

## PHILIPPIANS CHAPTER ONE

### A MIND OF THANKS

The things we commonly think about and the way we feel are the most important thing about us. The apostle Paul gave us an example of right-mindedness. In Philippians chapter one he exhibits a mind of *thanks*.

#### 1. *Personal thanks*; (1:3-8)

Paul liked people. He liked the Philippians. He was not thankful merely for God's blessings in an abstract way, but for people individually and particularly. He appreciated the Philippians for their partnership with him in his work. His thankfulness for them led him to feel a confidence about their future deeds and ways of life.

#### 2. *Prayerful thanks*; (1:9-11)

Paul prayed that their love might abound (overflow) more and more, leading them to better knowledge and more fruitfulness.

#### 3. *Optimistic thanks*; (1:12-26)

Optimistic thanks for *past* events—In the confinement of arrest in Rome Paul had won many to Christ, even from the Praetorian Guard. Other Christians had been made bolder. Even the few Christian preachers who were envious of Paul and tried to bring misery upon him, were still preaching the gospel, and Paul rejoiced in this. (1:12-18)

Optimistic thanks for *future* hopes—Whether Paul lived or died made no real difference to him. If he died, that was gain to him. If he lived, his life would bring progress and joy to Philippians. (1:19-26)

#### 4. *Concerned thanks*; (1:27-30)

Paul was concerned that their manner of life be worthy of the gospel, and that they be not frightened by enemies and by suffering.

## Outline of 1:1-2

Salutation; 1:1-2

1. Senders; 1:1
2. Recipients; 1:1
3. Greeting; 1:2

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**1:1. Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, to all the saints in Christ Jesus that are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons; 2. Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.**

*Translation and Paraphrase*

1:1. Paul and Timothy, bondservants of Jesus Christ, (send this epistle) to all the saints (the holy brethren) in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, (along) with (your) bishops (overseers or elders) and deacons (ministers or servants). 2. (May) grace (be) to you (all) and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ (the Messiah).

*Notes*

1. In New Testament times letters were started by giving the author's name first, and then the recipient's name.

Paul usually wrote an expression of thanks and prayer for his readers right after the salutation. This was followed by the body of the letter, which was closed with such concluding items as greetings from various people, and the benediction. Paul followed this pattern in Philippians.

2. Paul does not refer to himself as an *apostle* as he begins Philippians. The omission of this title is in keeping with the affectionate character of the letter. The Philippians were believers. Paul did not need to approach them with the tone of apostolic authority.
3. Timothy's name is added as co-sender of the epistle. Timothy was well-known to the Philippians. He came there with Paul on both visits to Philippi. See Acts 16:11-40; 19:21-22; Phil. 2:22.

Timothy seems to have grown up in Lystra (in Asia Minor), under the instruction of a godly mother (Eunice) and grandmother (Lois). II Timothy 1:5; Acts 16:1. He joined Paul and Silas when they came through Lystra during Paul's

second missionary trip. Timothy continued with Paul during his third missionary trip, and was with Paul in Rome during his first imprisonment, and afterwards. He was a loyal, constant, beloved, and effective helper to Paul.

4. While Timothy's name is joined with Paul's in the greeting, the frequent references to *my* and *me* instead of *our* and *us* in the book show that Paul was indeed the primary, if not the sole author. 1:3-4.
5. While Paul and Timothy sent the letter, in the truest sense Philippians is Christ's letter to the church.
6. Paul calls himself and Timothy *bondservants*; that is, slaves. While Paul was not servile, he was utterly a bondservant of Christ, bought, completely dependent, and undividedly loyal. Romans 1:1; Gal. 1:10.
7. The expression "servants of Christ Jesus" points back to the Old Testament, where the prophets are often called *servants* of God. See Amos 3:7; Jer. 7:25; Ezra 9:11; Daniel 9:6; Joshua 1:2.

Also Jesus himself was called the servant of God. Isa 42:1; 52:13; Matt. 12:15-18.

Thus the use of the title *servant* by Paul associates him with such honored servants of God as the prophets and with Christ himself.

8. The *saints* at Philippi were the *holy* ones, or the *separated* ones at Philippi. All Christians are saints. They are not called saints because they do not sin (See I John 1:8), but because they are set apart to God. The fundamental meaning of the word *holy* is that of setting apart, of being devoted to God. Compare Exodus 19:5-6.

In Christ Jesus we are set apart from the world, acquitted of all sins, and called to a life of good works.

9. Such expressions as "in Christ Jesus" are exceedingly common in Paul's writings. *In Christ Jesus* occurs 48 times; *in Christ* 34 times, and *in the Lord* 50 times. The doctrine that we are in Christ was a favorite of Paul's, and is accentuated in Philippians.
10. The Philippian church was organized with bishops and deacons. When these officers were selected for the Philippian church is not known. The churches of New Testament times seem to have selected their own elders and deacons, after the qualifications had been laid down for such offices by the inspired apostles and prophets.

11. The bishop (this word means overseer or superintendent) is the same officer as the one elsewhere called *elder*. Compare Acts 20:17, 28; Titus 1:5-7. Several elders were appointed for each individual church. Acts 14:23. The practice of having one bishop as overseer over a number of churches, or over some vast area, is a work of the devil.
12. Deacons (this word means servant, attendant, or minister) were men selected to do various services required by the church, as needs arose. Study Acts 6:1-6; I Timothy 3:8-13.
13. Paul began and ended every epistle of his (except Hebrews) with a wish for *grace* upon his readers.  
 Grace means favor, undeserved favor. It also refers to the good effects that God's favor brings to us. To gain a sense of our debt to God for His grace, and our total dependence on this favor, is to make a giant stride toward Christian maturity. See Hebrews 4:16.
14. In Paul's view *peace* was the state of tranquility and blessedness which rose out of reconciliation with God. We can experience peace amidst persecutions and poverty. Those not reconciled to God have inward strife and discontent, even in wealth and ease.

