO THINK. The accusative articular infinitive, an accusative of respect, is substantival, object of the verb "you have renewed."

**ὑπερ + gen. "for"** - CONCERNING, ON BEHALF OF [ME]. Expressing benefit, although here somewhat adjectival, limiting "your concern", "your concern which is for me"; "I am overwhelmed by your desire to do what is best for me."

**και "indeed"** - AND. Probably emphatic, as NIV, but possibly exegetical, "in that, with regard to which, you have long been concerned *for me* but lacked ....."

**εφ ᾧ "-"** - UPON WHOM. This construction may be final, expressing purpose, "for / to which end", Zerwick #129, or possibly even causal, "because of whom", but better taken as a substantival phrase, "with regard to which", Thrall *Particles*, ie., "with regard to your renewed concern for me." Somewhat complex and best left untranslated. "I know that your care for me has always been there, but you never had the opportunity to show it", Barclay.

**εφρονειτε [φρονεω]** imperf. "**you have been concerned**" - YOU WERE THINKING. The imperfect is durative expressing continued concern, but possibly conative; "you tried to show your concern, but ....."

**δε "but"** - BUT/AND. Transitional, "from intent to capability", Varner.

**ἠκτρισεθε [ακατρεομαι]** imperf. "**you had no opportunity to show it**" - YOU WERE LACKING OPPORTUNITY.

## v11

His joy is for their gift, not for the meeting of his need. As far as Paul is concerned, he has learnt to be satisfied in whatever circumstance he faces.

The sense of v10b and 11 is nicely expressed by Phillips who takes the view that Paul qualifies **ἤδη ποτε**, "at last / after all this time", v10a, with "I don't mean that you had forgotten me, .....", v10b, and **το ὑπὲρ ἐμοῦ φρονεῖν**, "your concern for me", with "nor do I mean that ...", v11. The syntactical difficulties found in this verse possibly reflect spoken Gk., rather than written, i.e., Paul is dictating. Moffatt nicely cuts through it all with "not that I complain of want for I have learned to be content wherever I am."

**ὅτι** "**[I am not saying] this**" - [NOT] THAT [I SPEAK]. Introducing an object clause / dependent statement, indirect speech, expressing what Paul is saying. "I'm not saying that / I don't mean that / I'm not suggesting that ..." Often **οὐχ ὅτι** forms an elliptical construction without **λέγω** (cf. 3:12) which may mean that **λέγω**, "I say", in this clause, relates to the dependent statement and not **οὐχ ὅτι**, "not that"; "I am not saying that I speak with reference to [my] needs, wants." Still, it seems likely that **λέγω** goes with **οὐχ ὅτι**. "In mentioning this matter ....", Cassirer.

**καθ [κατα]** + acc. "**because**" - ACCORDING TO. Usually with a meaning like "according to" so possibly here expressing reference, "with respect to, with reference to", but usually taken here as replacing **διὰ** + acc. "because of, on account of", as NIV, i.e., the meaning drifts toward cause/reason. "Don't think I'm saying this because of all the things I have to do without", Barclay.

**ὑστερησίν [ις ἑως]** "**I am in need**" - WANT, NEED, LACK. Possibly just a financial need, but the reference is probably much more general. Paul has in mind any need.

**γὰρ** "**for**" - BECAUSE. Introducing a causal clause explaining why Paul does not promote his needs.

**ἐγώ** pro. "**I**" - Emphatic by use and position; "I, for my part, whatever it may be for others", O'Brien.

**ἐμαθον [μὲνθων]** aor. "**have learned**" - LEARNED. Translated as a perfect tense to express what is obviously a constative aorist where the totality of the action of learning is in view.

**εἶναι [εἶμι]** pres. inf. "**to be**" - TO BE. Forming an object clause / dependent statement of perception expressing what Paul has learned.

**αὐταρκῆς [ου]** "**content**" - CONTENT, SATISFIED. Paul is not so much self-sufficient, but rather "God-sufficient", Bruce.

