



~THE BOOK OF PHILIPPIANS, PART 2~
~AN OVERVIEW AND SURVEY~
~ROUTE 66~



Book: The Book of Philippians has as a theme the living out of the Christian life. We also find the word the theme of “joy” and “rejoicing” in the book.

Warren Wiersbe notes,

“The secret of his joy is the *single mind*; he lives for Christ and the Gospel. (Christ is named eighteen times in Philippians 1, and the Gospel is mentioned six times.) "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain" (Phil. 1:21). But what really is "the single mind"? It is the attitude that says, "It makes no difference what happens to me, just as long as Christ is glorified and the Gospel shared with others." Paul rejoiced in spite of his circumstances, because his circumstances strengthened the *fellowship of the Gospel* (Phil. 1:1-11), promoted the *furtherance of the Gospel* (Phil. 1:12-26), and guarded *tine faith of the Gospel* (Phil. 1:27-30).” – The Bible Exposition Commentary

Author: The author is Paul. Let’s first consider the internal evidence. **One**, the author claims to be Paul (Phil. 1:1). **Two**, the book fits that claim. In Phil. 3:4-6 Paul talks about his life before coming to Christ. **Three**, the style is Paul’s, beginning with the familiar “grace and peace” found in Phil. 1:2. **Four**, the doctrine is Pauline. Christ is our life (Phil. 1:21; see Gal. 2:20) as Paul saw this as vital. Christ is the head over all things (Phil. 2:9-11; see Col. 2:9-10).

Now the external evidence. **One**, the earliest MSS of the book have Paul’s name. **Two**, it was accepted into the canon of Scripture as written by Paul. **Three**, the early church Fathers support Paul’s authorship. This includes Clement of Rome, Ignatius, and Polycarp. **Four**, almost all critics of the Bible accept the letter was written by Paul.

Breaking Down Philippians – The **first** section is **Christ Our Life** is seen in 1:1-1:30. The **next** section is a **Pattern For Christian Living** in Phil. 2:1-2:30. The **third** section is the **Prize For Christian Living – Christ Our Goal** seen in Phil. 3:1-3:21. Section **four** is the **Power For Christian Living** in Phil. 4:1-4:23.

2. Pattern For Christian Living – Phil. 2:1-2:30

A) Phil. 2:1-4 deals with our attitude of putting others first. We are to build unity by considering others and not just ourselves.

B) Phil. 2:5-11 deals with what is known as the “kenosis.” It has the idea that Jesus laid aside His glory and came to earth as a servant. We are to have His attitude as we go through life (vss. 5-8), that of being a servant. God has exalted Him to a place at His right hand, where Christ once again shares in the glory He had before coming to earth (vss. 9-11).

Vss. 9-11 also tell us that one day all of mankind and the angels will acknowledge Who Christ is.

C) **Phil. 2:12-18** is Paul's discussion of how we are to live in the world. In **vss. 12-13** he talks of our part in growing in our faith and in God's part of working in us.

This has nothing to do with earning our salvation. This deals with our spiritual growth. The word "obeyed" in **vs. 12** has the idea of "listen to a command and to obey it." The Philippian believers had done that in the past and Paul encourages them to keep doing it. What does Paul have in mind? The **Life Application New Testament Commentary** has something to consider,

"Work hard to show the results of your salvation," in light of the preceding exhortation to unity, may mean that the entire church was to work together to rid themselves of divisions and discord. The Philippian Christians needed to be especially careful to obey Christ, now that Paul wasn't there to continually remind them about what was right. We, too, must be careful about what we believe and how we live, especially when we are on our own. In the absence of cherished Christian leaders, we must focus our attention and devotion even more on Christ so that we won't be sidetracked."

Note Paul says to "work out" your salvation, not "work for" your salvation. They were already saved. They were to continue growing in their faith. And they were to work out their salvation with complete trust in God.

Yes, they had to do their part, relying on God through the whole process (**vs. 13**) Who is doing His part for His glory. He "energizes" us to do what we need to.

In **Phil. 2:14-18** Paul says we are not to "grumble" or "complain" (**vs. 14**). The reason – we are to be above reproach, in other words, we are to live a life that reflects Christ (**vs. 15**). The unsaved world does watch us. Our goal is to live in such a way that if someone does say something about us it is not true.

Vss. 16-18 is Paul saying that his desire is that his ministry will be fruitful among the Philippians. Referring to himself as a "drink offering" is explained in the following,

Paul viewed himself as being poured out like a drink offering on behalf of the Philippians (v. 17). But instead of sorrowing he rejoiced. "Poured out" is from the Greek word *spendomai*, used of a drink offering given as a sacrifice to God. The possibility of release from prison was not uppermost in Paul's mind as it had been before (cf. 1:24-26). He now viewed his death as imminent. Later, near the actual time of his death, he used this same language (2 Tim. 4:6). – The Bible Knowledge Commentary

Another view of what Paul means here is found in the **Nelson Study Bible**,

"Some have interpreted this figure of speech as depicting Paul's own martyrdom for the cause of Christ. However the content of the letter reveals by contrast that Paul assumes he will live (1:25) and expects to be released from prison shortly (see v. 24). Thus Paul probably was saying that he was presently being poured out as a living offering on behalf of the faith of the Philippians."