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### Outline of 1:3-11

- A. Thanks and prayer for the Philippians; 1:3-11
  1. Thanks; 1:3-8
    - a. Thanks given always; 1:3
    - b. Thanks given with joy; 1:4-5
    - c. Thanks given with confidence; 1:6-8
      - (1) Confidence that the Lord will perfect them; 1:6
      - (2) Confidence is the correct attitude for Paul; 1:7-8
  2. Prayer; 1:9-11
    - a. Requests; 1:9-10a
      - (1) That their love may abound in knowledge; 1:9-10a  
 —The result of knowledgeable love is that they will approve excellent things.
      - (2) That they may be sincere and void of offence; 1:10b-11a  
 —Unto the day of Christ.  
 —Being filled with the fruit of righteousness.
    - b. Purpose of the prayer—the praise and glory of God; 1:11b

3. I thank my God upon all my remembrance of you, 4. always in every supplication of mine on behalf of you all making my supplication with joy,

### *Translation and Paraphrase*

3. I give thanks to my God in all (my) remembrance of you, 4. always in every supplication of mine in behalf of all of you making my supplication with joy,

### *Notes*

1. These verses are easy to understand. They need more to be imitated than to be interpreted. Paul gave thanks for his brethren. Do we give thanks for our brethren?
2. The word *supplication* used here means a prayer emphasizing the aspect of need. Even in such prayers as supplications the Philippians were mentioned with thankfulness. Paul's prayers in behalf of his needs were not selfish nor self-centered. They were joyful prayers involving others.

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5. for your fellowship in furtherance of the gospel from the first day until now;

### *Translation and Paraphrase*

5. (I give thanks for you) because of your fellowship (your share in, and your participation) in (and for) the (work of) gospel, from the first day (when you received Christ until (right)now.

### *Notes*

1. The word *fellowship* is from the Greek *koinonia*, which refers to the share one has in anything, participation, association, or communion. It may refer to the act of sharing a thing in common, or to the thing shared. The word is variously translated as *communication* (Phm. 6), *communion* (I Cor. 10:16), *contribution* (Rom. 15:26), *distribution* (II Cor. 9:13), and *fellowship*.

The cognate verb (*koinoneo*) is variously rendered "be made partakers of," "be partakers of," "communicate," "distribute."

2. In Christ we have fellowship in ministering to people's needs (II Cor. 8:4), fellowship of the mystery of the gospel (Eph. 3:9), fellowship of the Spirit (Phil. 2:1), fellowship of Christ's sufferings (Phil 3:10), fellowship with God and one another (I John 1:3).
3. The Philippians had a fellowship in the furtherance of the gospel with Paul. The preposition *in* in 1:5 is the Greek *eis*, which suggests that their fellowship was not just *in* the gospel, but was *directed toward* the goal of the gospel. The Philippians' part in the gospel had been continual from the first day they received the Christ until the time Paul wrote this letter to them.

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6. being confident of this very thing, that he who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Jesus Christ:

### *Translation and Paraphrase*

6. (I am thankful for you because I am) persuaded (and convinced) that he who (God) began in you (plural) a good work (the work of transforming and using you) will carry it out to completion, (even) until the day of Christ Jesus (when he comes again).

### *Notes*

1. God is at work in the Christian. See Phil. 2:12-13. God will continue his work within the Christian until the end of his life. God prunes us like a vinedresser prunes grape vines, that we may bear more fruit. John 15:2. We are transformed to become like Christ. (II Cor. 3:18).
2. A day is coming called the day of Jesus Christ. It will be HIS day. Every eye shall see him. (Rev. 1:7). Every knee will bow, and every tongue confess. Phil. 2:10. Saints will marvel and glorify Him. II Thess. 1:10. Sinners will wail because of him. Rev. 1:7. Satan and the enemies of Jesus had their day long ago on Golgotha. But we may say of the day of Christ that "His day is marching on!"

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7. even as it is right for me to be thus minded on behalf 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 with me of grace. 8. For God is my witness, how I long after you all in the tender mercies of Christ Jesus.

*Translation and Paraphrase*

7. (I have this confidence concerning you), just as it is befitting for me to think (in) this (way) about you all. (And why is it befitting that I have this confidence about you?) Because I have you in my heart (and isn't it natural for us to have confidence in those we love?), since you are all partakers with me in the grace (of God); (you have been partakers) both in my bonds (imprisonment), and in the verbal defence, and (in the work of) making firm the gospel.

8. For (as surely as) God is my witness, I long for you all with the (very) heart (lit. bowels) of Christ Jesus.

*Notes*

1. Paul's reasoning in vs. 7 is a little hard to follow. Verse 7 is an explanation as to why he felt confident that God would continue to work within them (stated in vs. 6). The explanation is that it was right, or just, for Paul to feel this way. And why was it right? The implied answer seems to be that anyone should have confidence in those who are as dear to him as the Philippians were dear to Paul.
2. Paul and the Philippians had been joint-partakers of God's grace. Though 700 miles separated them, God's power was as close to the Philippians as it was to Paul.
3. The word *partakers* (Gr. *sugkoinos*) comes from the same root as the word *fellowship*. It means a joint sharer, or one who partakes with another. In three respects the Philippians had been partakers with Paul:
  - a. Partakers in *bonds*. Their contribution to Paul while he was in bonds identified them with Paul. Compare Heb. 10:32-33! Furthermore some of them may actually have been placed in bonds after Paul's departure. Phil. 1:29-30.
  - b. Partakers in the *defense of the gospel*. This refers to the verbal defense, or speech, as that given at a trial. Paul often defended the gospel by giving answers to those who spoke falsely about the gospel. Phil. 1:16; Acts 24:10; 26:1.