**ἐν οἷς** "**whatever**" - IN WHICH = WHATEVER *circumstances*. Reumann takes the view that this phrase truncates **ἐν τοῦτοις ἐν οἷς**, "in these [things] in which I am". The preposition **ἐν** obviously expresses association, "with", while the relative pronoun **οἷς**, neut. pl. expresses the "situations or circumstances where

Paul undergoes his learning experience", Reumann. So not "with whatever I have", CEV, but "with what I have", definite rather than an indefinite ὅστις.

## v12

As far as the trouble is concerned, Paul has learnt the secret of contentment, in either good times or bad.

**οἶδα** "I know" - Perfect of the stem εἶδ - εἶδον [ὄραω], "see = know", but used as a present tense.

**καὶ** "-" - AND = BOTH. This particle is used before each of the six infinitives found in this verse. The NIV translates the second as "and" and the last four as if forming a repeated "whether ..... or ..... " construction. It is most likely that they are to be taken as correlatives, "both *this* and *that*." This construction is disturbed in the first of the three pairs of infinitives because of Paul's emphatic repetition of **οἶδα**, but the sequence is clear enough "I know what it is both to be in need and to have plenty." Possibly, but not likely, adjunctive, "also".

**ταπεινουσθαι** [ταπεινω] pres. pas. inf. "**what it is to be in need**" - TO BE HUMBLLED, PUT TO SHAME / TO BE BROUGHT LOW, ABASED [AND I KNOW *how* TO ABOUND]. This infinitive, as with the "to abound = what it is to have plenty", forms a dependent statement of perception expressing what Paul knows. Robertson *grammar* notes that an infinitive following **οἶδα** doesn't just express content, but manner, "how to / to be able"; Paul has learned "how to live in an appropriate manner under these contrasting circumstances", O'Brien. "To be chastened and to have enough and to spare", Zerwick.

**μεμνημαι** [μνησθαι] perf. pas. "**I have learned the secret**" - [IN ALL THINGS] I HAVE LEARNED [*the* SECRET]. The perfect tense indicates a process of learning how to handle the difficulties, as well as the blessings, of life. Those of a secular background are often frustrated by the observation that they reach intellectual and emotional maturity at the time of life when their energy level is depleted. A believer, of course, knows that the lessons of life prepare them for eternity and thus their knowledge is not scattered to the wind in the face of *father time*.

**χορταξεσθαι** [χορταζω] pres. pas. inf. "**of being content**" - [AND = BOTH] TO BE FILLED, EATEN ENOUGH = TO BE SATISFIED [AND TO HUNGER, AND = BOTH TO ABOUND AND TO HAVE LACK]. A satisfaction not just of having a fully belly, but of life in general. This infinitive, as with the three that follow, "and to be hungry, both to abound and to come too late = have lack", form dependent statements of perception expressing what Paul has learned.

**εἰ** "**in [any and every situation]**" - in [EVERYTHING AND IN ALL THINGS]. Here local, sphere, forming an inclusive and emphatic statement; "in any situation and in all circumstances", Barclay.

### v13

Paul lets us into his secret. How is it that he can be content within the circumstances of life? His answer is simple; he is able to meet the circumstances of life head-on in the strength of Christ. Paul does not depend on his own strength or ability, rather he relies on the sustaining help of Jesus. In Christ he is inwardly independent. In Christ he possesses an empowering grace above his own limitations and weakness which enables him to face all the circumstances of life - to be strong in the strength of Christ. Paul rests on Christ's word - "my grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness."

**ισχυω** pres. "**I can do [everything]**" - I CAN, AM ABLE, AM STRONG TO DO [ALL THINGS]. Given the context the **παντα**, "all things, everything", refers to "any and every situation", v12, ie., the oscillations of life, the good and bad of it, so Hansen, Fee, O'Brien... So, Paul is saying he is able to cope with life's circumstances. Obviously his own emotional stability would play its part in his ability to cope, but he gives due recognition to the one who journeys with him and yes, who even carries him when he has nothing left to give. It is worth noting that this verse is used to support the claim that through Christ a believer can do anything, an "anything" only limited by the limit of one's *faith* - convictions. The failure to address context by *promise-box* believers can have serious consequences, even to undermining a person's faith.

