

Bible Commentary on Philippians

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Bible Commentary on Philippians

by Jonathan Cooper

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Introduction

This is not your typical commentary, so I'd like to give a few words of explanation before you begin. As a child I was taught to read the Word of God on a daily basis. Our goal as a family was to read through the Bible once a year, and that is what we did. When I became an adult I kept reading the Bible from cover to cover.

One day, however, I realized that I wanted something more. Reading the Bible was good, but I wanted to actually *study* it. Could I explain what each verse meant? Did I really understand what each chapter was saying? I decided to start writing daily commentary instead of just reading the Word.

This commentary was put together to help me study the Bible. I have no plans to release it, for there are far better commentaries out there that were written by much wiser men. This document is simply a tool to help me understand what the Word of God has to say.

Jon Cooper
4/14/2019

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Introduction to Philippians

Scholars believe that the book of Philippians was written around 62 AD (see Resource 2, "Timeline"). This means Paul wrote it about 32 years after the resurrection, and 28 years after the apostle encountered Jesus on the road to Damascus. It was the 8th book that Paul wrote and the 10th book of the New Testament to come into existence.

1/4/2011, 9/6/2018, 4/14/2019, 6/11/2019, 6/18/2019

Philippians 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:"
(Philippians 1)

This letter was written by Paul and Timothy. Notice how Paul identifies himself as the servant of Jesus Christ. He could have said he was an apostle (and he did sometimes, when he needed to defend his apostleship) and bragged about how amazing he was, but instead he presents himself with great humility. If anyone could have boasted about his greatness it was Paul, but he never does that. (There are many pastors today who love to boast about themselves whose achievements truly pale in comparison. Let him who boasts, boast in the Lord.)

As we can see, this was written specifically to the Christians who were at Philippi.

"2 Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our

Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ."
(Philippians 1)

Grace and peace are the two things we need, aren't they? The truth is we can't handle life without the grace of God. We need His grace to have faith in Him, to believe His Word, to walk in His ways, to resist temptation, and to be bold in spreading the gospel and speaking the truth. The need for grace and peace should be ever-present in our prayers. (Where do we find grace and peace? Not in the world, or our friends, but in God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ.)

"3 I thank my God upon every remembrance of you" (Philippians 1)

This is something Paul says quite a bit, but we don't usually think this way anymore. Paul was very grateful for this church and was thankful that God planted it, and that it was filled with Bible-believing Christians. Thankfulness is something we see all throughout the Bible – it is one of the characteristics of the saints of God. They were grateful to God for all He had done and all He had given to them.

"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;"
(Philippians 1)

One of the things Paul is grateful for is their love of the truth and their acceptance of the gospel. The apostles never sought unity apart from the truth; instead they longed for unity *within* the truth. They were never willing to compromise in order

to achieve bigger numbers, and instead always spoke the whole truth – and they were thankful when they found people who accepted and believed it.

Do you see how Paul said it was a joy to pray for this church? What an example he sets! Can we say the same?

"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:"
(Philippians 1)

This is a very comforting verse! Jesus has "begun a good work" in us; He has started the process of turning us into beings like Him – holy, blameless, and perfect people. *He* started the process (not us) and *He* will finish it. That is very good news, isn't it? After all, *God never fails!*

I am very, very far from perfect. I fall short all the time; I try and fail and try again, only to fail once more. I am constantly coming up short, and at times it is easy to start thinking that I will always come up short – that there is no real hope of ever being the person I know I should be. I know I have been declared righteous and am faultless in the sight of God, and that truly is a wonderful gift. However, I long to be free from sin once and for all – to cast it off and never go back. I don't want to keep falling into sin over and over again.

This verse tells me that I won't always be the person I am now. In fact, there is no chance that I will utterly fail because this process depends on *Jesus*, not myself. The Lord will finish what He started. He began the process and He will bring it to its conclusion. *He* is the one who will ultimately turn me into a person remade in His image.

That is a very encouraging thought! It's not up to me to make it happen; God will accomplish it in His time.

"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. 8 For God is my record, how greatly I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ." (Philippians 1)

Paul is actually writing this *from prison*, and yet he spends this letter encouraging the church and telling them how much he loves them and how often he prays for them! He isn't asking for pity or seeking to make himself the focus of the conversation; instead he is working to minister to the needs of this local group of believers. Do you see how much he cares about them?

"9 And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment; 10 That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ. 11 Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God." (Philippians 1)

What does Paul desire for this church? He wants to see them grow in knowledge and judgment. In other words, he wants them to study the Word, to learn more about God, and to become more familiar with the doctrines of Christianity. He wants them to know the truth (the whole truth!) and to believe *all* of it – the large doctrines and the "small" ones. He wants them to grow in the faith and the knowledge of God.

He also wants them to become more discerning. That is

what judgment is: the ability to tell good things from bad things. A discerning church can tell who is a heretic and false teacher and who is preaching the truth. That kind of church will resist evil and lies, and will cling to what is good. That is the sort of church that Paul wants the Philippians to become. Paul does *not* want a church that refuses to judge anyone and accepts everybody no matter what they believe or what they teach; instead he wants them to exercise judgment, discretion, and discernment.

Notice that Paul wants them to be "without offense". He doesn't say that they should just focus on the big picture things and ignore everything else, on the grounds that this will promote unity. He also doesn't tell them that doctrine is unimportant and that as long as they get the big things right they are doing fine. No, Paul wants them to be without spot and without offense! He wants them to be perfect, flawless, and blameless. He desires for them to grow in the faith and in judgment. He wants to see them bring forth the "fruits of righteousness" in their life.

There is also a reference here to the return of Jesus, isn't there? Paul wants them to continue in the faith, and to continue growing and learning, until the Lord returns and takes us home. That is the day we are longing for and working toward. None of us know when that day will happen, but it is approaching.

"12 But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel; 13 So that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace, and in all other places; 14 And many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear."
(Philippians 1)

Paul is saying that his imprisonment has actually furthered the cause of the gospel. Because he is in prison, people are preaching the gospel much more boldly! The apostle's overriding concern is the spread of the gospel, not his own welfare or the fact that he is prison suffering for the sake of Christ. What Paul really cares about is that the gospel is being spread, and he is grateful for the fact that his imprisonment is accomplishing that. Do you see what the apostle's priorities are? His heart is not on the things of this world; it is on the kingdom of God and the spread of the gospel.

"15 Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some also of good will: 16 The one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds: 17 But the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defence of the gospel. 18 What then? notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretence, or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice."
(Philippians 1)

This is a very interesting passage! Some people were preaching Christ out of a sincere love for the gospel, but others were preaching the gospel in order to make Paul's life even worse and get him into even bigger trouble. Paul was actually *grateful* for this, because it meant that the gospel was being preached! The fact that some people were preaching the truth with bad motives didn't bother him at all. As long as they were preaching the true gospel he was content – in fact, he actually *rejoiced*. The apostles hated bad theology and doctrine, but bad motives did not bother Paul. He was excited to see the truth preached regardless of the reason behind it.

"19 For I know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, 20 According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death." (Philippians 1)

This is something we see time and time again in the New Testament. Paul's prayer was for *boldness* – that he would be bold to preach the truth, to spread the gospel, and to stand up for Christ. He wasn't praying for deliverance from prison, or to be popular, or to have a large congregation; instead he sought the boldness to preach without shame. He wanted the grace to magnify Christ, even if it cost him his life. (Is that our prayer as well? Is that what we seek, or do we desire something far more worldly and carnal?)

"21 For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."
(Philippians 1)

Paul was very serious about this. His goal was not to find a way to prolong his life as long as possible; instead it was to glorify Christ and spread the gospel, no matter how much it cost him personally. The apostle is telling us something that we need to understand: while we have this life we must use it to glorify Christ, and when we die (if the Lord tarry) we will go to be with Him and have a vastly better existence. This verse is literally true: for Christians, dying really *is* great gain! The world we will step into after our death is vastly better than even the best things

that this life has to offer. It is so important to have that attitude, and to live this life for Christ instead of seeking all the carnal things that only serve to draw us away from God.

"22 But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labor: yet what I shall choose I wot not. 23 For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better: 24 Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you." (Philippians 1)

This is such an important attitude to have. Is Christ our life? Do we view death as gain or loss? Many are so caught up in this world that they view death as a tremendous loss, because it means they are leaving behind a career, a life, fame, power, money, or whatever it may be. It is tempting to think that way – and yet the Bible tells us that to live is Christ and to die is gain. The truth is we should not be striving after the many things this world has to offer, but instead to simply seek to be like Christ: to love, to serve, and to spread the gospel to all nations. If you are living a life of service then you have a different perspective. Then death has no loss, for you go from serving here to serving in Heaven – and, in fact, there is actually *gain*, for the problems of this life are gone and "in His presence is fullness of joy" (Psalms 16:11).

