

“Paul's Letter to the Philippians — ‘Paul’s Final Exhortation — Follow Me!’”

Review:

- ***Paul’s Imitators are Exhorted to Have Much Discernment***

[READ] Phil. 3:17-19

19 Brethren, be followers together of me [mimicing me together], and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample [type].

18 (For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, [that they are] the enemies of the cross of Christ:

19 Whose end [is] destruction, whose God [is their] belly, and [whose] glory [is] in their shame, who mind earthly things.)

- ***So, as we have already seen here in our studies in Philippians, the heart (“crux”) of the issue comes down simply to what we are “minding” and verses 18 & 19 say so powerfully what that truly is. And, do not forget that we must never forget the continuing light of his teaching already on the profound distinction between law and grace and the corresponding difference between legal works and the fruit of righteousness under grace. Note the keys words here “mimicing” and “type”. So very important they are. Are we willing to follow Paul, whatever the costs?***
- ***Those Minding Earthly Things Should Expect “Perdition”***
 - ***Verses 18 & 19 must be taken together or we will miss most of Paul’s meaning. The point he is making has to do PRIMARILY with ones “walk” and its consistency with the principles of God’s powerful and always sufficient grace.***
 - ***“the enemies of the cross of Christ”: He will now explain with these simple words, “the enemies of the cross of Christ”, what the real issue is, as he sees it. It is all about having the wrong “mind-set”, so often referred to here in this letter.***
 - ***“whose end is destruction”: This is often translated as “perdition”. In addition, these are characterized by their mind-set. They are focused on fleshly things, “earthly” things, and not at all on the “heavenly realm”. We are under the abundance of grace and not law and the two “rules” cannot mix without each being essentially changed.***

- *This word “perdition” is a difficult one to interpret because we think of this as hell-fire and damnation. But the context seems speak otherwise of the way of life of many believers that are in no way spiritual. In 1 Timothy Paul also uses this word but in the context of a wasted life, not lived to any enduring and eternal benefit.*
- *So this is all about two radically distinct and different courses or directions in life: one leads to destruction and “unraveling” whether it seems that way or not. He promises that here. The other leads to what he calls “perfection”, or reaching the desired and appointed end point as described in detail earlier in the letter.*

The one is based only on what is seen. The other on what is not seen. The one is temporal. The other is eternal. The one is by faith (plus works?), the other by the faith of Christ alone. The two are so very, very different and the end points of each life are defined by what course we will walk.

- *[SKIP] We must also compare this with chapter 1’s reference to those that preached Christ with improper motivations. Is this written about the same persons? I think not, since in the first case those singled out ARE preaching the true gospel. In the second case these are the enemies of the cross and surely are neither preaching the cross as Paul did and are actively in opposition to the doctrines of God’s unlimited grace and his dispensation of the grace of God. Paul actually speaks positively of those mentioned in chapter 1 but those here are condemned with strong words indeed.*
- *Those with a Heavenly Hope as A Constant Goal Should Expect “Perfection” and Have A Special Blessing Waiting for Them!*

Phil. 3:20-21

20 For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ:

21 *Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.*

- *“our conversation”: More than “manner of life or living” is implied here, rather “citizenship”. And that is supposed to inspire a way of life far above what it might have been otherwise.*

- *We are truly citizens of a heavenly realm. Nevertheless, we are also “aliens and strangers” here on this earth. We are to live accordingly.*
- *Such a great contrast has been drawn here by the apostle between those running the race Paul is running and the others, whether unbelievers or believers! Believers, are to be pure in thought and act as Christ himself was. And Paul, imperfect as he was, is still our example as we shall see in today’s study also.*
 - *It is so important to keep our focus on the goal set before us. That means we need to turn away often from those that name Christ but who refuse the riches of his grace and continue clinging to this world and its passing glories. We must run the race with the proper focus and expect (with the Lord’s constant supply) the full blessing:*
- *Now the apostle will continue but the focus will now be on believers. His final exhortation in the letter will be glorious indeed. Enjoy!*

Our Outline Today “The Final Exhortation: Follow Me” (Phil. 4:1-9):

- *Paul’s Final Exhortation — Its Subject: The Apostle’s Dear Ones*
- *Paul’s Final Exhortation — Its Application: Even To Our Ordinary Lives*
- *Paul’s Final Exhortation — Its Focus: Rejoicing and Again Rejoicing*
- *Paul’s Final Exhortation — Its Challenge: The Lord is Near, and Be Gentle*
- *Paul’s Final Exhortation — Its Promise: The Peace of God Is Abundant*
- *Paul’s Final Exhortation — His Calling: Follow Me!*

I. Paul’s Final Exhortation — Its Subject: The Apostle’s Dear Ones

[READ] Phil. 4:1 Therefore, my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, [my] dearly beloved.