**εν** + dat. "**through**" - IN. Probably instrumental, expressing agency, "by means of", but possibly local, sphere, expressing a believer's union with / personal relationship with Christ, so Moffatt, "in him who strengthens me."

**τω ενδυναμουντι [ενδυναμω]** dat. pres. part. "**him who gives [me] strength**" - THE ONE BEING STRONG *toward* [ME]. The participle serves as a substantive.

### v14

ii] Paul acknowledges the Philippians' partnership in his afflictions, while reminding them that he has never sought any personal gift from them, v14-17. Paul first returns to his expression of joy stated in v10, a joy prompted by the care that the Philippians extended toward him in terms of the financial gift they sent with Epaphroditus. To that joy Paul adds the joy he feels for their partnership in his **τη θλιψει**, "troubles", amounting to a partnership in the gospel, v15-16. This partnership is not personal, and Paul doesn't want it to function at that level, but rather at the level where divine reciprocation will apply, ie., a partnership in the gospel, a partnership which will be credited to their account, v17.

**πλην** adv"yet" - The adverb is used as an adversative conjunction, "but, yet, nevertheless."

**εποιησατε [ποιεω]** aor. "**it was [good] of you**" - YOU DID [WELL, NOBLY].  
**συγκοινωνησαντες [συγκοινωνεω]** aor. part. "**to share**" - HAVING TAKEN PART IN, SHARING IN. The participle is adverbial, probably instrumental, expressing means, "you did well by sharing as companions with", Berkeley, but usually treated as complementary, as NIV, so Hawthorne, Vincent, "nevertheless it was very good of you to become partners with me in my affliction", O'Brien.  
**τη θλιψει [ις εως]** dat. "**in [my] troubles**" - THE TROUBLES, AFFLICTIONS [OF ME]. Dative of direct object after to verb "to take part in." Presumably sharing in Paul's present troubles, namely his imprisonment.

## v15

In v15-16 Paul notes that the Philippians have always financially supported his ministry and have done so all the way back to his first mission in Macedonia and Greece. In fact, they were the only church in the region to offer financial support.

**δε "moreover"** - BUT/AND. Transitional, indicating a step in the argument. The **και** is possibly emphatic, so "indeed, ....", or adjunctive, "also".

**υμεις "you"** - YOU. Emphatic by use.

**οιδατε [οιδα]** "**as [you Philippians] know**" - KNOW, [PHILIPPIANS]. Paul is letting the Philippians know that he has not forgotten their generous support of his mission. "You Philippians are well aware that .....", Moffatt.

**οτι "-"** - THAT. Introducing a dependent statement of perception expressing what the Philippians should know. Note also the related clause in v16.

**εν + dat. "in"** - IN [THE BEGINNING]. Temporal use of the preposition.

**του ευαγγελιου [ον] γεν. )οφ ψουρ αχθουαιντανχε ωιτη τη γοσπελ"** - OF THE GOSPEL. The genitive is adjectival, idiomatic / temporal, with a word of time; "in the beginning when you were first acquainted with the gospel." Referring to the beginning of Paul's gospel mission in Philippi; "the beginning [of the proclaiming] of the gospel among them", Hawthorne. Of course, Paul may have in mind Macedonia, Europe, rather than just Philippi.

**οτε "when"** - WHEN [I WENT OUT FROM MACEDONIA]. Temporal conjunction introducing a temporal clause. Again, Paul is letting his readers know that he has not forgotten the continued support he received when he left Macedonia, cf. 2Cor.11:9. "When I left Macedonia in those early days of gospel preaching", Knox.

**εκκλησια [α]** "**church**" - [NOT ONE] CHURCH, ASSEMBLY. Nominative subject of the verb "to share with." Most often used of a local congregation, assembly of believers.