"To die is gain" is *not* a hopeless statement. It is a focused one – it says that our life is about serving Christ, not gathering "things", and that death takes nothing away but rather removes the trials of this life and replaces it with the joy of being in the presence of God. It is all too easy to try to "win" this life when we should be focusing more on being a servant of Jesus.

Temptations tend to focus on things that people want. However, if the world does not hold our interest and we are

focused on serving Jesus, then many temptations lose their power.

"25 And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide and continue with you all for your furtherance and joy of faith; 26 That your rejoicing may be more abundant in Jesus Christ for me by my coming to you again." (Philippians 1)

Why did Paul desire to remain in this world a little longer? It was because he loved the churches and he wanted to continue to minister to them and help nurture them. It wasn't for selfish or personal reasons; it was so that he might serve the body of Christ.

"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; 28 And in nothing terrified by your adversaries: which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God." (Philippians 1)

This was a difficult time for the church. They were persecuted and surrounded by enemies who wanted to destroy them, imprison them, and kill them. Paul wrote to tell them to *not be afraid* – to stand fast in the truth and continue to have faith in God and preach the gospel. He didn't tell them to compromise with their enemies or find common ground with those who hated the Scriptures; instead he told them to hold fast

to the faith and to stay faithful to the gospel!

Paul did want them to be unified – but he wanted them to be unified *in the truth*, not to achieve unity by abandoning the truth. He wanted them to achieve unity by *believing in everything the Bible said*, not by throwing everything out but a few "core" doctrines. The apostles always sought unity *in the truth*. No church was ever told that they should compromise in order to achieve greater popularity or acceptance.

We must remember that the darkness hates the light (John 3:20). What we see as salvation from God they see as coming judgment and death. To Christians the coming of God means salvation and everlasting joy, and to the wicked the coming of God means everlasting damnation and torment. That is why we are commanded to repent now and be saved, while there is still time – for the day is coming when that opportunity will close forever. Once you stand before God and are judged it is too late to change your fate.

"29 For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake; 30 Having the same conflict which ye saw in me, and now hear to be in me."
(Philippians 1)

Suffering for the sake of Christ is a blessing, not a curse, although it may be greatly painful and cost us dearly. It is a necessary part of the Christian walk. It won't always be this way, but we must remember that the world that hated Jesus also hates His servants (John 15:18).

Christ is greatly honored when we suffer for His name. It is a powerful testimony to the world, and the Lord has used it to bring many to salvation. It is also a test for us – is our love real? Will we have faith in God even in the dark moments? Do we love

Him even unto death? Just how far does our love and commitment to God really go?

When we do suffer we should realize that we are not the first people to suffer and be treated unfairly. Jesus suffered greatly, and the apostles did as well. This is a normal thing for the people of God – but the day is coming when our suffering will be over with forever, and there will be nothing ahead of us but endless joy.

1/5/2011, 9/6/2018, 4/14/2019, 6/12/2019, 6/18/2019

Philippians 2

"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."
(Philippians 2)

Paul desires the church to be unified – but he wants them to be unified *in the truth*. He does not say "In order to achieve unity, feel free to disregard any doctrines that are a source of differences. Unity is more important than truth, so make whatever compromises are necessary." His great desire is for church members to achieve unity by *all believing the truth!* He wants them to be likeminded, and the way that is done is by having faith in what the Bible says and taking God at His Word.

There is great consolation in Christ. There is great love and fellowship and mercy. However, we cannot attain any of those things if we jettison the faith in order to win the approval of the world. If we abandon Christ then how can we possibly expect to receive the consolation and mercy that only comes from Christ?

"3 Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves."
(Philippians 2)

In other words, don't spend your life trying to "build your brand". Don't try to win the fame and approval of others. Don't spend your time making much of yourself (and little of those around you). We are not called to serve ourselves and build our own kingdom; instead we are commanded to serve one another, and labor to build the kingdom of God. Christ humbled Himself greatly: He washed the feet of His disciples (John 13:4-5) and died a terrible death on the cross. If He was willing to humble Himself and do things that were far beneath Him (for who can claim that God owes then anything?), then we must be willing to do the same!

Love one another. Treat others the way you want to be treated. Show respect and courtesy to fellow believers, and do what you can to help and serve them.

"4 Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others."
(Philippians 2)

The Lord wants us to serve others, not just ourselves. Our lives should be focused on two things: loving God and loving our neighbors.

Incidentally, this is *very* different from Communism. In that system you do not give anything to your neighbors; instead it is taken from you by force and given to someone else, whether they need it or not. There is a *huge* difference between giving to

someone and having them steal it from you! There is no love in saying "I need this thing, so I'm going to take it from you by force". A political system that routinely takes things from people in order to give it to others is one that is based on a foundation of theft and greed. Such a system is evil, and the Lord will not bless it. *Voluntary* giving by one person to another person who has need is a good and noble thing. However, being *forced* to give by the power of the government is wrong (and is little different from being robbed by bandits).

The Lord would have us take care of those around us and watch over them in love. But we are also told to take care of widows who are "widows indeed" (1 Timothy 5:3). The Bible does not tell us to fund the lifestyle of people who are lazy and can't be bothered to work. There is a huge difference between helping the needy and helping the lazy, and it is one we would do well to keep in mind.

Not everyone who asks for money and says they are in need are honest. I remember a case when a man came to a church claiming to be in need, and asked for the congregation to pay his electrical bill. The pastor (a wise man) called around to other churches and found out that he had already gotten several other churches to pay that very bill. He wasn't in need at all; he just wanted free money. There have been numerous times when I have been approached by strangers who asked for gas money. Every time that I refused to give them money but offered to take them to a gas station to put gas in their car I have been turned down. They didn't actually want gas money; they wanted money for drugs and alcohol.

So be wise in your giving. Find out what is really going on and give to those who are truly in need. Do not be a fool.

"5 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: 6 Who, being in the form of God,

thought it not robbery to be equal with God: 7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: 8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." (Philippians 2)

Paul is using Christ as an example of how we ought to behave. Christ was fully God and fully man. He was the one who created the universe, and is part of the trinity. If anyone had a right to refuse to be a servant it was Him – and yet He humbled Himself. In fact, He humbled Himself so far that He actually *died* to save us from our sins – and He died a terrible and cruel death. If Jesus was willing to do that for us, then how much more ought we to be willing to serve those who are around us! Since Jesus took upon Himself the form of a servant, and labored to serve His disciples, we must do the same. We are commanded to serve one another; we are not commanded to find some way to force others to serve us.

"9 Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: 10 That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; 11 And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." (Philippians 2)

This is a famous passage, isn't it? One day everyone will stand before God and be judged for what they have done. When that day comes, every single person will bow down and confess that Jesus is Lord. No one will be able to deny it – not even the

most committed atheist. In that day the authority and power of Jesus will be obvious and undeniable. (Now, those who confess Jesus in this life will be filled with joy on that day, for they will be found innocent and guiltless. However, those who rejected Jesus will find themselves condemned for all of eternity. That is why it is so important to repent now, while there is still time!) Everything and everyone will bow down to Jesus – the saved and the unsaved, the angels and the demons, and all of the creatures that God has created.

God has indeed highly exalted our Savior. Jesus is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, and one day He will establish His kingdom in this world – a kingdom that will never be destroyed. He will destroy the kingdoms of this world and replace them with His own eternal kingdom (one whose increase will never end). All nations will serve Him, and He will rule over the world with a rod of iron. Evil will no longer have dominion, for the Lord will not allow it.

"12 Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. 13 For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." (Philippians 2)

These two verses need to be discussed together. Work out your own salvation, for it is God who works in you. What does this mean?

We know that God is the one who raised us up from the dead (for we were dead in our trespasses and sins – Ephesians 2:1) and gave us a new heart and new desires. He is the one who has promised to conform us to the image of His Son (Romans 8:29, and to make us perfect and incorruptible (1 Corinthians

15:52). He is working in our life (for He is our good Shepherd – John 10:11), and He has even preordained good works for us to do. God is holding us in His hand and nothing can separate us from His love (Romans 8:35-39).

At the same time, Paul has just spent the whole chapter commanding us to love one another and serve one another. He did not say "Since God is working in your life, sit at home on the couch and do nothing." Instead Paul commands us to go out and *work!* Preach the gospel; help one another; get involved in other people's lives; use your spiritual gifts to nurture the body of Christ. In Ephesians Paul commanded the church to put on the armor of God and resist the devil.

It is true that God is working in us – and since God is working in us, we must fight against evil and serve one another and seek to walk in God's ways. We do not do this because our salvation depends upon it (for we did nothing to earn our salvation, and we can do nothing to lose it), but because we are living sacrifices that are wholly dedicated to God. The greatest commandment is to love God with all our heart and soul and mind and strength, and the way we do that is by keeping His commandments.