- *“my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown”: This is repetitive for effect but a wonderful designation indeed. This is a six-fold expression of Paul’s relationship with these saints.*
- *The exhortation: “so stand fast in the Lord”: This is the ultimate in simplicity as we have seen so often in Paul’s letters before. But what could be better for believers than this, standing fast in the Lord. Amen.*

II. Paul's Final Exhortation — Its Application: Even To Our Ordinary Lives

[READ] Phil. 4:2-3

2 I beseech Euodias, and beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord.

3 And I intreat thee also, true yokefellow, help those women which laboured with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and [with] other my fellowlabourers, whose names [are] in the book of life.

- “I beseech Euodias, and beseech Syntyche”: ***Two women are mentioned explicitly by name here. Who were they and are they important? Well, “beseech” is a rather strong word so it must be important. By name they are mentioned and so their “conflict” goes down in history. It am sure it was important to them. Do you think they may have adjusted their behavior because of this letter? What if the apostle had written such a letter to you, to me? Or, has he?***
- ***Unity with Paul is strongly affirmed here and all believers (even the two named women) are greatly honored. This is the unity that has eternal glory: “whose names [are] in the book of life”.***

III. Paul's Final Exhortation — Its Focus: Rejoicing and Again Rejoicing

[READ] Phil. 4:4 Rejoice in the Lord always: [and] again I say, Rejoice.

- ***The four-fold joy is hereby ordained as our goal, and this would be abundance of joy indeed. To rejoice is “to enjoy” again. Twice therefore is four-fold joy!***

In other words, we should never stop rejoicing, “in the Lord”, and in His riches most glorious, whatever our situation might be!

IV. Paul's Final Exhortation — Its Challenge: The Lord is Near, and Be Gentle

[READ] Phil. 4:5 Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord [is] at hand.

- “Let your moderation be known”: ***Here, “moderation” = “gentleness”. Let it be known or “show it, display it, now and forever”. This is the apostle’s exhortation here!***
- “The Lord [is] at hand [or near]”: ***Literally, this really does mean “near”, but I do not believe he is writing prophetically of the return of the Lord in this verse. Rather, he writes about the Lord’s most intimate***

presence with us. He does dwell within us. Remember Rom. 8:9?

“But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.”

V. Paul’s Final Exhortation — Its Promise: The Peace of God Is Abundant

[READ] Phil. 4:6-7

6 Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.

7 And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

- “Be careful for nothing”: ***In other words, stop being anxious or concerned. Our concerns are no match for God’s abundant good care of each of us under the abundance of his grace. We are on a path to glory and the Lord will take us to our destination. Such a great promise now follows here. Let us take it to heart.***

6 Be careful for nothing; **but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.**

7 And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus

- “but in every thing [in every circumstance of life] by prayer and supplication”: ***Prayer and supplication and then finally our requests, are to follow our never-ending thanksgivings, in other words.***
- “with thanksgiving”: ***“Meta” = “after”. The thanksgiving should always precede our asking. Always. Our thanksgivings should always influence our requests and every other form of prayer. And they will!***
- “let your requests be made known unto God”: ***If our often thanksgivings for all things preceded our requests, how would our requests change??***
- “And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding”: ***Our understanding is always lacking concerning the many details of God’s working (we do not even know how to pray - Rom. 8:26). We can know however what is revealed and here we find such a great example of that. God’s peace is an incomparable gift that surpasses anything we might ever have expected. Praise God! What ever our trials, his grace and peace are always sufficient.***

- The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus”: **“keep” here means “guard”, as in a castle’s “keep”, where the crown jewels and gold of the realm are safely secured (Ft. Knox in America).**

So what is it that will protect our hearts and minds? Ah . . . It is the gift of the peace of God that is deposited there directly by God himself. That is what Paul has written here. Do we believe it? Will we receive it?

VI. Paul’s Final Exhortation — His Calling: Follow Me!

[READ] Phil. 4:8-9

8 Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things [are] honest, whatsoever things [are] just, whatsoever things [are] pure, whatsoever things [are] lovely, whatsoever things [are] of good report; if [there be] any virtue, and if [there be] any praise, think on these things.

9 Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you.

- ***There is so much failure today with so many dishonoring Paul’s crucial example of what it means to live “under grace and not under law”.***
- ***Here is that word for “think” or “mind” again, a key word in this letter! But this all brings us back to Paul’s example to the Philippians and to us all. “Think on these things”. What things?, The next verse tells us:***
 - ***“Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me”: His example was so powerful he was confident to set himself up as their example. Are we so confident? May it be so.***
- ***The “things” are all listed here - as Paul had been and continued to demonstrate to them all. They were now to run the race set before and “practice as a habit” through much exercise of the enablements God has provided.***
- ***The “God of peace” is the wording, not “the peace of God” as in verse 7. We have both when we walk as Paul walked and think and mind, as he did. What an exalted privilege indeed. Amen?***