εκοινωνησεν [κοινωνεω] aor. "shared with me" - SHARED WITH, PARTICIPATED WITH [ME]. Clearly here of a contribution, supporting the material requirements of the mission.

εις λογον "in the matter" - IN A WORD = AN ACCOUNTING. Here εις + acc. is not being used instead of εν + dat., "in the matter ...", as NIV, but rather reference / respect; "with respect to the matter of giving and receiving." Paul has adopted a commercial phrase here concerning the settlement of accounts. "You were the only church by whom in partnership I was offered, and from whom I accepted, any financial help", Barclay.

δεσεως [ις εως] gen. "of giving" - OF PAYMENTS, EXPENDITURES [AND RECEIPTS]. The genitive is usually taken as verbal, objective.

ει μη "except [you only]" - IF NOT = EXCEPT [YOU ONLY]. Serving to introduce an exceptive clause. Paul underlines the fact that only the Philippian church (in Europe / Macedonia???) became a partner with Paul in the gospel, the only one that chose to share in the mission financially / materially, but also spiritually, eg., prayer.

## v16

οτι "for" - THAT. Possibly explanatory, explaining the partnership of the Philippians in the gospel, v15, as NIV, but better serving to introduce a further dependent statement of perception; "you know that ..... v15, and indeed that ....."

και "even" - AND. Ascensive, "even", or probably better, emphatic, "indeed, in fact." The Philippians didn't just support Paul's mission when he left Macedonia, they supported his immediate mission in Macedonia; "in fact, when I was still in Thessalonica ...."

εν + dat. "when I was in [Thessalonica]" - IN [THESSALONICA]. A temporal use of the preposition is intended, as NIV.

επεμψατε [πεμπω] aor. "you sent me aid" - YOU SENT. "You sent money", Moffatt.

και .... και "[again] and [again]" - AND = BOTH [ONCE] AND [TWICE]. Correlative use of the conjunctions. "Not merely once, but twice", Vincent, but a more general sense is probably intended; "again and again / more than once", BAGD, as NIV.

εις + acc. "when [I was in need]" TO, TOWARD [THE NEED OF ME]. Possibly goal / end is intended, so expressing purpose, "for my need"; "in order to meet my needs." The possessive genitive μου, "my", is not a strong reading. The dative of interest, advantage, μοι, "for me", is preferred", but most translations go with

μου, dative of possession, "my need"; "you sent me help more than one to supply my needs", Cassirer.

#### v17

ουχ ὅτι "**not that**" - NOT THAT [I SEEK THE GIFT]. The phrase is commonly elliptical such that εστιν must be supplied, "*it is not that ....*", thus ὅτι introduces a substantive clause, subject of the assumed verb to-be.

αλλα "**but**" - BUT. Strong adversative standing in a counterpoint construction; "not ....., but rather ...." Paul counters any suggestion that he may be after financial support for his own person, finances to meet his own needs, i.e., he does not want patronage, but partnership. His allusion to heavenly credit indicates that he is happy for further support, financial or otherwise, but only as a partnership in the gospel. A full-time priest / minister / pastor might say something like, "don't give me any money, give it to the treasurer so it can be used directly for gospel ministry."

τον καρπον [ος] "**what**" - [I SEEK] THE FRUIT. Accusative direct object of the verb "to seek after." Used here in the sense of "advantage, gain, profit", BAGD.

τον πλεοναζοντα [πλεοναζω] pres. part. "**may be credited**" - THE ONE INCREASING, MULTIPLYING, BECOMING MORE. The participle is adjectival, attributive, limiting "fruit"; "a fruit which is increasing."

εις λογον "**to [your] account**" - TO *the* ACCOUNT [OF YOU]. This prepositional phrase serves as an accounting term, cf., v15.

#### v18

iii] Paul acknowledges that the Philippians' "fragrant, sacrificial offering" has fully supplied his material needs, which offering will be met by God's reciprocal grace, v18-19. This gift has completely met his needs and so he sees it, not so much as a gift to him, but as a gift to God - an offering of a beautiful fragrance to God, one that is pleasing to God. An act of love toward a brother is an act of love toward Jesus.