"14 Do all things without murmurings and disputings: 15 That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world;"
(Philippians 2)

Paul wants us to be unrebukable. He does not say "Make sure you're getting the big things right, because that's all that matters." No, he wants us to be getting *everything* right – to be spotless and perfect! At the very least that should be the goal we

are striving toward. (If we are dividing up the Word of God into "things that matter and we should believe" and "things we can reject because they're not important" then we have already lost.)

The church ought to be characterized by *love*. If we love one another then we shouldn't be fighting among ourselves! A church that seeks to serve one another, where each person esteems others as being better than themselves, and where people believe the truth in unity, ought to be a church that doesn't have a lot of conflict. If there is conflict then there is a problem – either someone is teaching heresy, or someone is being self-centered. We ought to be shining as lights in a dark world, and if infighting is going on then we are going to set a terrible example.

"16 Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain." (Philippians 2)

There are a couple different ways we could look at this verse. If the Philippians refused to obey this letter and instead were full of pride and infighting and disunity, then that would be a sign that they were not a true church at all. If a church rejects the teachings of the Word of God and instead embraces heresy and hate then they are a false church – and one that God will reject on the day of judgment. If this church was a false church then Paul wasted his time planting it and has labored for them in vain.

Another way to look at this is on a more personal level. If we refuse to obey the Lord and reject His Word, and lead wicked and self-centered lives, then our Christianity is a fraud and we have run in vain. Genuine Christianity always results in a changed heart and a changed life; if there is no changed life then there is no salvation either. The deeds of a person are evidence of what is

truly in their heart! We are not saved by our works, but our works do show what side we are really on.

"17 Yea, and if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy, and rejoice with you all. 18 For the same cause also do ye joy, and rejoice with me." (Philippians 2)

The apostle Paul is willing to die for the gospel (and ultimately he did exactly that). He valued the gospel more than he valued his own life, and he rejoiced greatly in the gospel. Notice how these verses say that he found joy in this! That is how much he loved the Lord and the churches. Paul is not looking for pity here.

"19 But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timotheus shortly unto you, that I also may be of good comfort, when I know your state. 20 For I have no man likeminded, who will naturally care for your state." (Philippians 2)

Even though Paul was in prison and did not know if he was going to live or be executed, he still cared greatly about the well-being of the churches! In fact, he cared about them so much that he sent Timothy to find out how they were doing and bring back a report. He specifically sent Timothy because he shared Paul's great love for the churches.

Verse 19 says that knowing how the Philippians were doing was a source of *comfort* to Paul. The apostle did not merely instruct others to love and serve one another; he demonstrated it very clearly in his own life!

"21 For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's." (Philippians 2)

Paul knew that there were many people who cared only for themselves. They looked only to their own business and did not love or serve others. We see this same attitude today: there are many who are *hostile* to the idea that they ought to serve and help however they can. Too many people have an attitude of entitlement, and demand that others serve them on the grounds that "I want something and so I demand you give it to me." That attitude comes from the devil, not from God.

You can build your own kingdom, or you can work to advance the kingdom of God and spread the gospel, but you cannot do both. No man can serve two masters (Matthew 6:24).

"22 But ye know the proof of him, that, as a son with the father, he hath served with me in the gospel. 23 Him therefore I hope to send presently, so soon as I shall see how it will go with me." (Philippians 2)

Timothy must have been a truly remarkable person! Paul has great things to say about his love, devotion, and faithfulness. (How would you have liked for the apostle Paul to say that *you* were like a son to him?) Since Paul trusted Timothy so completely, that was who he was going to send. This is more evidence of how concerned Paul was about the Philippian church and how much he wanted to know about their welfare.

It looks like Paul was going to wait a bit, and send Timothy after he found out what was going to happen to him. (Was he going to remain in prison, be set free, or be executed?) That seems reasonable – after all, if the purpose of the visit was

for Paul to find out how the church was doing, there was no reason for Timothy to go if Paul was about to be executed.

"24 But I trust in the Lord that I also myself shall come shortly." (Philippians 2)

Paul was ready to die for the faith, if need be, but he was hopeful that the Lord would set him free so that he could minister to the needs of the church (and go pay the Philippians a visit). As much as he longed to be with his Savior in Heaven, he knew there was still work for him to be done.

"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. 27 For indeed he was sick nigh unto death: but God had mercy on him; and not on him only, but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow. 28 I sent him therefore the more carefully, that, when ye see him again, ye may rejoice, and that I may be the less sorrowful." (Philippians 2)

There's quite an interesting story in these verses! It looks like Paul was sending Epaphroditus to the church as well, because he had been sick in the past but was now feeling better. In fact, he had been greatly sick to the point where he almost died – but God healed him and, as evidence of his recovery, Paul was going to send him to the Philippians so they would no longer be worried about him.

It apparently upset Epaphroditus that the Philippians had found out about his sickness. He wasn't looking to score sympathy points by telling everyone about how sick he was; instead he apparently tried to keep the news to himself so they wouldn't worry about him and be distressed, but they found out anyway. Epaphroditus wanted to spare them worry, and the Philippians wanted him to get well! You can see the love and care that they had for one another, and how they are setting an example of what it looks like to truly esteem others better than yourself (and to bear one another's burdens). No one is posturing in order to win the approval or attention of the masses (which is so common today, especially on social media). Instead there is only genuine love and concern for the welfare of others.

There is another interesting point here. Early in Paul's ministry he was able to easily and instantly heal people simply by laying hands on them. He once even resurrected a man from the dead (Acts 20:9-12)! Yet here, toward the end of Paul's ministry, he no longer has the gift of healing. (If he did then he could have easily healed Epaphroditus, as he healed so many others.) There is no indication that Paul had lost faith or was being punished; instead the establishing gift of healing had run its course and was gone. Even in the early church this gift did not endure. Once the churches had the Scriptures (which contained everything they need), there was no longer a need for the miraculous establishing gifts.

"29 Receive him therefore in the Lord with all gladness; and hold such in reputation: 2:30 Because for the work of Christ he was nigh unto death, not regarding his life, to supply your lack of service toward me." (Philippians 2)

Paul is not trying to put the Philippian church down here

or insult them. He is simply saying that they should hold Epaphroditus in high esteem and treat him with respect, because his love for the Lord was so great that he valued the gospel more than he valued his own life. Apparently Paul had some sort of needs that the Philippian church was not able to help with, so Epaphroditus stepped in and risked his own life to meet it. His love for the gospel was so great that he was willing to endanger his own life – and as a result he became very ill and almost died. That is how dedicated he was to the service of others!

Do you see the example that is being set here? Do you see how we ought to love one another and serve one another? It is vital for Christians to esteem one another highly and treat them with respect – instead of seeking the praise of men while treating others with hostility and great rudeness.

1/7/2011, 9/6/2018, 6/13/2019, 6/18/2019

Philippians 3

"1 Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you, to me indeed is not grievous, but for you it is safe." (Philippians 3)

I don't think I do nearly enough rejoicing, and I don't spend enough time praising the Lord. It's so easy to become burdened by all the things that are going wrong and lose sight of how glorious and awesome the Lord is. He loves us so very much and He has blessed us in so many ways! Yet when we're in the mist of hard times, the thought of praising the Lord is often the farthest thing from our minds.

In fact, when things are going wrong it's easy to start blaming God and thinking ill of Him. The problem is that we expect things to go well for us, even though the Lord told us in advance that we would suffer. The world hated Him, and it hates

us as well (John 15:19). Things are not always going to go well and they're not always going to be fair, but yet we still expect them to go the way we would like – and when they *don't* we get upset at God. (Have we forgotten the painful life of suffering and poverty that Christ led? Why do we expect to have a life that is more comfortable than the one our Savior experienced?)

We also tend to expect justice to be immediate. We see people doing horrible things (perhaps even to us) and yet they seem to get away with it. God has indeed promised a final day of reckoning but it comes *after* death, not before (Hebrews 9:27). Justice *will* be served – at the proper time.

It's also easy to look at the way people treat us and assume that God is no different. If we live in a society that is unfair and cruel then it's easy to attribute those same characteristics to God. If the people around us are selfish and distant then it's easy to think that God is too. But the Bible tells us that God is not any of those things, nor is He influenced by our culture! God is eternal and unchanging (Malachi 3:6), and He has spelled out in the Bible exactly who He is and what He is like. We need to stay in the Bible so that we remain grounded in reality.

God is a glorious God who is worthy of great praise! He has blessed us with His Son and with the Holy Spirit, He has given us forgiveness and grace and eternal life, and He has promised us an amazing future that is filled with everlasting peace and joy (Revelation 21:4). He is with us in our trials and will never abandon us. He is most worthy of praise!