Sometimes people say, "The gospel does not need defending; it only needs preaching." This is not completely true. Paul defended the gospel. Often it is true, however, that the clear presentation of the gospel is its best defense.

- c. Partakers in the *confirmation* of the gospel. Confirmation is the act of making firm. This is done by teaching and by exhorting. The Philippians shared with Paul in doing this.
4. In verse 8 Paul seems to assert that his love for the Philippians is so great that it can hardly be believed. Therefore he calls upon God to witness to the truth of what he said.

Paul longed for them with the very same kind of longing that is in the heart of Christ himself. Do you have any Christian brethren that you can truthfully say you love like that?

The words "tender mercies" in vs. 8 (KJV *bowels*) is, literally *bowels*. Ancient people spoke of the bowels (the nobler bowels, stomach, liver, lungs, etc., rather than entrails) as being the seat of the affections. Actually this makes just as much (or more) sense as it does for us to speak of the *heart* as the center of the emotions and affections.

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**9. And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and all discernment; 10. so that ye may approve the things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and void of offence unto the day of Christ; 11. being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are through Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.**

### *Translation and Paraphrase*

9. And I pray this: (first) that your love may abound (overflow) yet more and more, in (ways directed by) precise knowledge and all discernment;

10. (And may this knowledgeable love bring you to the point) that you may test the things that differ (in this world with its conflicting values, and approve the things that are excellent); (then, secondly, I pray) that you (all) may be (as) sincere (as sunshine) and without offense unto the day of Christ,

11. being filled (not merely with inward sincerity but) with (the outward) fruit of righteousness (which comes) through Jesus Christ; (and all of these things will work out) unto (the) glory and praise of God.

### *Notes*

1. Vss. 9-11 contain Paul's prayer for the Philippians. Basically this is a prayer that they may have an educated love and that they be sincere. Note that their educated love was to lead them



to approve the things that are excellent, not the trashy things in this world. Note that the things that Paul prayed for were all to result in glory and praise to God.

2. If there was any one problem that especially beset the Philippian church, it seems to have been the problem of dissension and lack of love between some of the members. This seems to be suggested by Phil. 2:3-4 and 4:2. Therefore Paul prayed that their love might abound (that is, not be merely adequate, but enough to overflow).
3. This love was not only to be abundant, but it was to be a knowledgeable love. It was to abound in knowledge (*epignosis*, precise love) and all discernment. Love without knowledge is useless sentimentality and self-defeating. We must discern what is truly good for those we love, as well as have a loving feeling toward them.
4. The first part of 1:10 may be translated in two ways, both of which, however, come out with about the same idea:
  - (1) that you may approve the things that are excellent (Gr. *diaphero*).
  - (2) that you may distinguish (or test) the things that differ (A.S.V. margin).

The verb *diaphero* in both classical and New Testament Greek meant (a) to excell (Matt. 6:26; 10:31; 12:12; Luke 12:7), and (b) to differ (I Cor. 15:41; Gal. 4:1; 2:6. Thus either of the above translations is suitable.

5. In our lives we find ourselves confronted with MANY differing things, and we must choose what we shall accept. As Christians we ought to choose the things that are excellent and not those that are trashy. This applies not only to food, but to everything—to reading, to entertainment, to music, to clothing, to art, to friends, etc., etc.
6. Paul prayed that we might be *sincere*. The etymology of this word (*heilikerimes*) is uncertain. Some think that it comes from *heile* (meaning sun), and thus we are to be as sincere as sunshine! Others say it comes from the verb *eilo* meaning to turn. According to this meaning we are to be sincere enough to stand being rotated about and inspected in every part.
7. "Void of offence" means "Not causing others to stumble."
8. The word *fruit* in 1:11 is singular, like *fruit* in Gal. 5:22. The fruit of righteousness may be single, when thought of as a whole, but it does come in many forms and flavors.

9. If the fruit of righteousness comes through Jesus Christ, it is easy to see why the world is such an unrighteous place. The people of the world either don't know of Christ or have rejected Him. Either way the world is deprived of the fruit of righteousness.

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### Outline of 1:12-18

- B. Progress of the gospel in Rome: 1:12-18
1. Report of Progress; 1:12
  2. Ways in which progress has occurred; 1:13-18
    - a. His bonds became manifest in Christ; 1:13
    - b. Most of the brethren are bolder to speak; 1:14
    - c. Christ is preached, even though insincerely; 1:15-18
      - (1) Some preach from envy and strife
      - (2) Some preach from good will
      - (3) Paul rejoiced in all the preaching; 1:18

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**12. Now I would have you know, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the progress of the gospel;**

#### *Translation and Paraphrase*

12. But I (do) want you to know, brothers, that the things (which have happened) to me have come (along in such a way that they have worked out) for the advancement of the gospel.

#### *Notes*

1. Philippians has more of a newsy quality about it than Paul's other epistles. Yet the news is such that it builds up the soul, rather than merely satisfying the curiosity.
2. The word translated "furtherance" (or progress) is *prokope*, and refers to that which cuts open a way for an army or any forward-moving thing.

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**13. so that my bonds became manifest in Christ throughout the whole praetorian guard, and to all the rest;**

#### *Translation and Paraphrase*

13. (The result has been) that my bonds have become plainly recognized (as associated with my being) in Christ—(This has become known throughout the whole Praetorium (the imperial guard) and to all the rest (who are around me)).