δε "-" - BUT/AND. Transitional, indicating a step in the argument, although it may be slightly contrastive, so Fee.

περισσευω pres. "**even more**" - [I HAVE ALL THINGS AND] I ABOUND. "I have been paid back everything and with interest", CEV.

πεπληρωμαι [πληρωω] perf. pas. "**I am amply supplied**" - I HAVE BEEN FILLED. "I am filled full."

δεξαμενος [δεχομαι] aor. pas. "**now that I have received**" - HAVING RECEIVED. The participle is adverbial, possibly temporal, "when I received", as NIV, or causal, "because I have received."

**παρὰ** + gen. "**from**" - FROM [EPAPHRODITUS]. Here expressing source, "from", or agency, "by", with the second use of the preposition obviously source, "from"; "having received the gifts by/from Epaphroditus from you."

**τὰ** "**the gifts [you sent]**" - THE THINGS [FROM YOU]. The article serves as a nominalizer turning the prepositional phrase "from you" into a substantive, accusative direct object of the participle "having received." Referring to the Philippians' gift, the sense of which is defined by the following three phrases standing in apposition to **τὰ παρ ὑμῶν**, "the gifts you sent." All three phrases are cultic and derive from the LXX, see Fee 451.

**εὐωδίας [α]** "**a fragrant [offering]**" - A ODOR [OF SWEET-SMELLING]. The genitive is adjectival, attributive, limiting "fragrance, perfume"; "a sweet-smelling fragrance."

**δέκτην** adj. "**acceptable [sacrifice]**" - Attributive adjective. The dative "to God" is assumed. Possibly with the sense of being pleasing because it is acceptable. The "sacrifice" refers to something offered to God, not just a cultic sacrifice, but prayer, praise, thanksgiving, .... etc.

**εὐαρεστον** adj. "**pleasing**" - Attributive adjective. Referring to an action which gives pleasure. It is not an uncommon idea in the scriptures that service according to the will of God is pleasing to God. That our service, compromised as it is, would give God pleasure, serves only to emphasize his grace. Viewing our service as acceptable to God in Christ seems less fraught than assuming that it is pleasing to God.

**τῷ θεῷ [ος]** dat. "**to God**" - Dative of reference / respect; "with respect to God", or interest, advantage, "for God." Reumann, quoting Georgi, makes the point that it is as if Paul is saying "I accept your gift as if it were a gift offered by God, before God, and to God."

## v19

Paul now turns his attention to the Philippians themselves. Just as Paul knows that he can do everything through Christ who gives him strength, in similar fashion the Philippians are well able to do the same. They have to face the difficulties found in service to the gospel, and in that service Christ will stand with them through the rough-and-tumble of life.

**δε** "**and**" - BUT/AND. Transitional, "a change in focus from Paul to the Philippians", Varner.

**μου** gen. pro. "**my [God]**" - [THE GOD] OF ME. The genitive is adjectival, possessive, or idiomatic / subordination, "the God over me."

**πληρωσει [πληρωω]** fut. "**will meet**" - WILL FILL, FULFILL = SUPPLY [EVERY NEED OF YOU]. God has met Paul's needs, through the Philippians, and he will meet all their needs as well. This is not a *quid-pro-quo*; Paul is not saying if you

meet my needs God will meet yours, nor is he saying that God will meet all their perceived needs. Paul is clearly referring to "all" their needs, physical, emotional, spiritual, so O'Brien, but he is surely only making this promise within the frame of Jesus' words "give us this day our daily bread" = give us this day the resources we need in our kingdom service for you. If Paul's *needs* were his *wants* then he wouldn't be in prison. Kingdom service, performed within the will of God, comes with its necessary resources, a reality Paul has observed in the Philippians' gift to him, and a reality he wants them to experience as well. We are bound to be disappointed if we try to second-guess God as to our kingdom-needs. The Western text variant **πληρωσαι**, "may God fill, supply", optative expressing a wish, solves our exegetical problem, but is probably not original. Note other ways of dealing with the dilemma: Hawthorne argues that the "needs" refer to the Philippians "present material needs", ie. a specific promise for the Philippians (Really!); Hansen argues that although the needs include physical needs (eg., persecution), the fulfilment of the promise is inevitably spiritual.