"2 Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers,
beware of the concision." (Philippians 3)

The "concision" refers to heretics who taught that you had to keep the Mosaic Law in order to be saved. These false teachers were proclaiming salvation by works, and the work that

they focused on was circumcision. Today different cults focus on different works, but the message is the same: you must earn your salvation through your good works. However, that road leads to Hell, not to Heaven, so beware! You *cannot* be saved by your works (Ephesians 2:8-9); you cannot be saved through the Law. It just doesn't work that way. You need perfect righteousness in order to be justified in the sight of God, and that only comes from Christ.

The phrase "evil workers" is easy to understand: take notice of people who spread evil, and do evil, and teach evil, and be wary of them. In other words, practice discernment! Do not take people (and teachings) at face value. Take time to dig deeper and see what is truly going on. Exercise judgment. (Yes, we are indeed called to judge other people. How else could we tell good workers from evil ones?) If you want your body to be healthy you need to drive the sickness out of it. The same thing is true for the church. That is why things like discernment ministries and church discipline is so important! If the church has no immune system then it will not survive as a faithful church for long.

So what about "beware of dogs"? Well, I don't think it is talking about animals. Some people say that it's a reference to the Gentiles, but since Paul wrote this letter and Paul was the apostle to the Gentiles it seems unlikely that he would give such a blanket condemnation of the very people he was ministering to. Others say it is a reference to the "concision" – the group who was spreading heresy and teaching salvation by works. It's possible that another way to render this might be "beware of wolves" – that is, beware of predators that seek to enter the sheepfold and devour the sheep.

The message in these verses is that the church is under attack and needs to understand that it is on the battlefield, and if it does not guard itself it will soon have injured sheep (or no sheep at all).

"3 For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh." (Philippians 3)

Paul is pointing out that in spite of what the "circumcision" thinks, the real followers of God are those who seek salvation by grace instead of works. Since we believe we are saved by grace alone through faith alone, we put no confidence "in the flesh" – meaning we do not look to our own works to save us, but instead wholly rest on the perfect life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. We look to Jesus *alone* for righteousness, not to anything we have done!

People who believe that they are saved by their works rejoice in *themselves* and take joy in *their* good deeds, for they think their good deeds save them. However, those of us who seek salvation by grace rejoice in Christ alone, because He is the one who saves us. Who gets the credit for saving us: is it ourselves or the Lord? Are we saved by what *we* do or by what *God* does for us? The difference is the difference between Heaven and Hell! If you have confidence in the flesh then you are looking to yourself for salvation, and you cannot save yourself! Salvation only comes through Jesus alone (not Jesus plus other works on your part).

"4 Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: 5 Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; 6 Concerning zeal, persecuting the church;

touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless." (Philippians 3)

If anyone had reason to trust in their own works it was Paul. He had it all: he was circumcised, he was an Israelite, and he was a member of the Pharisees – one of the most fanatical and educated religious groups of the day. Paul's life before he was saved was devoted to knowing and keeping the law – but as we will see in the next passage, none of that was able to save him. You cannot be saved by your lineage, or your memberships, or your works; salvation only comes by Christ alone!

"7 But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. 8 Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ," (Philippians 3)

Don't overlook the fact that Paul's conversion cost him *everything*. He lost his possessions, his status in society, his reputation (among the religious leaders of his day), and the power he once had. At one point Paul was a powerful and influential person (which can be seen by the way he went from place to place imprisoning and persecuting Christians), but when he wrote this letter he had become a prisoner who might shortly be executed. Paul lost everything he had – and that was a trade he was willing to make. He was willing to give up everything in *this* world so that he might attain the *next* one. He was willing to sacrifice everything so that he might spread the gospel. He valued Christ above everything else, and was willing to despise his possessions and treat them as garbage if it meant getting

saved and having a relationship with Christ. Paul had his priorities firmly in order: he knew what mattered in life and he sacrificed everything to get it.

"9 And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:"
(Philippians 3)

This is an important point. Our righteousness doesn't come from obeying God's commandments; it comes from faith in Jesus Christ. *He* is our righteousness! Obeying God does *not* make us more righteous, and disobeying Him does not make us *less* righteous. Now, it is true that we should obey Him out of love and a desire to serve Him, but our obedience should be motivated by love and gratitude. We need to understand that it does not affect our righteous standing in the sight of God. When we become a Christian God gives us the perfect righteousness of Jesus, and there is nothing we can do in order to add to it or take away from it. Your works do not keep it and your works cannot lose it, because your works are not involved in any way!

Notice that this verse says our righteousness comes from the faith *of* Christ. This is literally true: Christ was perfectly faithful and perfectly obedient, and He kept the Law without fault. Those who are saved have been given that perfect righteousness. It is indeed the faith *of* Christ that obtained the righteousness that we are now wearing. It is nothing that we did, and is everything that our Savior did!

"10 That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his

sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;" (Philippians 3)

Paul willingly and gladly sacrificed everything he had in order to know Christ. Above everything else he wanted to know Him, and have a relationship with Him, and be saved by Him. That is what truly mattered to Paul – and, in fact, that is really the only thing that matters in life! The greatest priority we ought to have in life is to know Christ, and obey Christ, and serve Christ (by loving others, spreading the gospel, discipling the nations, and so forth). This is more important than our possessions, our job, our life, and even our families. (Yes, we ought to love and take care of our families, but Christ matters infinitely more.)

Does His resurrection have power? Absolutely – Christ conquered death, and one day He will return and raise us up from the dead as well (1 Corinthians 15:52). Death no longer has dominion over us (Romans 6:9)! Do we have fellowship with his sufferings? We certainly do – just as Christ suffered, so we suffer as well. (We may not suffer in the same way, but Christians are still persecuted and hated for their faith. Since the world hates Christ, they hate us as well.)

"11 If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. 12 Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. 13 Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, 14 I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 3)

This is not as difficult a passage as it seems. Paul is not saying that it is a sin to believe you are saved, nor is he saying that it is wrong to believe in "once saved always saved". Even Paul said "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day" (2 Timothy 1:12). Paul taught *extensively* that salvation is through grace alone, *not* works (in fact, that is what the whole book of Galatians is about). In addition, the whole book of I John was written so that we might have *assurance* that we are saved – so we can truly know, once and for all (1 John 5:13).

What Paul is saying is that as Christians we are running a race and we need to finish it. We shouldn't say "Since I'm saved my work is done," and then just sit down and do nothing for the rest of our lives. We need to keep working, keep going, keep serving, and keep striving! God saved us and gave us life so we could go out and *do* things, not so we could idly watch the world go by. We are called to good works and we must pursue them aggressively (Ephesians 2:10).

The key to interpreting passages like this is to take the whole Bible into account. The New Testament says a great deal about salvation, grace, and works. Once all of the Bible's teachings are kept in mind it becomes possible to see what passages like this actually teach. You have to look at the whole picture because it can be very deceiving to just look at a single part. After all, look at what verse 16 says: "Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing." Notice how Paul says that "we have *already* attained" – which confirms what he taught in many other places.

"15 Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you. 16

Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing." (Philippians 3)

Why does Paul call us "perfect"? Because we have been given the perfect righteousness of Christ. This does not mean that we will never sin again or that we won't make mistakes. What it *does* mean is that we are perfect in the sight of God, and therefore we ought to walk in God's commandments and prioritize Christ above everything else in our life. Instead of seeking the things of this world we ought to be willing to sacrifice them for the kingdom of God.

This doesn't mean we are called to take a vow of poverty. Being poor is not a virtue, and being rich is not a sin. Abraham was wealthy (Genesis 13:5-6) and King David had immense wealth (1 Chronicles 22:14 says David donated 100,000 talents of gold to the temple, which is *7.5 million pounds of gold*), and God never condemned either of them for it. What matters is who our heart belongs to and what we are trying to obtain in this life: is it more possessions, or is it Christ?

"17 Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample."

In this letter we have seen Paul set an example by the way he lived his life. We can see his priorities, his love for Christ, and his willingness to sacrifice everything for the sake of the gospel. Paul is setting an example and urges people to follow that example. The apostle goes on to point out that he is not the only example that the Philippians have; there are others who are also setting a godly example by their lives, and he urges the Philippians to copy them.

Think of it as providing inspiration: when one person takes a stand and does what is right, that can inspire others to copy them and do the same thing. As Christians we ought to be provoking one another to good works and greater faithfulness.

"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.)" (Philippians 3)

This is a marvelous description of what has been called "carnal Christians". These people call themselves Christians but they care nothing for Christ. They openly despise the Bible and change it to suit themselves. They mock God's commandments and refuse to obey the Lord. They call Jesus "Lord" but they refuse to submit to His authority, and they are terrified at the thought that He will return one day. They love the things of this world and are completely unwilling to give them up. They hate the thought of leaving this life and going to Heaven. They are very much friends of the world and have only contempt for lovers of God.

