

***“Paul's Letter to the Philippians —
All Our Need Met With His Sufficient Supply”***

Introduction:

Today we reach the final verses of this great epistle of the apostle Paul to the believers in Philippi. Consider this well. This may have been the only letter from the hand of the apostle that these saints would have had available to them for years. It would have been read over and over again many, many times, and would have been put to memory without question. What was its impact, do you think? How many lives were transformed by it?

What is its impact today? What about us?

Review:

Paul's Testimony of God's Abundant Grace Continued:

- ***Rejoicing Though Under Roman House Arrest***
- ***Contented Though Suffering the Lack of Many of Life's Necessities***
- ***“Initiated” Through the Many Trials of Life***
- ***Empowered by Christ Himself***

Phil. 4:11-12

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

12 I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.

- ***“I know both [how] to be abased, and I know [how] to abound”: Here the apostle speaks not only of his “education in life”, as if by the mere living of it, it might be sufficient for God's purposes, but that he would come “to see” what otherwise could not be known . And he had come to see so clearly through it the eternal value of both “his humbling or abasing” and also “his abounding”, and both together.***
- ***He uses here the word (only found here in the Greek text) “initiated”. He writes here that he has been initiated into a sacred knowledge (perfect passive indicative). This word in the Greek language of his time was commonly used of initiations into a secret knowledge and practice, whether in religious or in philosophical pursuits. It refers to a special privilege granted to the one so initiated.***

- ***So the Christian life is one to be lived, walking as Paul walked and (by necessity) suffering as he also suffered. May Christ be glorified, for it is his life that we are living out in this world!***
- ***The next verse further explains our empowering for this life by using two different words for “energy” or “power” as the apostle finishes his words here in this final chapter or this life-transforming letter to the Philippians.***

Here we see Paul’s testimony of God’s abundant grace continuing to empower him through Christ Jesus:

Phil. 4:13 I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

Our Scripture Today: The Climax of Paul’s Example for the Philippians (and Us).
We start here again today:

Phil. 4:13-23

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

14 Notwithstanding ye have well done, that ye did communicate with my affliction.

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.

16 For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity.

17 Not because I desire a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound to your account.

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.

19 But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

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:

The Final Page on Paul's Example for the Philippians (and Us):

- ***Well Prepared for Every Circumstance***
- ***Not Allowing Physical Challenges to Dominate***
- ***Satisfied With the Lord's Provision***
- ***His Blessings Available to All Saints***

- ***His Closing Salutation — Confirmed By A Precious Historical Note***
- ***His Closing Salutation — Stands Complete***

I. Well Prepared for Every Circumstance:

[READ] Phil. 4:10-13

10 But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at the last your care of me hath flourished again; wherein ye were also careful, but ye lacked opportunity.

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

12 I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.

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

- ***Literally here, “I can do all things” = “I am empowered”, and then “Christ which strengtheneth me”. The first is the gift of empowerment while the second is the on-going internal energizing by Christ himself.***
- ***Which “all things” does the author have in mind here? Again, the context is so very, very important if we would properly comprehend the meaning. Since this expression is often used in this letter, the “all things” here must refer back to the former “all things”, that which was part of the “newness of life” in general, AND, that which was part for all as we are called to imitate the apostle in the ministry.***

II. Not Allowing Physical Challenges to Dominate:

[READ] Phil. 4:14-17

14 Notwithstanding ye have well done, that ye did communicate with my affliction.

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.

16 For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity.

17 Not because I desire a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound to your account.

- **Background - this was during the second missionary journey**
 - **Derbe → Lystra → Iconium → Galatia → Troas → Macedonia / [Philippi] → Thessalonica → Berea**
 - **Remember:**

Phil. 4:10 But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at the last your care of me hath flourished again; wherein ye were also careful, but ye lacked opportunity. [**“now at the last” . . . “flourished again”; “careful” . . . “lacked opportunity”**]

Phil. 2:25-26

25 Yet I supposed it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother, and companion in labour, and fellowsoldier, but your messenger, and he that ministered to my wants.

26 For he longed after you all, and was full of heaviness, because that ye had heard that he had been sick.

- **Apparently, Epaphroditus had been sent earlier to care for Paul in his imprisonment. He had worked hard and was ill as a result, “nigh unto death”, because the Philippians had not kept sending gifts and offerings. So Paul had sent Epaphroditus back to them and suffered great need as a result. But now he had returned with this great gift and thus the occasion of the writing of the letter. Now their messenger will be the carrier of the good tidings back to them.**
 - **What a wonderful part of sacred history this was indeed. And what an encouragement to us, I would hope, it is as the complexities and details of our lives develop one day at a time. For we like Paul have every reason to rejoice. For his grace is always sufficient. Amen?**
- **Paul was concerned more for their fruitfulness than his well being. What does this say about our prayers and requests? Is there a lesson in this for us? And what might that be?**

III. Satisfied With the Lord's Provision:

[READ] 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.

- ***The apostle cannot ignore the actual gift itself though because it was the fruit he had desired, their fruit, which was such a blessing to him in his need. The Lord had provided though the Philippians, as he writes it here, "in the beginning of the gospel".***
- ***"an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, wellpleasing to God": This is language that is very indicative of God's working under grace as opposed to his working under law. Do you see why?***

IV. His Blessings Available to All Saints:

[READ] Phil. 4:19 But **[or, and or moreover]** my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

- ***Note, it does NOT say "all your wants or desires" BUT "all your need". There is such a big difference . . . explain what Paul learned here...***
- ***"supply": To fill to overflowing, fulfil, as with prophecy, for example.***
- ***"need": Not lack of just anything but a fundamental need***
- ***"riches in glory by Christ Jesus":***
- ***What we should not assume — that Paul had an abundance as we might think of it. My youth, then and now ...***
- ***We now reach the apostles final words, nearly:***

V. His Closing Salutation — Confirmed By A Precious Historical Note:

[READ] Phil. 4:20-22

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.

- ***"Now unto God and our Father [be] glory for ever and ever. Amen":***

- “Salute . . . greet . . . salute”: ***All the same word here, simply, to greet as dear ones, friends in the Lord.***
- “chiefly they that are of Caesar's household”: ***“Chiefly” is a very strong word. Consider the significance of this here. Remember the introduction in chapter 1? This is the crowning part of the salutation!***

Phil. 1:13 So that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace, and in all other [places]

- ***What is the application of this to our current day, our own lives? Is there any? Any testimonies?***

VI. His Closing Salutation — Stands Complete:

[READ] Phil. 4:20, 23

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

...

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

[It was written to the Philippians from Rome, by Epaphroditus.]

- ***Verses 20 and 23 must be taken together as together they constitute the closing salutation here. What a great one indeed it is.***
 - ***It is to God and for his glory forever that the grace of Christ belongs to each of us. Now that is cause for rejoicing indeed.***
- ***What else would any of us need in addition to “the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ”? We have it all.***

This is a fitting end to this letter and a blessing for all time and for eternity.

Application:

- ***The Lord God never stops his working through us all.***

Phil. 1:6 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

Phil. 1:19 For I know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ,

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

- ***Together we are part of his plan for now and eternity.***

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.

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.

- ***His grace abounds, now and forever!***

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

Phil. 4:23 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ [be] with you all. Amen.