**κατα** + acc. "**according to**" - Here expressing a standard, "corresponding to, in accordance with." If this is the intended meaning of the preposition here, then obviously Paul is qualifying his words, so "in a manner that befits his wealth", Reumann, not "the measure of God's supply will be according to the measure of God's riches", Hansen, nor "out of the splendor of his wealth", Barclay, which is more in line with the preposition **εκ**.

**εν δοξη** - "**[his] glorious [riches]**" - [HIS RICHES, WEALTH OF HIM] IN GLORY. The preposition **εν** is usually understood as adverbial here, modal, expressing manner, "his riches with glory" = "in a glorious manner he will provide", translated adjectivally, "his glorious riches, wealth", as NIV. Still, local, expressing sphere, is possible; "his riches in glory", "in the realm (sphere) of the heavenly", Lightfoot, indicating that the riches in view at this point are spiritual, so Silva, or even temporal, "in the glory of the coming age / the parousia."

**εν** + dat. "**in [Christ Jesus]**" - Here the preposition is usually understood as local / sphere = incorporative union, so "in union with, in relationship with Jesus Christ", cf., v10. Of course, this idiomatic phrase can virtually equate with a person's status of being a believer, and given the context, is sometimes redundant: "You can be sure that God will take care of everything you need, his generosity exceeding even yours in the glory that pours from Jesus", Peterson.

**v20**

iv] Paul concludes this section of the letter with a doxology, v20. A statement of praise to God the Father - may his sublime revelation be for all time.

**δε** "-" - BUT/AND. Transitional, "now", AV.

τω ... θεω dat. "**to [our] God [and Father]**" - TO THE GOD [AND FATHER OF US]. Obviously a verb must be supplied, probably in the form of a prayerful ascription to God, so optative εἶη (an affirmation is possible, so εστιν, "he is", Lightfoot) in which case "the God and Father" functions as a dative of indirect object / interest, advantage, "*may glory be to God*"; "to him who is our God and Father let glory be ascribed", Cassirer.

ἡ δόξα [α] "**glory**" - *be* THE HONOUR, PRESTIGE / BRIGHTNESS, RADIANCE. Subject of an implied optative verb to-be. Often just "radiance", but in this type of ascription the word expresses the prestige of the divine creator and saviour.

εις "**for**" - TO, INTO. Temporal use of the preposition, "into the eternity"; "for ever."

των αιωνων [ων ωνος] gen. "**[ever] and ever**" - [THE AGES] OF THE AGES [AMEN]. The genitive is irregular, idiomatic. This phrase appears a number of times in the NT, eg., Gal.1:5, 1Pet.4:11. It draws on the LXX phrase εις τον αιωνα του αιωνος. Note the singular person αιωνος. In the NT the plural is used to reflect the idea that time is "a succession of cycles" such that "glory to God is not restricted to *this age* but belongs to *the age to come*", O'Brien. As a Semitism it simply expresses "for all eternity."

## 4:21-23

### 8. Conclusion

#### Personal greetings and benediction

##### Argument

Paul concludes his letter with personal greetings and a benediction. It is quite possible that these verses are in his own hand, the rest of the letter having been dictated. He sends his greeting to all the believers in Philippi and adds a greeting from all the believers who are with him in Rome, probably his co-workers, including those who belong to Caesar's household. He then closes with a benediction.