I do not speak idly; I have seen these things. There are many "Christians" who are without any form of self-control, and who have given themselves over to whatever their flesh happens to desire. They love their sin and enjoy being selfish, cruel, and hostile. They truly glory "in their shame", and their mind is on earth things to such a great extent that they hate the very thought of Heavenly things. Whether they will admit it or not, they see Heaven as their enemy and God as their oppressor.

The church today calls these people "carnal Christians" and doesn't believe it is a serious issue. They don't think it affects

their salvation – but they are very wrong. Genuine Christians will always bear the fruits of the Spirit! As I John so eloquently explains, that is how we can tell true believers from frauds. If the fruits are absent then the Spirit is absent is well, and if the Spirit is absent then so is salvation!

There are many people who give God lip service, but they have no genuine love or passion. They love only themselves and live worldly, depraved lives. Being a disciple of Christ is not a priority to them. Unlike the modern church, Paul calls these people "enemies of the cross of Christ"! There is no trace of "Well, some Christians love God and others don't, and it doesn't matter either way." No, Paul calls them *enemies* and warns that their end is *destruction*.

What is the end of a true believer? Salvation and eternal life. Only the lost face destruction! The message is clear: *carnal Christians are not Christians at all*. They are lost.

What makes this difficult is that many churches have stopped preaching holiness. Pastors rarely sound the alarm, as Paul did, to warn that carnal Christianity is not Christianity at all. It's not happening, and since the church doesn't take it seriously it's easy to start thinking that God doesn't take it seriously either – but that is a huge mistake. Just because the church doesn't care does *not* mean that God agrees with them. (If you want to know what God thinks then read His Word for yourself. Do not depend on the church to tell you!)

This is why it's so important to stay grounded in the Word and not allow the culture to influence us. We are *in* the world but we must not be *of* the world. We are commanded to have the mind of Christ (1 Corinthians 2:16). God takes sin *very* seriously, even if the church does not. No matter what pastors may teach, the Bible is clear: the end of these carnal "Christians" who hate God and what He stands for is *destruction*.

"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." (Philippians 3)

The Bible has a lot to say about prophecy. It often speaks of the Millennial Kingdom (Revelation 20:1-6), the rapture (1 Corinthians 15:51-54), the Second Coming (Revelation 19:11-21), and the world to come (Revelation 21) – yet many churches ignore these verses. When they do that they are teaching people to ignore the world to come and only focus on life in this world. Christ, though, taught something different: He commanded us to have our hearts set on Heaven (Matthew 6:20-21).

What did Paul say we ought to be looking for, waiting for, and longing for? The return of Christ! Paul was clear that when Christ returned (which we ought to be *earnestly desiring*, not dreading!) He would transform our mortal body into a glorious, incorruptible, and immortal body. That is an extremely exciting promise! It is going to happen, and when it does we will be forever changed. That will be an incredible moment, and if we meditate on this it will make us more interested in the world to come and less concerned with the problems that beset us. Do we have health problems? One day they will be gone *forever*. The challenges and frustrations of this life are not as horrible when you realize that *God is going to fix them*.

Will Christ subdue all things to Himself? Absolutely! When He returns He will defeat the armies of the antichrist (Revelation 19:11-21), crush the kingdoms of this world (Revelation 11:15), and establish a new kingdom that will never be destroyed and never end (Daniel 2:44). He will rule over the nations with a rod of iron (Revelation 19:15). Everything will be

under His authority, and will remain that way forever. A new world leader is coming – the King of Kings and Lord of Lords!

1/11/2011, 9/7/2018, 6/14/2019, 6/18/2019

Philippians 4

"1 Therefore, my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved." (Philippians 4)

When Paul said that the Philippian church was his joy, it's easy to see that he meant it. He is writing this letter from prison, and instead of talking about himself and his problems he focuses on the welfare of the church! He loves them, he prays for them, he encourages them, and he is trying to set a good example for them. His biggest desire is that they will grow in the truth, learn to be discerning, and be unified in the doctrines of the Scriptures. He doesn't want them to abandon what the Bible has to say for any reason.

He doesn't say "be pragmatic", or "adapt to the changing times". Instead he commands them to *stand fast*. The truth has been revealed once and for all (Jude 1:3), so *stick with it*. Defend the teachings of the Bible and do not move away from them! People have come up with an endless list of excuses as to why they aren't going to believe the Bible and obey it, and Paul rejects them all. God meant what He said and said what He meant.

"2 I beseech Euodias, and beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord." (Philippians 4)

Paul took the time to address two people by name and tell them to get along. That can only mean that these two people were notorious for fighting and causing problems within the congregation. (If it had been a minor issue do you think Paul would have mentioned it in this letter? After all, Paul could have asked Timothy to talk to them privately, since he was about to make a trip to visit the church in person.)

The apostle does not tell them to "find common ground", or to "reject the doctrines that are causing problems". No, he tells them to "be of the same mind in the Lord". In other words, unity comes by *believing what the Bible has to say!* It comes from being united in the truth. Paul tells them to "be of the same mind", not "major on the majors and minor on the minors".

"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." (Philippians 4)

It is true that God does not permit women to be pastors or to preach (1 Timothy 2:12). However, that does not mean that women are forbidden from having any role in the church at all. There are a lot of roles that do not involve teaching – plus, everyone is commanded to share the gospel with others. These women helped Paul and he was grateful for it, and so he made special mention of them.

What does Paul have to say about these people? He says that their names are written in the Book of Life. This is one of the rare mentions of this Book (which is very real!) in the Bible. Jesus said that we were to rejoice because our names were written there, and for good reason: all those whose names are *not* written in it will be cast into the lake of fire on judgment day

(Revelation 20:15).

Why were their names there? It is not because of any works that they did, but because of what Christ did for them. Jesus is the one who secured their names – and ours as well. The reason these people helped Paul was because they were saved. The reason they were saved is because God predestined them to be saved. After all, their names were written in the Book of Life *when God laid the foundations of the world* (Revelation 17:8).

"4 Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice." (Philippians 4)

I realize that your life may be difficult, and you may be beset by problems on every side. You may be suffering persecution and pain and distress. Remember, though, that the person who wrote this was in prison for the sake of Christ and thought that he might be facing *imminent execution*. He had lost everything for the sake of the gospel – his position, his power, his prestige, and his wealth. Yet here he tells us to rejoice!

Why should we rejoice? Because God has done amazing things for us and given us astounding promises. God has paid for our sins, so we are forgiven and will not be condemned in the day of judgment. God has promised to raise us up from the dead at the rapture and transform our bodies into something glorious, incorruptible, and immortal (1 Corinthians 15:52-54). God has promised that in the Millennial Kingdom we will reign with Him over the world (Revelation 2:27). God has promised that we will eat of the Tree of Life (Revelation 2:7), and we will live forever in a perfect world where there is no sin or suffering or death (Revelation 21:4). If we look beyond our current situation to the things God has promised us in the days to come, we can find a great deal to rejoice over!

"5 Let your moderation be known unto all men.
The Lord is at hand." (Philippians 4)

One point the Bible makes is that drinking alcoholic beverages is fine, but overdoing it and getting drunk is *not* fine. Alcohol is one of many things in this life that are good in moderation but which should not be overdone. In other passages we are told that since the Lord is at hand we ought to live carefully, redeem the time (Ephesians 5:16), and seek righteousness and holiness. Since the Lord can come back at any time (and even now may be near!), we ought to live with great care. After all, what sort of life do you want Jesus to catch you living when He returns? When He comes there will not be time to make any changes! The immanent return of Jesus should motivate us to do what is right so we don't have to be ashamed when He appears (1 John 2:28).

Why did Paul say that the Lord was at hand? I believe it is because the Lord could return at any time. There are certain events that must take place before the seven-year tribulation can begin, but the rapture can occur at any moment. Since we don't know when the Lord will return for us (but it might be soon), we ought to live with care.

"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." (Philippians 4)

God doesn't want us to worry about things; instead He wants us to cast all of our cares upon Him. He wants us to bring

our requests to Him instead of trying to handle things ourselves. He wants us to go to Him. When we do this – when we center our cares upon Christ – we will be blessed with peace.

However, that doesn't mean Christ is going to make our problems go away. Our challenging situations or personal problems may still be there in spite of our most earnest prayers. (Remember, 1 Corinthians 12:7-9 says that Paul prayed three times that his thorn in the flesh might be removed, but God never removed it.) Yet peace is still possible. The peace that God gives is not the peace that says "I have no problems", but the peace that says "the Lord is my strength".

Perhaps we are too focused on getting rid of our problems, when God may actually want us to work *through* them with His strength and His grace. There *can* be peace in the midst of trials – a peace that comes from trusting the One Who holds tomorrow.