D) Phil. 2:19-30 Paul talks about Timothy and Epaphroditus. Note his words regarding Timothy in **vss. 19-22**. **Vss. 25-30** tell us about Epaphroditus. Paul calls him a “brother” and “fellow worker” (**vs. 25**). This man was concerned for the Philippians because they had heard that he had been ill which he was, even near death (**vss. 26-27**).

God showed mercy on him and Paul was eager to send him to the church at Philippi (**vss. 28-30**). **Vs. 30** is not a “shot” at the church. They could not be in Rome. Epaphroditus was, ministering Paul to the point he almost died but doing what the Philippians were unable to do.

There is the thought that Paul was telling the Philippian church what he did about Epaphroditus so that when he returned to Philippi the church would not look at him as possibly failing in his mission to Paul because he had been ill. Paul tells them they were to honor him for all he had done (**vss. 28-30**).

3. Prize For Christian Living – Christ Our Goal – Phil. 3:1-3:21

A) Phil. 3:1-2 is a warning to watch out for false teachers, the Jewish legalists who demanded certain additions to the Gospel. The word “dogs” was normally used to describe Gentiles but Paul uses it here to refer to those who were adding to the message of salvation. Their intentions may or may not have been good but they were not to be listened to.

Note he begins this chapter by telling them to “rejoice” in the Lord (**vs. 1**).

B) Phil. 3:3-6 is not to be taken as Paul bragging about himself. He is simply stating that all that he had done, and all that he was, did not save him. His point was to contrast that with what he says in the following verses.

C) Phil. 3:7-11 shows that Paul’s heart is to know Christ and the power of His resurrection in his life. His goal was to know Jesus (**vs. 8**). **Vs. 9** tells us clearly that righteousness, being declared right before God, has nothing to do with our works, but through faith in Christ alone.

D) Phil. 3:12-17 deals with Paul’s desire to leave the past behind and press on to the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. His goal is to know Christ, experience the resurrection power, and recognize it is as an ongoing thing to strive after. His goal, as well as ours, should be spiritual maturity.

The **Life Application Study Bible Notes** gives us food for thought regarding **vss. 12-14**,

“Paul said that his goal was to know Christ, to be like Christ, and to be all Christ had in mind for him. This goal took all of Paul’s energies. This is a helpful example for us. We should not let anything take our eyes off our goal—knowing Christ. With the single-mindedness of an athlete in training, we must lay aside everything harmful and forsake anything that may distract us from being effective Christians. What is holding you back?”

Vss. 17-21 is a reminder that we are to imitate those who walk in the way of Jesus, to guard against false teachers and to remember that our final destination is heaven (**vss. 20-21**).

4. Power For Christian Living – Phil. 4:1-4:23

A) Phil. 4:1-3 begins with Paul’s encouragement to the believers to “stand firm...in the Lord” (**vs. 1**) and then he asks a believer at Philippi (unnamed) to help two ladies get things right with each other (**vss. 2-3**). We do not know what the issues were but they were serious enough for Paul to address. These ladies had an impactful ministry. The issue between them was causing problems in the church.

B) Phil. 4:4-9 gives us encouragement and talks about prayer. **Vs. 4** is Paul encouraging us to constantly “rejoice.” In **vs. 6** we are told to not worry about anything but to go the Lord in prayer. When we do we not only make our requests known but we also show a thankful heart to God that He answers according to His will and leading.

H.L. Willmington says regarding prayer,

“Contrary to the popular saying, prayer does not always change things. But sincere prayer does always change us, by protecting against those things that can drive us to despair.” – Willmington’s Bible Handbook

In **vs. 7** Paul tells us that when we pray and give the requests to God, we experience His peace which guards our minds and hearts. To have this peace we must go to the Lord in prayer.

Vs. 8 gives us a list of things that we are to think on. This helps us keep our mind right and directs our life. In **vs. 9** Paul encourages them to practice the spiritual things that he did.

C) Phil. 4:10-19 gives us Paul’s sharing of how God provided for him through the Philippian church. In **vs. 10** he mentions how they care about him. In **vs. 11** he talks about how he “learned” contentment.

In **vss. 12-13** he tells us that through Christ, no matter the situation, he could do all things.

Vss. 14-19 is again his thankfulness for the church helping him, that these were a sacrifice to God that honored the Lord (**vs. 18**), and that God will supply for the Christians all they need (**vs. 19**) because of Christ Jesus.

D) Phil. 4:20-23 are Paul’s final greetings. Note he mentions the “saints”, especially those of the household of Caesar (**vs. 22**). Nero was ruling at this time. Caesar was a title. This last group could have included soldiers and maybe some of the workers in the house. Relatives possibly? We cannot say for sure.

He also notes that it is the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ that makes all things possible (**vs. 23**).