##### Issues

i] Context: See 1:1-11.

ii] Background: See 1:1-11.

iii] *The conclusion to the letter:*

Greetings, v21-22;

Benediction, v23.

iv] Interpretation:

Theories about as to the identity of "those who belong to Caesar's household." It is simply not possible to identify who they are, nor what position they held in the "household". They could be slaves, officials, military or civil. They may just be those who Paul has befriended in prison, guards even. The reference does support the contention that Paul is writing from Rome. See Bruce for a short survey of possible contenders.

The benediction is typically Pauline and very similar to the ending of his other letters. One point of interest is the phrase **μετα του πνευματος υμων**, "with your spirit." The same wording is used in the benediction found in Galatians 6:18, although this should not be taken to imply some connection with Galatians. Most commentators take it to be nothing more than an emphatic way of expressing **υμων**, "you" = "yourselves".

##### Text - 4:21

Conclusion, v21-23: i] Greetings, v21-22.

**αγιον** adj. "[all] **God's people**" - [GREET EVERY] HOLY = SAINT. The adjective serves as a substantive, accusative direct object of the imperative verb "greet". "Give my good wishes to every one of God's dedicated people", Barclay.

**εν** + dat. "**in [Christ Jesus]**" - As Varner notes, this is now the twentieth use of "in the Lord", or "in Christ." As already indicated, a local sense prevails, expressing incorporative union, although likely to be idiomatic; "give our regards to all the believers."

**συν** + dat. "**who are with [me]**" - [THE BROTHERS] WITH [ME GREET YOU]. Expressing association.

## v22

**μαλιστα** adv. "**especially**" - [ALL THE SAINTS GREET YOU AND] ESPECIALLY. the superlative form of the comparative adverb **μαλα**; "in particular, those who belong to the Emperor's household", Cassirer.

**οι** "**those who**" - THE ONES. The article serves as a nominalizer turning the prepositional phrase "from the household of Caesar" into a substantive, subject of the assumed verb "to greet"; "in particular, those of Caesar's household *greet you*."

**εκ** + gen. "**belong to**" - FROM [THE HOUSEHOLD OF CAESAR]. The preposition may be taken to express source / origin, but most likely serving as a partitive genitive; "the believing members of Caesar's household."

## v23

ii] Benediction. An optative verb to-be is assumed, expressing a wish / desire, here a wish / desire that God's favour / grace, operative through Jesus Christ, might be bestowed on the Philippian believers.

**του κυριου [ος]** gen. "**of the Lord**" - [THE GRACE] OF THE LORD. The genitive is adjectival, descriptive, idiomatic, source, "from".

**Ιησου Χριστου [ος]** gen. "**Jesus Christ**" - Genitive standing in apposition to "Lord".

**μετα** + gen. "**be with**" - Expressing association / accompaniment.

**υμων** gen. pro. "**your [spirit]**" - [THE SPIRIT] OF YOU. The genitive is adjectival, possessive. One's own "spirit", a person's inner being; "may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ find its home deep deep within you."

# Excursus

## Key propositional terms

**δικαιοσύνη**, "righteousness", 1:11. A "righteousness" that comes from God, 3:6, as opposed to a righteousness that **εν νομῳ**, "in/on law, based on law", and 3:9, **εκ νομου**, "from law." This word takes on different meanings in the scriptures, depending on the context:

- A moral sense is often present, of "being right", "uprightness", Fitzmyer/Goodspeed.
- A dynamic sense is also at times present, of "doing right", "performing righteously."
- A forensic (legal, courtroom) sense is at times present, when used of God's people, expressing "justification", of "being judged right", "approved before God", "counted as righteous", Barrett, "judged in the right with God", Dumbrell.
- A covenantal sense is at all times present where being right in the eyes of God entails a person's compliant covenant standing and therefore, by implication, their right to access the covenant blessing of God; "a righteousness defined by the covenant", Dunn, "counted as covenant compliant (a compliance that maintains membership of the covenant)", Dumbrell = "right standing in the sight of God."
- A particular sense is sometimes evident in Paul's letters. Here a state of being is in mind, of existence under the righteous reign of God, of life within the domain of righteousness. Paul's law-bound opponents sought to reinforce / advance this state for blessing, but this state is only ever retained, as it is gained, by grace through faith.