I think sometimes it is impossible to reach this peace because we're bitter over the problems that we're facing. Life often seems cruel and unfair, and praying doesn't always make our problems go away. Sometimes we are looking for an end to our problems when what God is offering is peace *in spite of* our problems.

"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."
(Philippians 4)

Here is another famous verse! In this world we are surrounded by evil and wicked people who are doing evil and

wicked things. We can find the most depraved things imaginable (and unimaginable) in our newspapers, on the television, and even when just walking down the street. Although we are surrounded by evil and live in an evil world, it is important to *keep this evil out of our minds*. We must not let it take root inside of us! Instead of thinking evil thoughts we ought to monitor our thoughts and keep them focused on things that are right and good and encouraging.

Remember, our thoughts will turn into our actions, so if we want to live a holy life we need to start at the root. We will find it difficult to be loving if our thoughts are full of hate.

"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." (Philippians 4)

Paul is trying to set a good example for the church. He is not the sort of person who says "Do what I say, not what I do". If he tells people to do something he is first going to do it himself! Paul has no desire to be a hypocrite. He doesn't just teach the Scriptures; he lives them. (Can we say the same?)

Many people today say "you need to find your own truth", or "you can't really believe everything the Bible says", or "the culture has changed, so we need to change with the times". The apostles *strongly disagreed*. They taught what the Scripture had to say, they lived it in their lives, and they commanded that the churches *stick to the truth*. You will not find moral relativism or compromise in their writings! Their message was extremely consistent: "This is what the Scriptures have to say, so this is what you must be doing."

If we do what God has to say and if we believe the words He has given to us, then that is a sign we are truly saved – and

since we are saved God has sealed His Spirit within us and He will always be with us. However, if you reject His commands and refuse to believe His words then that is a sign you are still dead in your trespasses and sins (1 John 2:3-5). In that case God is not with you, and you are facing the wrath of God (which will come upon all those who do not repent).

"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." (Philippians 4)

Earlier in this letter Paul said that he had some needs the church was not able to meet, so Epaphroditus met them instead – and somehow that led to an illness that almost killed Epaphroditus. Here we find out there was some reason the Philippian church could not meet that particular need. Whatever the issue was, it doesn't seem to have been a matter of willingness: the church was willing to help but was unable to do so.

We live in a world that is full of problems. There are some problems we can fix, but there are others that are beyond our ability to help. In this verse Paul is rejoicing because the Philippians were once again in a position to minister to him. (As we will see in verse 17, though, his rejoicing is *not* because he wanted free stuff from them, but was because he wanted to see them bear fruit.)

It is a good thing for us to earnestly seek the opportunity to do good to others and to minister to their needs. There may be times when we cannot help, but when opportunities arise we should take them. That is what it means to "bear one another's burdens" and "love one another as yourself".

"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." (Philippians 4)

Paul is saying that his joy does *not* come from getting free stuff from the Philippian church, but instead (as we will see in verse 17) he is rejoicing because he sees the church bearing fruit. Paul knows how to live with wealth and with poverty; he knows how to endure when his needs are not being met and he is content no matter what his state is. In other words, even though Paul is *in prison* his primary concern is *not* having his needs met, but instead is seeing that the church bears fruit!

This goes back to verses 6 and 7 – God wants us to be content with our current state, whatever it may be. Our life might be easy or it might be hard; we may be full or we may be hungry. Yet God wants us to be content – to cast our cares upon Him and be at peace (1 Peter 5:7). Is your life full of troubles and pain? Be content. Let go of the bitterness and be at peace with the situation God has placed you in. (I realize that is an easy thing to say and a hard thing to do, but keep in mind that the person who wrote these words was *in prison facing potential execution*. It was not a rich person living an easy life!)

It's easy to be content when we are full, but it can be hard to be content when we are hungry, or in pain, or in great need. Yet God would have us be content no matter what state we are in. God is willing and able to give us the grace we need to endure – the question is, do we want it?

"13 I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." (Philippians 4)

When Paul said these words he was talking about having the ability to *suffer in prison, facing death, and not having his needs met*. That is what he said he could do through the power of Christ! He was specifically talking about suffering and being persecuted. He was *not* talking about "having your best life now" or winning sports championships or achieving your dreams.

We really *can* do all things through the strength that Jesus gives to us! The problem is that we're usually not looking for strength to get *through* our problems; instead we want our problems to end. God can and will empower us to do His will – but sometimes His will is the path of difficult trials, and the strength He gives us is the strength to be content *in spite* of our troubles.

Jesus warned us that in this world we would have tribulation (John 16:33). There would be times when things would *not* go well and we would be beset with many trials. Life would be hard, but He would be with us. The attitude we are to have is this: life is difficult but God loves us and wants us to cast those cares upon Him, and accept His peace in the midst of our trials. He wants us to be content in the midst of pain and go to Jesus for the strength to finish our lives. That is where the strength of Christ comes in – the strength to run and not be weary, and to walk and not faint (Isaiah 40:31).

"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."
(Philippians 4)

This is what I was talking about earlier. The Philippian church aggressively pursued Paul and worked hard to meet his needs. When Paul was in need they were actually the only church that reached out to help him! That is why Paul was rejoicing – *not* because he was getting free stuff, but because the church was demonstrating their love for the Lord by meeting the needs of others.

The church was so focused on meeting the needs of others that they didn't wait around for someone to come to them; instead they reached out and asked Paul if he needed help. This was a very aggressive church!

"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."
(Philippians 4)

It seems that Paul did receive the gifts that the church sent to him. We aren't told what they are, but apparently they made a difference. Their gift was acceptable to God because it was given out of a willing heart, and it ministered to a fellow believer in prison who needed it.

Many churches try to force people to give through guilt and constant pestering. God hates that! He wants people to give whatever is in their heart, and to give it cheerfully and willingly. It is worth noting that the only collections we see in the New Testament are gathered for the specific purpose of meeting the

needs of other Christians. That is what the church should be doing – but instead we do that rarely, and instead pastors preach a tithe that no apostle ever taught to the churches. There is a great deal wrong with the way modern churches handle money and giving. (For more information on this topic see Appendix S, "The Modern Practice Of Tithing Is Not Biblical".)

"19 But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus."
(Philippians 4)

I have heard some people suggest that God was only willing to meet the needs of the Philippian church because they met the needs of Paul. In other words, if the church had failed in the area of giving then God would walk away from them in their hour of need and let them suffer. This goes back to the old heresy that you must earn favor with God, and if you don't store up enough "points" then God isn't going to help you when you need it.

What we must remember is that God loved us *when we were His enemies*, and He died to save us *when we still hated Him*. The only reason we are saved is because God took action to raise us up while we were dead in our trespasses and sins! God loves us and has promised to never leave us or forsake us (Hebrews 13:5). If He sends rain upon the just and the unjust (Matthew 5:45), and if He takes care of the birds of the air and even the flowers (Matthew 6:25-34), then how much more will He take care of us!

God is going to give us what we need *because He loves us*, not because we have earned it. The truth is that even if we are 100% faithful and obedient in all things, we still still *never* be able to say "God, you owe me a favor". God owes us nothing (Luke 17:10), and yet He has made us promises anyway! We can

never deserve any good gifts from God, and yet God has promised to meet our needs anyway. You can never *earn* favor with God; all you can do is accept it with gratitude and rejoicing. (If you do not accept it as a free gift, but instead try to earn it through your works, then you will never have it at all.)

"20 Now unto God and our Father be glory for ever and ever. Amen." (Philippians 4)

Who does all glory and honor and power and praise belong to? Not to you, or to me, or to a "celebrity pastor"; no, it all belongs to God and God alone! Whose kingdom should we be building? Not ours, but God's. Who should we be serving? Not us, but God. Whose dreams and desires should we be chasing? Not ours, but God's. Remember, we are bought with a price and are called to be a living sacrifice. (This is not a burden; it is a great joy!)

"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." (Philippians 4)

Paul took the time to greet other Christians, and we should do the same. (Yes, Christian fellowship is important – and yes, that fellowship ought to be more than just shaking someone's hand in a church service for five seconds.) Notice that the gospel had even reached into the palace of Caesar!

"23 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen." (Philippians 4)

What do we need in our life? The grace of God. When do we need it? *All the time, forever.* There will be many times in our life when God will *not* solve our problems and will *not* rescue us from whatever situation we are in; remember, there have been many martyrs throughout history who were not delivered from torture and execution. However, God will always give us His grace so that we might walk, and not be weary, and run, and not faint (Isaiah 40:31).

Appendix S: The Modern Practice Of Tithing Is Not Biblical

If you have been going to church for any length of time, you have probably heard a sermon about tithing. Pastors commonly teach that Christians must give 10% of their pre-tax income to their local church. They even go so far as to say that the curse of Malachi rests upon those who refuse to pay it:

Malachi 3:8: "Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings.

