

**“Paul's Letter to the Philippians –  
A Thank You Note Never to be Forgotten”**

**Introduction:**

***We have come to the end of this great epistle of the apostle Paul to the believers in Philippi. Today and next time we will provide a “view from the top”, as it were.***

***Considering that this may have been the only letter from the hand of the apostle that these saints would have had available to them for years, I would have been read over and over again many, many times, and would have been put to memory without question. And, remember, these words are the very words (translated, of course) that the Holy Spirit had given to the Philippian believers.***

***Does that make a difference to us students of the word of truth? WHAT IF THESE WORDS WERE THE ONLY WORDS FROM THE LORD GOD THAT YOU POSSESSED? WHAT IF . . ? WHAT A TREASURE INDEED THESE WORDS FROM GOD’S (AND PAUL’S) PEN ARE.***

**Review: The Final Page on Paul’s Example for the Philippians (and Us):**

- ***Well Prepared for Every Circumstance***

***Phil. 4:11, 13***

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

***. . .***

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

- ***Not Allowing Physical Challenges to Dominate Our Thinking***

***Phil. 4:15, 17***

***15 Now ye Philippians know also, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only — 17 . . . [but always] I desire fruit that may abound to your account.***

- ***THEREFORE, Satisfied With the Lord’s Provision***

***Phil. 4:18 But I have all, and abound: I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things [which were sent] from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, wellpleasing to God.***

- ***A REMINDER: His Blessings Are Available to All Saints***

***Phil. 4:19 But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus. Now and forever!***

- ***His Closing Salutation – Confirmed By A Precious Historical Note & Standing Complete***

***Phil. 4:20-23***

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

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

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

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

***Our Outline Today: “A Thank You Note Never to be Forgotten”***

- ***Its Very Language, even the Words Themselves, Compel Our Careful Study – Take Special Note (and there are 12 of them as I count them today!) - TWELVE DIMENSIONS OF BLESSEDNESS ARE REFLECTED HERE SO POWERFULLY***

- 1. Our Sanctification in Christ Jesus – THE GIFT OF OUR GOD***
- 2. Our Abundant Grace – HIS RICHES Poured OUT FREELY***
- 3. Our Precious Fellowship – GOD HAS DRAWN US INTO FELLOWSHIP***
- 4. Our Gospel and Its Defined Faith – IT IS THE POWER OF GOD***
- 5. Our Striving Together, Standing Fast – OUR SACRIFICE IS NEEDED***
- 6. Our Special Governing Relationships – THE POLITICS OF FAITH!***
- 7. Our Singleness of Mind (The Examples of Christ & Paul, and Timothy and Epaphroditus) – MIND IS THE KEY***  
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- 8. Our Joining Together with One Spirit & Soul – THE UNITY OF THE SPIRIT***
- 9. Our Blessings, Filled with the Abundant Supply – NO LACK!***
- 10. Our Shared Sufferings & Persecutions for Christ's Sake – WITH HIM***
- 11. Our Hope of “Out-Resurrection” & The Prize of Upward Calling !!***
- 12. Our Example, Paul, with Christ Above All –***

***I. Its Very Language Compels Our Careful Study – Take Special Note:***

- ***The words themselves provide the best outline of the letter. As we shall see, they provide a compelling structure for our thinking and our living:***

**1. Our Sanctification in Christ Jesus (1:1 & 4:21, 22)**

**[READ ] Phil. 1:1** Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all **the saints in Christ Jesus** which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons:

- ***Can this include sinners such as ourselves?***
- ***“servants” = “bond-slaves”***
- ***“saints” = “holy ones” or “sanctified ones”***
- ***“In Christ Jesus”: This is a Pauline expression not found outside Paul’s letters – This speaks of our relationship to Christ as our Head with we as members of His body, righteousness by imputation, etc., all Catholic doctrine notwithstanding.***

**2. Our Abundant Grace (1:2, 7, 4:23):**

**[READ ] Phil. 1:2** **Grace [be] unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and [from] the Lord Jesus Christ.**

**[READ ] Phil. 1:7** Even as it is meet for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart; inasmuch as both in my bonds, and in the defence and confirmation of the gospel, **ye all are partakers of my grace.**

- ***Without grace, what do we have?***
- ***“in the defense and confirmation of the gospel”: Is this a limitation on the following statement?***
- ***They are partakers or co-participants in his ministry of the gospel. What a statement indeed.***

**3. Our Precious Fellowship (1:3-6 & 4:15-16)**

**[READ ] Phil. 1:3-6**

**3 I thank my God upon every remembrance of you,**

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

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

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

- ***“good works” are needed and a blessing to many. But the essential good work is this:***
- ***By the way, the specific good work here is a financial offering given by the Philippians believers for the sake of Paul in his imprisonment! But it says explicitly here that this good work is the work of God who has “begin it” and who will “complete it”. And this is a promise!***
- ***The end point of this is at the Judgment Seat of Christ. May we receive this teaching fully, for false teachings about good works abound.***
- ***I wonder how the Philippians received this teaching.***

**4. Our Special Governing Relationships (1:27 & 3:20-21)**

**[READ ] Phil. 1:27** Only let your **conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ:** that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind [soul] striving together for the faith of the gospel;