*Notes*

1. Paul reports that now in Rome the chains and bonds he wears are plainly recognized as being "in Christ," that is, that the wearer is in Christ and the bonds are the result of his being in Christ. They are not looked upon as bonds worn by one caught in a crime, but they have become a badge of Paul's being in Christ.
2. The phrase *in Christ* goes with *manifest*, rather than with *bonds*. The bonds were manifest as being the bonds of one in Christ. Paul's imprisonment became a matter of notoriety for his being in Christ. Confinement for such a cause would attract attention and inquiry.
3. Even the Praetorian guard (KJV, the *palace*) had come to realize that Paul was in bonds for being in Christ.

The Praetorium was the imperial guard. Originally this body was instituted by Augustus Caesar with 10,000 select soldiers. They were stationed in Rome and in nearby towns. Tiberius Caesar concentrated them all in Rome in a permanent strongly fortified camp. The name Praetorium nonetheless refers to the soldiers themselves, and is not used in a local sense of their camp. These soldiers had special privileges and double pay. In later years they became king-makers, with power to install and depose emperors.

Paul's gospel made a deep impression even among this rough body of men. The soldiers guarding Paul heard him teach his visitors, or conversed with him themselves at other times. When off duty, the guards would relate to others their experiences with Paul.

4. Paul's bonds were not only manifest to be in Christ among the Praetorian guard, but to all the rest, to all who saw or heard of him.

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14. and that most of the brethren in the Lord, being confident through my bonds, are more abundantly bold to speak the word of God without fear.

*Translation and Paraphrase*

14. And (I want you to know also that) the greater part of the brethren in the Lord (here), being persuaded by (the example of what I have done in) my bonds, are (now) daring more

abundantly to speak the word of God fearlessly (than they ever did before).

### Notes

1. Still more good news! Because of Paul's presence and example, many (that is, more, the greater part) of the Christians in Rome were now more confident and bold to speak of Christ without fear than ever before.
2. The power of one person who is courageous and faithful to stir up many who are willing but hesitant can be plainly seen in this verse.
3. This verse sounds very up-to-date. We are mostly fearful and hesitant to speak boldly of Christ in daily conversation with unbelieving associates. Yet the presence of one committed Christian who does this naturally and effectively will stimulate others greatly. Which are you, the bold example, or the hesitant follower?

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15. Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some also of good will: 16. the one *do it* of love, knowing that I am set for the defence of the gospel; 17. but the other proclaim Christ of faction, not sincerely, thinking to raise up affliction for me in my bonds.

### Translation and Paraphrase

15. (It is regretfully true that) some indeed are proclaiming Christ because of (their) envy (of me) and (because of their love of) strife; but some also (are preaching) through good will.

16. The one (group do what they do) out of love, realizing that I am appointed for (the) defense of the gospel,

17. but the other proclaim Christ out of factiousness, not sincerely, thinking to stir up affliction (upon me) in my bonds.

### Notes

1. Paul's report about those in Rome who preached in such a way as to make people dislike Paul, while at the same time they were (at least supposedly) preaching Christ, sounds like bad news for Paul. But Paul took an utterly unselfish view about it, and rejoiced that Christ was being preached, even by these envious and factious speakers.

2. The question as to who these preachers are who preached Christ from motives of envy and strife has exercised the minds of commentators very much. Many suggest that they were the Jewish Christians who tried to force Gentile Christians to keep the law of Moses in addition to their faith in Christ. Such people were called Judaizers. Paul strongly condemned these Jewish legalists in Phil. 3:2-8.
3. The truth of the matter is that we just do not really know who these troublesome preachers were. It is hard for us to believe that Paul could rejoice that *Christ* was preached when the preaching consisted of demands to keep the law of Moses. Such Judaizing preachers are called "evil workers" and "dogs" in Phil. 3:2. The book of Galatians had been written several years before, and it in Paul had passionately condemned the binding of the law upon Christians.

All of this makes us feel that the Roman preachers who gave Paul trouble were not the Judaizers, but only certain unknown brethren, possibly Gentiles (since few Jewish brethren were with Paul in Rome; See Col. 4:11), whose hearts were deeply infected by envy and party-spirit.

4. If this be so, it is not necessary to conclude that Paul approved of half-false denominational-style preaching, or that we should do the same. There was nothing wrong, as far as we can tell, with the content of this preaching, except the statements of personal selfishness and envy that got into it. Paul gladly overlooked these, even he was the victim of the evil-speaking.
5. The factitious Roman preachers who through envy belittled Paul were like the Pharisees who through envy delivered Jesus to Pilate. Matt. 27:18; Mark 15:10.

However, let us not condemn these brethren too harshly, until we are utterly sure that we have never spoken about (or against) some brother so as to belittle him and exalt ourselves. If we have been the victims of such remarks, let us pray for grace to look upon them as Paul did.

6. Paul was set for, that is, appointed or destined for, the *defence* of the gospel. Compare Phil. 1:7. Not every man has the ability to make conspicuous public oral defence of the gospel. Such people become prominent, and frequently are the objects of criticism by their brethren who are less conspicuous, but are jealous of their prominence.

We must ever be cautious not to tear down the "big men" God has set in the church in order to exalt "little men" like most of us. They have too many enemies outside the church to need critics from their own brothers in Christ.

7. "Preaching Christ of faction" means preaching Christ in such a way as to build up our own little faction, clique, or denomination. *Faction* is party spirit, electioneering, and promoting our loyal (sic!) group. Too often church members will work harder to elect their special friends to some church office than they will to tell sinners of Jesus.
8. Those proclaiming Christ out of factious motives were indeed *thinking*, Paul says, but oh such thinking! Their thinking was based largely upon feeling alone, and was controlled by their own personal desires. Such thinking as this sought to raise up more affliction for Paul, even when he was already in chains.