9 Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation.

10 Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it."

However, is this really true? Are Christians really commanded to do this? Does God actually curse believers if they don't give their local church ten percent of their pre-tax income?

Before I answer these questions, let's take a look at the context of these passages. We need to understand what the Biblical tithe actually was before we can explore whether it still applies today.

Tithing in the Old Testament

In Numbers 8 the Lord gave a series of ordinances regarding the Levites. In case you're not familiar with them, the Levites were given the job of maintaining the tabernacle:

Numbers 8:19: "And I have given the Levites as a gift to Aaron and to his sons from among the children of Israel, to do the service of the children of Israel in the tabernacle of the congregation, and to make an atonement for the children of Israel: that there be no plague among the children of Israel, when the children of Israel come nigh unto the sanctuary."

The reason the Levites were given this job is because in the Old Testament, before Jesus came, the Israelites were not allowed to interact directly with God. This was because they (like everyone else) were sinful and unholy, and if they approached God in their unholiness they would die. In order to save their lives the Lord appointed the tribe of Levi to take care of the tabernacle.

The Levites were divided into two groups. Aaron and his sons were made priests, and became responsible for offering the sacrifices. The rest of the tribe was charged with taking care of the tabernacle (and later, the Temple). The priests and the Levites were the *only ones* who were authorized to serve in the tabernacle. The Lord was quite strict about this:

Numbers 18:22: "Neither must the children of Israel henceforth come nigh the tabernacle of the congregation, lest they bear sin, and die.
23 But the Levites shall do the service of the tabernacle of the congregation, and they shall

bear their iniquity; it shall be a statute forever throughout your generations, that among the children of Israel they have no inheritance."

If you were not of the tribe of Levi then you were not allowed to serve in the tabernacle, and the penalty for breaking this commandment was *death* (Numbers 18:22). Your eligibility to serve was determined by your ancestry. Although the Temple had an outer court that non-Levites could enter after they purified themselves, no non-Levite was ever allowed to enter the Temple itself. (There were no exceptions to this: when King Uzziah broke this commandment the Lord immediately struck him with leprosy.) Even the High Priest (the oldest son of Aaron of each generation) could only enter the Holy of Holies *once a year* to make atonement on behalf of the people, and before he could enter he had to offer a sacrifice to cleanse his own impurities (Hebrews 9:7).

Even if you *were* of the tribe of Levi, the requirements for being involved in Temple service were very strict. As Numbers 8 and Leviticus 21 explains, not only did Levites and priests have to come from the tribe of Levi, but they had to be of a certain age (starting at 25 and forcing mandatory requirement at age 50), have no physical handicaps (Lev. 21:17-21), and abide by certain purification laws. These were the people that interacted with God on behalf of the nation of Israel, and they had to do things God's way all of the time or God would strike them dead. There was no margin allowed for error or personal flair. Nothing less than absolute holiness and perfection could enter His presence. (Incidentally, those requirements have never changed; the only reason we can enter God's presence is because we are clothed in Jesus' righteousness. His absolute perfection cleanses us of our sins and grants us entrance to Heaven. Those who try to enter on their own merits, or apart from Jesus, will find themselves damned. There simply is no other way.)

All of this brings up a question: if you were a priest or Levite then where did you get your income? Well, when the land of Canaan was given to the Israelites the tribe of Levi was not given a portion of the land (Numbers 18:20). Instead they were to dwell in a series of cities that were set aside for them throughout the land of Israel (Joshua 21). The tithe was given to them as their inheritance:

Numbers 18:21: "And, behold, I have given the children of Levi all the tenth in Israel for an inheritance, for their service which they serve, even the service of the tabernacle of the congregation. ...

24 But the tithes of the children of Israel, which they offer as a heave offering unto the Lord, I have given to the Levites to inherit: therefore I have said unto them, Among the children of Israel they shall have no inheritance."

However, the Levites did more than just maintain the Temple. God designed Israel to be a theocracy, and the Levites served as the nation's government. They were the judicial system: cases were brought to them and they issued judgments (Deuteronomy 17:9-12). The Levites also served as the nation's education system, who were supposed to teach the people and guide the nation. They were not just holy men: *they were the government*. Even in the time of the kings they still functioned as judges and teachers.

As was mentioned earlier, not all Levites were priests. The only Levites that were allowed to serve as priests were the descendants of Aaron. The priests operated the Temple and offered sacrifices. When Israel gave the Levites the tithe, the Levites were to give a tenth of what they received to the priests:

Numbers 18:25: "And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying,

26 Thus speak unto the Levites, and say unto them, When ye take of the children of Israel the tithes which I have given you from them for your inheritance, then ye shall offer up an heave offering of it for the Lord, even a tenth part of the tithe.

27 And this your heave offering shall be reckoned unto you, as though it were the corn of the threshingfloor, and as the fulness of the winepress.

28 Thus ye also shall offer an heave offering unto the Lord of all your tithes, which ye receive of the children of Israel; and ye shall give thereof the Lord's heave offering to Aaron the priest."

It's interesting to note that the tithes were not given directly to the priests. Instead the tithes were given to the Levites, who gave a tenth of what they received to the priests. The priests themselves tithed to no one; they kept everything they received. In other words, the priests *only received 10% of the tithe!*

Another interesting fact is that every three years, the entire tithe was given to the poor. In those years none of it went to the priests:

Deuteronomy 26:12: "When thou hast made an end of tithing all the tithes of thine increase the third year, which is the year of tithing, and hast given it unto the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, that they may eat within thy gates, and be filled;"

Also, do you notice how it says "of thine increase"? One important fact that is often overlooked is that the tithe was *not* an income tax. The Israelites were not required to keep detailed financial records of all their income so that at the end of the year (when tithes were paid) they knew how much to give God. Instead the tithe was calculated based on *the increase of their net worth*. If their net worth did not increase then they paid no tithe. This is how one person described it:

The ancient Israelite calculated and paid his tithes only once per year, after the harvest. During the year, he bought and sold, exchanged his labour for other men's goods, and his goods for other men's labours; on none of this income did he pay any tithes. All year long, he and his family ate of the increase of the land and of the livestock. What he consumed in the course of the year was not recorded and added to his total harvest for the purpose of calculating his tithes. If he went fishing and caught ten fish in the middle of the year, he ate them all; he didn't save one of them to the end of the year in order to pay tithes on his fish. If he received some gold or silver in an inheritance, he was not required to pay tithes on his inheritance. . . The Israelite was not commanded to tithe on everything he obtained and used throughout the year, but only on his increase at the end of the year. (apostasynow)

So let's stop and take a quick review. Because the Israelites were not holy enough to interact directly with God, the Lord took one of the tribes of Israel and dedicated them to serving in the tabernacle on behalf of the people. Since they were dedicated to Temple service the Lord gave them no

inheritance in the land; instead the Israelites were to give the Levites one tenth of their increase (*not* their income!), and the Levites were to live off of that. The Levites then gave a tenth of what they received to the priests so that they could operate the Temple and perform the sacrifices.

This tithe was very important because it was the priests' entire livelihood. If the priests didn't receive the tithe then they couldn't do their job, and that was bad news for the nation because in order to approach God in the Old Testament *you had to go through a priest!* No one else could offer sacrifices or enter into the Temple to inquire of God with the Urim and Thummim. When people neglected the tithe the priests were forced to abandon the Temple to find another means of survival, which that meant that the only people who were allowed to approach God were gone. That is why God became so angry when the tithe was neglected, and that is why Malachi 3:9 (which was quoted at the beginning of this chapter) says what it does.

Although the Levites as a whole received the full tithe, the priests only received 10% of it. However, every third year the entire tithe was given to the poor and the priests didn't receive anything.

So, how does this compare to the modern practice of tithing? Do we still go through the tribe of Levi in order to approach God? Do Levites tithe to priests so that they can offer sacrifices on our behalf? The answer, of course, is *no*. The sacrificial death of Christ on the cross changed everything.

Christ's Sacrifice Changed Everything

You see, when Jesus died and rose again He replaced the Levites as our bridge to God. We no longer need a High Priest to

make atonement for our sins each year in the Holy of Holies, because Jesus has finished our salvation. Jesus is now our high priest. We no longer need to offer sacrifices because Jesus offered Himself once and for all as the perfect sacrifice:

Hebrews 9:11: "But Christ being come a high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building;

12 Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. ...

24 For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us:

25 Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others;

26 For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself."

The reason Christians no longer need a class of Levites to interact with God on their behalf is because Christ's death has consecrated us as a nation of priests:

Hebrews 10:19: "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus,

20 By a new and living way, which He hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh;"

Revelation 1:5: "And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the price of the kings of the earth. Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood,
6 And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen."