**την εκ θεου δικαιοσυνην**, "the righteousness from / out of God". This phrase is found in 3:9. A similar phrase is found 8 times in Romans: 1:17, 3:5, 21, 25, 26, and twice in 10:3, and once in 2Cor.5:21, , **την του θεου δικαιοσυνην**, "the righteousness of God", and should be considered with Romans 5:17, "the righteousness given by God", **ἡ δωρεα της δικαιοσυνης**, along with a number of singular references in Paul's letters.

The phrase, "righteousness of God", is usually resolved in the following terms:

- The righteousness of God as a "gift of God", which leads to the reformed idea of "an ethical quality transferred from God to mankind" (imputed righteousness). "That status of being right with God which comes as his gift", O'Brien. This approach often leads to "righteousness of God"

taken as a technical term for "justification" where the forensic sense is dominant.

- The righteousness of God as a dynamic attribute, namely, "God's salvation-creating power", Kasemann, "God's loving faithfulness to his people in terms of the covenant", Fee, where a relational sense is dominant.

Although the interpretation of this phrase is anything but settled, these notes take the view that "the righteousness of God" for Paul moves toward **the righteous rule of God**, his setting all things right - the vindication of the righteous, Ps.9:3-4; the defence of his people, Deut.33:21, 1Sam.12:7, Mic.6:5; the punishment of the wicked, Ps.9:3-4. God's righteousness, this righteous reign of God / from God, involves his setting all things right, his "activity in the process of global transformation", Jewett, his restoration of the whole creation, his "dynamic fidelity to his covenant promises / covenant faithfulness", Dumbrell.

**πιστεως Χριστου "the faith / faithfulness of [Jesus] Christ"** 3:9. The noun "faith" is usually understood as "committal of oneself to Christ on the basis of the acceptance of the message concerning him", Burton; "Faith in Christ is the sole and sufficient means of justification", Fung. The trouble is that **πιστις** in Gk. at the time and in the Septuagint (the Gk. OT) didn't mean "faith / trust" directed toward someone, but rather "reliability / fidelity / firmness / faithfulness / trustworthiness." This sense seems also to dominate the NT, including Paul's letters. Although not widely accepted, it is more than likely that the "faith" here is actually generated by Christ (subjective genitive), or belongs to Christ (possessive), or generally describes Christ's character (adjectival, descriptive). So, our right-standing before God / righteousness, rests on Christ's "faith / faithfulness" to the will of God expressed in his obedience to the way of the cross on our behalf; "Christ's trustful obedience to God in the giving up of his own life for us", Martyn.

It has been argued that the faithfulness is actually God's and is realized in Christ, "God's faithfulness revealed in Christ", so Hebert, Bath, but it seems more likely that Paul is speaking of Christ's own faith / faithfulness. So, the genitive "of Jesus Christ" is most likely subjective, or possessive, "through the faith / faithfulness of Christ", rather than the more widely accepted objective genitive, "faith in Christ", NIV, where Christ is the object of the faith. Christ's faithfulness, evident in the cross, rests of the Father's faithfulness to his promises, the appropriation of which (the promises of God worked out in the cross) is to we who (**επιστευσαμεν**) believe, cf., Rom.3:22, Gal.2:22 - "A person is ... justified ..... by means of the faith / faithfulness of Christ Jesus."

When it come to the word **πιστις**, "faith", Donald Robinson in *Faith of Jesus Christ - a New Testament Debate* in the Reformed Theological Review, #29,

1970, opts for the translation "firmness"; "Christ is the immovable rock established by the immutable God, upon which he invites men to take their stand without flinching."

For further reading see the doctoral dissertation by Richard Hays, *The Faith of Jesus Christ: An Investigation of the Narrative Substructure of Galatians 3:1-4:11*, published in the Society of Biblical Literature Sources for Biblical Study edition #56 edited by Bird, 1983, and republished as *The Faith of Christ*, Eerdmans, 2002.

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