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18. What then? only that in every way, whether in pretence or in truth, Christ is proclaimed; and therein I rejoice, yea, and will rejoice.

### *Translation and Paraphrase*

18. What (is my reaction to this)? Only (this) that in every manner—whether in pretense or in truth—Christ is being proclaimed, and in this I am (sincerely) rejoicing, and what is more I shall keep on rejoicing.

### *Notes*

1. What then indeed? What if it is true that some men here in Rome are preaching Christ in such a way that I am getting more affliction because of their words? Suppose this is so, so what?

Paul leaves this annoying side of the case to itself, and passes on to the encouraging aspect. Christ is being preached and in this he rejoices and will continue to rejoice.

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### Outline of 1:19-26

- C. Paul's confidence in life or death; 1:19-26
  1. Confidence that his experiences would turn out to salvation; 1:19
    - a. Through your supplication.
    - b. Through the supply of the Spirit.

2. Confidence that he would always magnify Christ; 1:20-26
  - a. He would not be put to shame; 1:20.
  - b. He would magnify Christ either by life or death; 1:21-23.
  - c. He felt sure he would remain with them; 1:24-26.

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19. For I know that this shall turn out to my salvation, through your supplication and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ,

### *Translation and Paraphrase*

10. For I know that this (that is, my experiences) will turn out for me unto salvation (by salvation I mean my preservation and deliverance, both now and hereafter), through your prayer (of supplication) and (through the assistance provided in the) supply of (benefits given by) the Spirit of Jesus Christ.

### *Notes*

1. Salvation means (1) safety, that is, deliverance from difficulties; (2) general health and well-being; and (3) eternal life in heaven.

Paul's reference to salvation here seems to refer more to the first two meanings than to the third. He expected to be acquitted of the accusations against him and to be released.

2. Paul had two helps that gave him confidence that he would get salvation.

(1) The prayers of his brethren, the Philippians in particular. Prayer is powerful.

(2) The supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ. (This is only a name for the Holy Spirit. Compare Romans 8:9.) This can mean either that the Holy Spirit himself is supplied to us to strengthen us (which is true), or that a supply of strength and intensity of faith is given to us by the Holy Spirit.

Whether the *supply* referred to is the Spirit himself, or to the various forms of assistance supplied by the Spirit, the net result is the same. Either meaning is satisfactory. We prefer the latter interpretation, but there is negligible difference.

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20. according to my earnest expectation and hope, that in nothing shall I be put to shame, but *that* with all boldness, as always, *so* now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether by life, or by death. 21. For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

*Translation and Paraphrase*

20. (My confidence in salvation is) in accord with my constant expectation and hope, (and my expectation is this,) that (1) I shall in nothing (ever) be put to shame (never silenced, defeated, nor shown to be in error!), but (2) that (on the contrary) while (I continue to live) in all boldness as (I) always (have, that) Christ shall exalted (and magnified) in my body, whether through life or through death.

21. For to me to live is Christ (His life lives in me), and to die is gain.

*Notes*

1. Paul's confidence that he was going to be released from imprisonment in Rome, and come back to see the Philippians as a free and effective preacher, was no new feeling for him. He always had optimistic expectations about the course of his life. His present optimism was in full accord with his normal earnest expectations and hope.
2. The true man of God is never discouraged and pessimistic, gloomy and inwardly defeated. He knows that the Lord will win the victory, and he knows that he is on the Lord's side.
3. The root meaning of the word *expectation* (Gr. *apokaradokia*) means an intense watching, with the head turned from all other objects. May God help us to have such a magnificent confidence in His direction in our lives that nothing else will look important to us.
4. Paul's constant confidence led him to have two particular hopes, one negative and one positive:
  - (1) In nothing would he be put to shame, never being silenced by adversaries, nor shown to be in error.
  - (2) Christ would be magnified, that is, honored and exalted and made to appear great by the things which Paul did in his body. See Acts 19:17: "The name of the Lord Jesus was magnified."
5. Paul's hope that Christ would be magnified in his body was Paul's confidence whether he lived or died, because to Paul to live was Christ, and to die was gain.
6. Wm. Barclay, in analyzing the ways that for Paul it was true that "to live is Christ," says that Christ is the beginning, the continuing, the end (or goal), the inspiration, the task, the



strength, and the reward of life. Each of these ideas deserves a lot of meditation.

7. For the Christian dying is gain, because we depart and be with Christ. Compare Phil. 1:23. The Christian is only two or three heartbeats from being with Christ forever. The sinner is only two or three heartbeats from being separated from the Savior forever in torments.
8. Phil. 1:21, 23 are two of numerous passages throughout the Bible that rather clearly teach that the spirit of man continues a conscious existence after death, even before the general resurrection of the bodies of all men.

If there is no conscious existence after death, it was foolish for Paul to desire to depart (die) and be with Christ. If we know nothing after death, and will not see Jesus until the resurrection, Paul could not have hastened his being with the Lord by dying. The doctrines of soul-sleeping and annihilation just do not fit Paul's teachings.

9. Other passages which give evidence of conscious existence after death include:

II Cor. 5:6, 8-9. To be absent from the body means to be at home with the Lord.

Luke 16:19ff. The story of the rich man and Lazarus. There is no convincing reason for not taking this story rather literally.

Acts 7:59. Stephen, as he was dying, called, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Stephen expected to go where Jesus was, and so do I.