- ***It is a matter of our testimony as well as Paul points out here regarding the Philippians believers. A compatibility between the gospel and our governing relationships would be most wonderful indeed!***
- ***This word “conversation” speaks of the governing principles in the church regarding our living out of the faith. The constitution of our country is a valid illustration of this. Here it is the gospel itself that is the measure.***

**5. Our Striving Together, Standing Fast (1:27, 4:1, 3)**

**Phil. 1:27** Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I

may hear of your affairs, that ye **stand fast in one spirit, with one mind [soul] striving together** for the faith of the gospel;

- ***“Standing fast” and “striving together”. Those are God’s carefully chosen words here. What are ours? Note that it is the gospel itself that is the measure here.***
- ***This means at the minimum a common purpose and passion. I assume Paul is thinking of the two women mentioned later regarding this. He uses similar wording in chapter 4.***
- ***I believe there is very little of this in the contemporary church. Remember the “Chariots of Fire” illustration . . .***

6. **Our Gospel and Its Defined Faith** (1:5,12, 17, 27 (2), 2:22, 4:3, 15)

***Phil. 1:27*** Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for **the faith of the gospel**;

- ***“becometh the gospel” & “the faith of the gospel”: Our “motives are everything, our “mind-set” is critical. This is a weighty matter indeed.***
- ***Not “the gospel of the faith” but rather “the faith of the gospel”. That is very different. The former is the portion of our doctrine that is called the good news. The latter is the realization of that by a constant and transforming faith. “From faith, to faith” (Rom. 1:17).***
- ***If our gospel were one “of works”, then law and works of law would dominate everything (as in Gal. 3:12). But the gospel of grace is “of faith” and therefore that faith dominates (or should dominate) all of life.***

7. **Our Singleness of Mind** (The Examples of Christ & Paul) — many, many occurrences, “to think carefully” or “to mind”, used 10 times in Phil., esp. 2:5) (1:7, 2:2 (2), 5, 3:15 (2), 16, 19, 4:2, 10)

**[READ ] Phil. 2:5 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:**

- ***This is the “capstone” of this teaching here. Remember what we have already learned about “mind” or “mind-set”. This mind-set here is Paul’s (which models Christ’s). It has already been set forth as their example in the earlier verses in chapter 2.***
- ***So, it makes all the difference “how” we are thinking. That is the main focus of this entire letter, isn’t it? This letter is “correctional”, for the Philippians had failed to exemplify the heavenly teaching that they had received concerning the believer’s position and blessings “in Christ Jesus”. The REMEDY THEREFORE is in the realm of godly THINKING:***

***Phil. 1:30 Having the same conflict which ye saw in me, and now hear [to be] in me . . .***

***Phil. 2:1-3***

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

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

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

- ***So, the apostle continues, as verse 5 declares, “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus”:***

***Heb. 12:2*** “Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of [our] faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.”

- ***So be it.***

- ***For next time . . .***

## ***8. Our Joining Together with One Spirit & Soul (1:27, 4:2)***

9. ***Our Blessings, Filled with the Abundant Supply*** – (1:11 [comp. 19] & 4:18-19)
10. ***Our Shared Sufferings & Persecutions for Christ's Sake*** (1:29, 3:10 with many refs. To Paul's "bonds" and ours as well as in 1:7, 13, 14, 16)
11. ***Our Hope of "Out-Resurrection" & The Prize of Upward Calling*** (3:14)
12. ***Our Example, Paul, with Christ Above All*** (3:17 ["type" and "followers"], and many, many, others by implication as 4:9)

## ***II. Its Themes Await Our Reflection – Discover Their Meaning:***

- ***So what have we found here, what precious jewels have we discovered?***
  - ***Christ's "mind" as exemplified first by him and then by Paul dominates the letter - Mind should dominate over fleshly responses leading to oneness in other areas including ministry. Unity in soul and spirit as well is critical to the sharing of the ministry of the gospel.***
  - ***But it is the enabling by Christ and the Spirit that makes it all possible. And the "dynamic" or empowering here is that of a true and authentic hope (through this letter, of course) that is being realized by the believer. As the provision of God is received with thanksgiving in every circumstance, ultimately the prize is secured. That is Paul's teaching here.***
  - ***The whole letter is essentially an exhortation though in form it is a simple thank you note:***
  - ***God has done a great work and continues to do that work. an He will not cease until his goals are accomplished in the church of which we are all critical parts.***
  - ***Paul's "grace" is being distributed though this letter to the believers in Philippi and everywhere. (1:2, 1:7, 4:23)***
  - ***Running the race to the finish must be our central focus never taking our attention off of Christ as displaced by the apostle.***
  - ***The many practical consequences of this "walk" or "run" are to be enjoyed everywhere, even through BOTH abundance***

**AND need. For through it all we may in mind, soul and spirit be united together with one another in the same “struggle” Paul was engaged in.**

- **Praise be unto God!**

**III. Its Place Invites Our Response – A True Capstone Among Paul’s Epistles:**

- **As his second missionary journey completes with his imprisonment in Rome, Paul writes with a great expectation of further blessings in this life and eternal blessings following**

**IV. Its Power Demands Our Willing Reception – Spiritual Enabling Abounds:**

- **But all the glory goes to Almighty God since his empowering is what enables always – 1:6-7 . . . completed 4:18-20**