
*Standing In Christ: Paul's
Letters to the Galatians,
Ephesians, and Philippians*

Part 3

Paul's Letter to the Philippians

Only In Christ is Real Unity and Joy Possible

Week 11

Introduction: Overview

Introduction: Basic Outline

Key Themes

Paul's Account of His Present Circumstances (Chap. 1)

A. Paul's Prayer for Thanksgiving (1:1-11)

B. Paul's Afflictions Promote the Gospel (1:12-18)

C. Paul's Afflictions Exalt the Lord (1:19-26)

D. Paul's Exhortation to the Afflicted (1:27-30)

Introduction: Overview

1. Paul writes this letter while under house arrest in Rome as a thank-you note to the believers at Philippi for their help in his hour of need
2. The Philippians, when they heard of Paul's Roman imprisonment, sent Epaphroditus with financial help, and did so on at least two other occasions (4:16)
3. Paul also uses the occasion to send along some instruction on Christian unity



Paul's Visit to Philippi

Paul's "Macedonian Call" (Acts 16:6-10) in Troas during his second missionary journey led him to his ministry in Philippi. Here Lydia was converted and ministered to them while in Philippi. Philippi was the first place in Europe to hear the gospel.

Paul casts out demons in a slave girl and he and Silas end up in prison which led to the conversion of the jailor.

The City of Philippi

King Philip of Macedonia (father of Alexander the Great), took this town in 356 B.C. and re-named it Philippi.

The Romans captured it in 168 B.C.; and in 42 B.C., Anthony and Octavian (Augustus) defeated Brutus and Cassius, outside the city and Octavian made Philippi a Roman colony and military outpost.

The citizens of Philippi were given a number of special privileges as Roman citizens.

Introduction: Basic Outline

- I. Paul's Account of His Present Circumstances (Chap. 1)
- II. Paul's Appeal to Have the Attitude of Christ (Chap. 2)
- III. Paul's Appeal to Have the Knowledge of Christ (Chap. 3)
- IV. Paul's Appeal to Have the Peace of Christ (Chap. 4)

Key Themes (from ESV Study Bible)

1. Christians need to keep making progress in their lives (1:12, 25; 3:12-16).
2. A proper spiritual outlook is critical for progress in the faith (1:5-11; 2:1-11; 3:7, 15; 4:7-9).
3. Christ is the supreme example of loving and faithful service to God, and mature Christians can also serve as role models in this regard (1:12-26; 2:5-11, 19-30; 3:3-17; 4:9).
4. Suffering will come, but through faith it can be met with joy (1:12-26; 2:14-15; 4:4, 11-13, 19).
5. Prayer is crucial for maintaining a joyful Christian life (1:3-11; 4:5-7).
6. The gospel is not individualistic: Christians are to share in rich fellowship with one another, and to be united together in service to promote the gospel (1:4, 7, 24-27; 2:1-4, 19-30; 4:2-4, 14)

Paul's Account of His Present Circumstances (Chap. 1)

A. Paul's Prayer for Thanksgiving (1:1-11)

1. Salutation (vv. 1,2)

- a. Paul and Timothy bond-servants (*doulos*) - Bond-servants from Exodus 21 and Deuteronomy 15
- b. Overseers (*episkopos*) and deacons (*diakonos*) - *Overseers* and [^] includes both *leadership* and *laity*. Note that that Luke uses the words, elder, pastor, and overseer to address the leaders of Ephesus in Acts 20:17, 28.
- c. Grace and Peace
 - i. *Grace* (*charis*) the merciful kindness by which God, exerting his holy influence upon souls, turns them to Christ, keeps, strengthens, increases them in Christian faith, knowledge, affection, and kindles them to the exercise of the Christian virtues
 - ii. *Peace* (*eirene*) the tranquil state of a soul assured of its salvation through Christ, and so fearing nothing from God and content with its earthly lot, of whatsoever sort that is

2. Thanksgiving (vv. 3-8)

- a. Remembrance through prayer

- b. Confidence in the Perfecting work of Christ
 - i. *Confident* (*sure* - ESV) (peitho) [Tense-Second Perfect; Voice-Active; Mood - Participle] to persuade unto i.e. move or induce one to persuasion to do something
 - ii. *Perfect* (*carry it on to completion* - NIV, *bring it to completion* - ESV) (epiteleo) to bring to an end, accomplish, perfect, execute, complete
- 3. Prayer (vv. 9-11)
 - a. Love may abound in real knowledge and discernment
 - i. *Love* (agape)
 - ii. *Abound* (perisseuo) to exceed a fixed number of measure
 - iii. *Real Knowledge* (epignosis)
 - iv. *Discernment* (*depth of insight* - NIV) (aisthesis) perception, not only by the senses but by the intellect
 - b. Approve the excellent (*best* - NIV) (diaphero) to distinguish between good and evil, lawful and unlawful, to approve of things that excel, to differ from one.
 - c. Filled with the fruit of righteousness
- B. Paul's Afflictions Promote the Gospel (1:12-18)
 - 1. Greater progress for the Gospel
 - a. Praetorian Guard (*palace guard* - NIV, *imperial guard* - ESV) heard of Christ
 - i. *Praetorian Guard*, the palace in which the governor or procurator of a province resided, to which use the Romans were accustomed to appropriate the palaces already existing, and formerly dwelt in by kings or princes; at Jerusalem it was a magnificent palace which Herod the Great had built for himself, and which the Roman procurators seemed to have occupied whenever they came from Caesarea to Jerusalem to transact public business.
 - b. Brethren more confident to speak
 - 2. Christ proclaimed the priority
 - a. From envy and strife out of selfish ambition

- b. From good will out of love
- C. Paul's Afflictions Exalt the Lord (1:19-26)
 - 1. Christ being exalted is the focus
 - a. By Life...
 - i. Fruitful labor
 - ii. Necessary for the progress of the gospel and the growth of the believers
 - b. By Death...
 - i. Eternal gain
 - ii. Depart and be with Christ
- D. Paul's Exhortation to the Afflicted (1:27-30)
 - 1. Conduct yourselves Gospel Worthy
 - a. Stand firm in the Spirit
 - b. Working unified together for the gospel
 - 2. Not alarmed by opponents of the Gospel
 - a. Opponents destroyed by God
 - b. Believers saved by God
 - 3. Christ has granted us...
 - a. To believe
 - b. To suffer

Note on verse 29...

Not only to *believe* on him. It is represented here as a privilege to be permitted to believe on Christ. It is so.

But also to *suffer* for his sake. Here it is represented as a privilege to suffer in the cause of the Redeemer—a declaration which may sound strange to the world. Yet this sentiment frequently occurs in the New Testament. Thus it is said of the apostles, Ac 5:41, that "they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name." Col 1:24: "Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you." 1Pe 4:13: "But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings." It is a privilege thus to suffer in the cause of Christ, because...

- 1. ...we then resemble the Lord Jesus, and are united with him in trials;

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2. ...because we have evidence that we are his, if trials come upon us in his cause;
3. ...because we are engaged in a good cause, and the privilege of maintaining such a cause is worth much of suffering; and
4. ...because it will be connected with a brighter crown and more exalted honor in heaven.