Matt. 17:3. Elijah and Moses were alive and recognizable thousands of years after their presence on earth.

Genesis 25:8; Num. 21:24; Deut. 32:50. Many Old Testament saints "were gathered to their fathers," when they were not buried in the tombs of their fathers, or anywhere near them. When, then, did this gathering take place? Unless the expression is purely figurative, it seems to be best to understand that they were gathered together in that realm beyond the grave.

Ezekiel 32:31. Pharaoh in Sheol (Hades) sees the multitude of his host and speaks with them.

II Samuel 12:23. David expected to go unto his dead son.

10. Such passages as Psalm 115:17 and Eccl. 9:5 are set forth by some as presumably teaching that the dead know nothing and are unconscious. Since the Scriptures never contradict them-

selves, and such a meaning contradicts other plainer passages, this cannot be the true teaching of the passages referred to.

It is true that the *bodies* of the dead know nothing, and differ in no way from the dead bodies of beasts. This is probably the point of these verses. Also these verses may simply reflect the fact that in the Old Testament dispensation that God had not yet fully revealed the facts about life and immortality as He has now revealed them through Christ. For it was Christ who brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. II Tim. 1:10. Note that He did not bring it into existence; he brought it to light.

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**22. But if to live in the flesh,—if this shall bring fruit from my work, then what I shall chose I know not.**

### *Translation and Paraphrase*

22. But if (it happens to be my lot) to continue living in (the) flesh, (well) this (will produce) to me fruit of labor; and (therefore) I cannot make known what I would (really) choose (as my lot, since I really do not know myself!).

### *Notes*

1. Paul found himself in a quandry, wanting both to die and to live. So he weighed the alternatives. If he lived, that would bring to him further fruit of his labor on earth. This to him was as appealing as the idea of dying and going to be with the Lord. So he says, "What I should choose I know not."
2. Paul had no uncertainty about what would happen if he lived, as the inclusion of the italicized *if* in the American Standard Version might suggest. He took it for granted that fruitfulness would follow if he continued living on earth. We need not ever be in doubt that we shall bear fruit, if we speak forth our gospel clearly and regularly. See Gal. 6:9 and Isaiah 55:10-11.
3. Every saint must come to this condition of mind-willingness to die, and yet desire to stay on earth and work.
4. Perhaps we may wonder how Paul could assume that by wishing it he could influence the course of events, and determine whether he lived or died. In truth he probably couldn't; none of us can. And yet a "death wish" very frequently leads people to give up their interests in life, and to give up trying, and to pine themselves to death. Paul did not yield to this. He

retained his zest for life, and his confidence that he could do something worthwhile, even when he was old and in prison. He did not join the duet of Jonah and Elijah, "We wish we could die." (Jonah 4:3, 8; I Kings 19:4).

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**23. But I am in a strait betwixt the two, having the desire to depart and be with Christ; for it is very far better: 24. yet to abide in the flesh is more needful for your sake.**

### *Translation and Paraphrase*

23. I am hard pressed (from the two sides), having the desire to depart (that is, to die) and be with Christ, for this is very much better (Gr. more better by much),

24. but to continue (or remain) in the flesh (is) more necessary for you (plural).

### *Notes*

1. Paul was in a *strait*. A strait is a narrow place, as a neck of water between two land areas (e.g., the straits of Gibraltar and the straits of Magellan). He was close to both sides, to living and to dying. He found both directions appealing. He was pressed, squeezed in by both alternatives.
2. The expression "to depart" means to break up, as the breaking up of a camp; also to loose, as of loosing the mooring ropes of a ship so it can sail. Thus in Paul's use it meant to break up the camp in this life, and loose life's moorings so as to move to another world.
3. See notes on 1:21 about our departing to be with Christ. The doctrine of immortality is very precious to God's saints.
4. To Paul to depart and be with Christ was better by much than to remain on earth.

But just at that time he was needed on earth, and was emotionally and intellectually drawn toward living and helping the Philippians, since that was more needful for them than his death.

The courage of the Philippians might have faltered if Paul had just then died in bonds. The mystery of lawlessness was already working, and Paul was needed to help them resist this apostasy.

25. And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide, yea, and abide with you all, for your progress and joy in the faith; 26. that your glorying may abound in Christ Jesus in me through my presence with you again.

### *Translation and Paraphrase*

25. And being persuaded of this (the necessity of living to help you) I know that I shall remain and continue near to you for your progress and joy in the faith,

26. So that your exultation (and joy) may abound (and be overflowing) in Christ Jesus by means of me, through my coming again to you.

### *Notes*

1. Paul's conviction that he was needed assured him that he would continue living in the flesh. What was best for man was the thing that God would cause to happen.
2. Paul would not only just abide (Gr. *meno*), but abide with (Gr. *parameno*) them.
3. Paul himself experienced progress in the gospel (Phil. 1:12), and joy (Phil. 1:3). His presence with the Philippians would cause them to share such progress and joy.
4. Progress and joy are necessary things in the lives of Christians. Without them our motivation and energy lags, and we soon lag all over.
5. "Glorying" means "our cause or ground for glorying," rather than the act of glorying or boasting.
6. Evidently the Philippians were praying for Paul's release. Compare 1:19. When this release came to pass, they would glory in Christ because their prayers had been granted.

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### Outline of 1:27—2:18

- D. Exhortation to a worthy manner of life; 1:27—2:18
1. Plea for steadfast striving; 1:27-30
    - a. Do this whether I come or be absent.
    - b. Stand fast in one spirit.
    - c. Do not be affrighted by adversaries; 1:28-30.
      - (1) This is to them a token of perdition.
      - (2) This is to you a token of salvation.
      - (3) Follow my example in this.

2. Plea for unity and humility; 2:1-4
  - a. Motives for unity; 2:1-2a
  - b. Attitudes and actions of those in unity; 2:2b-4
3. The example of Christ; 2:5-11
  - a. He did not grasp his original state; 2:5-6
  - b. He became an obedient servant; 2:7-8
  - c. Honors that Christ received because of his obedience.
    - (1) Exaltation;
    - (2) A name above every name.
    - (3) Universal submission to him; 2:10-11
4. Commands; 2:12-18
  - a. Work out your salvation with fear and trembling; 2:12-13
    - (1) Do this whether I am present or absent.
    - (2) God is working in you; 2:13
  - b. Do all things without murmurings; 2:14-15
 

Purposes—That ye become blameless and harmless.  
That ye become children of God without blemish.
  - c. Hold forth the word of life; 2:16
  - d. Paul's place in their worthy life; 2:17
 

—A drink-offering poured out upon their service.
  - e. Rejoice. 2:18

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**27. Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ: that, whether I come and see you or be absent, I may hear of your state, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one soul striving for the faith of the gospel;**

### *Translation and Paraphrase*

27. Only live as citizens (of God's kingdom) in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you, or am absent, I may hear the news concerning you, that you (plural) stand fast with one (united) spirit, with one soul striving together (like athletes in training) for the faith (which is) the gospel.

### *Notes*

1. While the Philippians were to glory in the progress and joy of their faith, they needed to take care that their lives were *worthy* of the gospel (or good news) of Christ. *Worthy* means of equal weight or value.

2. There is a figure of speech in 1:27 which is not apparent in the English translation. When Paul said, "Let your manner of life (KJV *conversation*) be worthy," he was literally saying, "Behave as citizens in a manner worthy of the gospel." The Greek verb *politeuo* means "to be a citizen, or exercise your citizenship." The metaphor of heavenly citizenship is found again in Phil. 3:20.
3. Paul exhorts them not to allow their faith to fluctuate with his circumstances or presence. Live lives worthy of the gospel whether he is present or not.
4. The Philippians should stand fast in one spirit, that is, in one disposition, one frame of mind. The word *spirit* here probably has no direct reference to the Holy Spirit, but to their own spirits, which would, of course, be under the control of the Holy Spirit.

It is very important that Christians *stand fast* in what they believe, and in their determination to live according to this belief. Compare Ephesians 6:11, 13-14.

5. The expression "with one soul" probably means "with one mind or feeling." It seems to be nearly an exact synonym of "in one spirit." The collective "soul" of the whole group was to be ONE soul, one mind. Compare Acts 4:32.
6. The Philippians were to be *striving* for the faith of the gospel. *Striving* (Gr. *sunathleo*) means striving *together*. The figure refers both to athletic games and to contending in battle. The Christian life requires effort, and discipline, and exertion.
7. Our striving is to be done for the faith, or in the faith (a dative of interest). There are many good causes in this world, but the striving of Christians is to be exerted for the faith.
8. "The Faith of the gospel." The faith is the gospel. (It is a genitive of apposition.) The faith is the full sum of what we believe and practice, as revealed by Christ.

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28. and in nothing affrighted by the adversaries: which is for them an evident token of perdition, but of your salvation, and that from God;

### *Translation and Paraphrase*

28. And be frightened by nothing (which may be done) by the opposers. (Your boldness will make an impression on them, as being) and evidence of (their impending) destruction; But (on

the other hand your boldness in the face of opposition will to you be an evidence) of your salvation, and (that) this (salvation is) from God (himself).

### Notes

1. 1:28 elaborates the command in 1:27 to *stand fast*. Two participial phrases expand this idea of standing fast: We stand fast (1) striving together; and (2) being frightened in nothing by the adversaries.
2. Generally the adversaries of the gospel would rather frighten us from our faith and Christian work, than try to convince us logically that we are wrong, or physically prevent us from serving Christ. Those who are frightened by threats are defeated before the battle ever starts. Christians in many lands today face threats of loss of jobs or other troubles. "Be frightened by nothing."
3. The boldness of Christians in the face of threats and persecutions is for the unbeliever an evident token of perdition, a plain sign that they face destruction by God. Compare II Thess. 1:4-5. *Perdition* means destruction, or ruin, and refers to the punishment of hell.

When persecuting unbelievers see Christians boldly continuing in their faith in spite of threats and harm, they instinctively feel, "If this Christian faith means so much to these people, there must be something to it after all. And if there is something to it, then I'm on the wrong side, and God will surely punish me for fighting against the truth." Paul seems to have felt that way before his conversion. Compare Acts 26:14, 22:19-20.

4. Whereas the boldness of Christians is to sinners an evident token of destruction, it is at the same time an evident token (a plain indication) of salvation to Christians. When Christians experience trouble victoriously, they sense that the power to endure came from outside of them, from God, and not from their own puny will power or strength of character.

Also the boldness of Christians serves as an evident token of salvation in that it fulfills the words of Christ to us that we both shall suffer, and that He will help us at such times. See Luke 12:11-12.

5. The expression "and that from God" refers back to the word *salvation*. We have not merely a token of salvation, but a token of salvation which comes from God.

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29. because to you it hath been granted in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer in his behalf: 30. having the same conflict which ye saw in me, and now hear to be in me.

### *Translation and Paraphrase*

29. (Do not think that your sufferings indicate that you are not saved,) because it has been graciously granted to you to suffer on behalf of Christ, and not (merely) to believe upon him. (The privilege of suffering for Christ is a gift from him to you.)

30. (You shall be) having the same struggle (and agony) which ye saw was in my life, and now hear is my lot.

### *Notes*

- 1:29 enlarges on the idea expressed in 1:28 that the boldness of Christians is a plain indication to them of salvation. This is true because Christ has granted to us the privilege of suffering for Him as well as believing on him. The fact that we suffer confirms the truth of his words and confirms that we are His.
- The word *granted* (KJV *given*) in 1:28 means to grant as a favor, or bestow graciously. How seldom do those who suffer look upon this as a gracious grant! But the early Christians so viewed it. Acts 5:41.
- The troubles of the Philippians were like those that they had observed Paul to experience, and like those which they now heard that Paul was enduring. This fact doubtless strengthened their backbone, and took away their self-pity.

The word *conflict* in 1:30 is from the Greek *agonia*, from which we get our word *agony*. It refers to painful types of struggle and to extreme mental anguish.

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## Study and Review

### Questions Over Philippians Chapter One

(Give Scripture references with your answers if none are given in the questions.)

1. What heading is suggested for Philippians chapter 1? Suggest another topic for the chapter if you wish.



## CHAPTER ONE

2. What two individuals joined in sending the epistle?
3. Does the fact that Paul did not use the official title *apostle* at the start of the letter (as he did in Gal. 1:1) suggest anything to you? What?
4. How do the two senders describe themselves? (1:1). What is the meaning of this term?
5. To what class of people in the Old Testament was the title *servants of God* often applied?
6. By what word are the Philippians described in Paul's greeting? What is the meaning of this word?
7. What does the word *bishop* mean?
8. What other names are applied in the scripture to the same offices as the bishop?
9. What does the word *deacon* mean? What briefly was the work of deacons?
10. How many of Paul's epistles begin with a request for grace to be with his readers?
11. What is grace?
12. What else did Paul wish for them besides grace?
13. What were Paul's feelings as he remembered the Philippians in prayer? (1:3-4)
14. What had the Philippians done that Paul described as *fellowship in the gospel*? (Compare Phil. 4:14-16.)
15. What does the word *fellowship* mean?
16. What was Paul's confidence concerning the good work done by the Philippians?
17. What is the *day of Jesus Christ*?
18. Why did Paul say in 1:7 that it was meet (or proper) for him to feel toward the Philippians the confidence he expressed in 1:6?
19. In what three ways were the Philippians partakers of grace with Paul?
20. What does *confirmation of the gospel* mean?
21. How greatly did Paul long after the Philippians?
22. Explain the phrase *bowels of Jesus Christ* in KJV of Phil. 1:8.
23. What three things did Paul pray that the Philippians might do or be? (1:9-11)
24. What results occur when our love abounds more and more in knowledge and judgment? (1:9-11)
25. Revised version margin translates part of 1:9, "So that ye may

## PHILIPPIANS

- distinguish the things that differ." (Similarly Barclay). Discuss the meaning of this rendering.
26. Explain the term *offence* in 1:10.
  27. What is the source of the fruit of righteousness?
  28. How had Paul's prison experiences generally affected the progress of the gospel?
  29. Where did Paul lodge while in Rome as a prisoner? (Acts 28:30)
  30. Where had Paul's faith and reputation become known? (1:13)
  31. What was the Praetorian Guard (the "palace")?
  32. What sort of bonds did Paul wear? (1:14; Compare Eph. 1:20; Acts 28:20)
  33. How had Paul's presence in Rome affected many of the brethren there?
  34. What did Paul mean by saying, "Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife"? Is this a description of heresy or of bad attitudes?
  35. Who were those who were guilty of preaching Christ of contention, supposing to add affliction to Paul's bondage?
  36. What was Paul's feeling toward those who preached the gospel contentiously?
  37. Does Paul's attitude toward insincere preaching indicate that we should approve of preaching mixed with denominational doctrines? Why or why not?
  38. What two things gave Paul assurance that his experiences would turn out to his salvation?
  39. What does the word *salvation* in 1:19 mean?
  40. How did Paul feel about the possibility of his being put to shame, that is, being humiliated into silence? (1:20)
  41. What does *magnify Christ in my body* mean?
  42. In what circumstances did Paul expect that Christ would be magnified in his body?
  43. Explain the phrase *For me to live is Christ*. What does Christ have to do with the Christian's life?
  44. What advantage was there for Paul to continue living in the flesh?
  45. What advantage in dying? Which was preferable, living or dying?
  46. Where do Christians go when they depart from this life? (Compare II Cor. 5:6, 8)

## CHAPTER ONE

47. Did Paul conclude that he would remain alive or die?
48. What purposes would be served by Paul's future presence with the Philippians? (1:25)
49. What sort of manner of life (KJV *conversation*) were the Philippians to live?
50. What did Paul hope to hear about the state (or affairs) of the Philippians?
51. What is the relation of the gospel to the faith as indicated by the expression *the faith of the gospel*?
52. How were the Philippians to feel about their adversaries?
53. Explain the expression *an evident token of perdition*. (Compare II Thess. 1:5)
54. How is a Christian's boldness before adversaries an evident token of perdition to the adversaries?
55. How is a Christian's boldness an evident token of salvation to the Christian himself?
56. Does Paul speak of suffering as a privilege, or as a necessary evil to be endured?
57. Who is set forth as an example of suffering with joy? (1:30)

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The apostle Paul gives two letters—Ephesians and Colossians—to Tychicus to deliver.

Travelling with Tychicus on the thousand-mile trip to Colossae is the slave Onesimus, who clutches to himself a letter from Paul to his master Philemon.

Though Paul was under house arrest in his own rented dwelling, and chained always to a Roman guard, he was inwardly joyful, and thanked God for the faith and love of the Colossians and Ephesians.