1 Peter 2:9: "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that He should show forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvelous light:"

It is very important to realize that there is no longer a tribe of Levi ministering to God on behalf of His people. Jesus bridged the gap between man's sinfulness and God's holiness. Christians are a royal priesthood and are able to boldly approach the throne of grace (Heb. 4:16). In the past this would have brought instant death, but Jesus changed that forever.

In the Church Age pastors minister to the body of Christ, *but they are not Levites*. In order to be a Levite and serve in the Temple you had to prove the purity of your lineage (that is, present documented evidence that all of your forefathers were from the tribe of Levi), you had to be ordained in a certain way, and you had to meet certain physical characteristics. The Levites pointed the way to what Christ would accomplish in His sacrifice, and that sacrifice has been made. Pastors today do not approach God once a year to atone for the sins of their congregations. They do not sacrifice animals on behalf of anybody. Their job is *completely different* from the Levites.

It's also worth noting that tithes were to be brought *into the Temple*. This can be seen in Malachi 3:10, in which the Lord

says "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house". In the Old Testament God did not dwell within His people. Instead the glory of God resided in the Holy of Holies in the Temple. When the High Priest entered into the Holy of Holies once a year he was going before the *actual presence of God* to intercede on behalf of the nation. God Himself dwelt within the Temple, which can be seen passages such as 1 Kings 8:10-11. The reason that the Jews no longer offer sacrifices is because they no longer have a Temple. Modern Jews also do not tithe because tithes can *only* be given to the Levites, *and there are no Levites today*.

As Christ predicted when talking to the woman at the well (John 4:21-23), Christians do not gather at a single Temple in order to approach the presence of God. This is because Christians *are* temples of the Living God, for God dwells within us, not inside a building in the Middle East:

1 Corinthians 3:16: "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?"

17 If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are."

In other words, things are different now. The sacrifice of Christ changed everything – including the way that giving works. As we are about to see, what the apostles taught the Church about giving is quite different from the system of tithing in the Mosaic Law.

Tithing Is No Longer Possible

It should be apparent by now that it is *impossible* for Christians to tithe according to the Law of Moses. The tithe could only be given to the Levites (Numbers 18:24) and there are no Levites today because Christ fulfilled the sacrificial system and brought it to an end. Even if the Levites still existed it would still be impossible for Christians to bring tithes into the Temple because *there is no Temple*. Instead Christ dwells within us, making our bodies the temple of the Lord (1 Corinthians 3:16).

I want to emphasize this last point, because it is easily glazed over. It is *impossible* for Christians to offer the tithe that the Lord instituted in Numbers 18. It *cannot* be done. The only people who were allowed to receive the tithe were the Levites, not some random Gentiles from your local community (or even random Jews, for that matter). The job of Levites was to offer sacrifices for the forgiveness of sins, which is something that pastors do not and cannot do. Pastors are *not* the same thing as Levites.

The curse and blessing of Malachi 3 simply cannot be applied to modern Christians. God was concerned about providing *the Levites* with a livelihood, but that group of people no longer exists. God no longer has a Temple in which goods can be stored and given to a priestly class. *That entire system is gone*. Even if Christians wanted to bring food into the Temple, it isn't possible because *there is no Temple anymore*. The death and resurrection of Jesus changed everything.

To put it as plainly as possible, Christians today cannot tithe as instructed in the Law of Moses. It is not possible. They can give a portion of their income to their local church, yes, *but that is not tithing*. Tithing involved giving to Levites and there are no Levites. It involved bringing food into the Temple and there is no Temple. Have you ever met *anyone* who gave a tenth of their increase to a Levite? The truth is that no one has tithed

according to the Law of Moses since the Temple was destroyed in 70 AD. You *cannot* simply swap out pastors for Levites and churches for the Temple and then say that it's all the same thing. The New Testament simply *does not allow this* (which we'll get into a bit later.)

Many pastors (in fact, virtually all of them) teach that Christians are required to give a tenth of their pre-tax income to the Church. I hope you can see by now that this is not even close to the Mosaic Law of tithing. The Israelites tithed *of their increase* – that is, of the increase of their net worth at the end of the year. On top of that, the tithe went to the Levites, who functioned as Israel's government. The priests themselves only received a tenth of the tithe, or 1% of the increase of Israel's net worth. There is simply *no way* you can turn "1% of the increase of your net worth" into "10% of your pre-tax income". They're not even close.

But there's more. In the Old Testament, the priests never tithed because *the entire point of tithing was to support the priests*. I have yet to hear any pastor say that pastors are exempt from tithing. There is also the fact that every third year the entire tithe went to the poor and the priests received nothing. I've never seen any church try to implement *that* part of the Law either.

There's also something else. If the Temple was too far away, you were allowed to spend the entire tithe on whatever you wanted:

Deuteronomy 14:22: "Thou shalt truly tithe all the increase of thy seed, that the field bringeth forth year by year.

23 And thou shalt eat before the Lord thy God, in the place which he shall choose to place his name there, the tithe of thy corn, of thy wine, and of thine oil, and the firstlings of thy herds

and of thy flocks; that thou mayest learn to fear the Lord thy God always.

24 And if the way be too long for thee, so that thou art not able to carry it; or if the place be too far from thee, which the Lord thy God shall choose to set his name there, when the Lord thy God hath blessed thee:

25 Then shalt thou turn it into money, and bind up the money in thine hand, and shalt go unto the place which the Lord thy God shall choose:

26 And thou shalt bestow that money for whatsoever thy soul lusteth after, for oxen, or for sheep, or for wine, or for strong drink, or for whatsoever thy soul desireth: and thou shalt eat there before the Lord thy God, and thou shalt rejoice, thou, and thine household,

27 And the Levite that is within thy gates; thou shalt not forsake him; for he hath no part nor inheritance with thee."

Did you notice that verse 22 once again mentioned that the tithe was only *of their increase*, and not of their net income? Did you see how God said that if the **one** place that was allowed to receive the tithes (the Temple) was inaccessible or too far away, you were allowed to spend the money on whatever you wanted and literally eat it before the Lord? In other words, since there is no longer a Temple, people who *really* wanted to keep the Mosaic Law of tithing should spend their entire tithe on steaks and have a big barbeque. After all, *that is what the Mosaic Law commands!* But no pastor is *ever* going to say that, even though that is exactly what the Bible teaches.

So does the Mosaic Law *really* command Christians to give a tenth of their pre-tax income to their local church? It should be obvious by now that the modern practice of tithing is not in any way similar to the tithe specified in the Law of Moses.

Pastors are not Levites, the local church is not the Temple, and 10% of your pre-tax income is not the same as 1% of the increase of your net worth.

Is there a commandment in the New Testament stating that all Christians must give ten percent of their income to support their local body of believers? The answer is *no*. As it turns out, the New Testament model of giving is actually quite different.

Are There Other Examples of Tithing?

Before we get into that, though, there is one other point I need to address. Some people claim that there are other examples of tithing apart from the Law of Moses. Take Jacob as an example:

Genesis 28:20: "And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, if God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the Lord be my God, and this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house: and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee."

This passage has been used to support tithing, but I believe it actually does the opposite. If Christians are required to tithe then why is Jacob offering to tithe if he returns in peace? After all, if God *already* required Jacob to give a tenth then this whole vow is meaningless! *This is only a gift if Jacob was not*

required to give it.

Plus, how did Jacob give the offering to God? There were no priests in those days because Levi had not yet been born (much less Aaron or the other priests). Jacob, a shepherd, must have sacrificed one-tenth of his flocks on an altar. He did *not* give the animals to his local tabernacle. Are Christians required to take their money into their backyard and burn it, *as Jacob did*? I've never heard anyone suggest that, but it's worth noting that the animals that Jacob gave did *not* go to support the local priesthood – instead they were slaughtered and burned. (It's worth noting that the tithe in Scripture was always a portion of crops or animals, not money; Lev 27:30-32 is a good example of this. There was a monetary tax called the temple tax but that was completely different from the tithe.)

What is entirely missed is that Jacob's vow shows how little faith he really had in God. The Lord had already given Jacob fabulous promises, but instead of believing them Jacob tried to bribe God by saying that *if* God lived up to His end of the bargain then Jacob would pay God back for it. Jacob's tithe was intended to *bribe God into fulfilling His promise*. Is that really an example that Christians should follow?

Another example that people sometimes use to support tithing appears in Genesis 14:

Genesis 14:18: "And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God.

19 And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth:

20 And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him tithes of all."

After Abraham returned from conquering the armies that attacked the king of Sodom, he gave a tenth of the spoils to Melchizedek. Some people have claimed that this proves that Christians are required to tithe, but it should be noted that Abraham *gave* tithes. If they were required then he would have *paid* them, which is quite different. A gift is not required – it is given freely. If it is required then it is the payment of a debt, not a gift. Nowhere in this passage is it even suggested that Abraham was required to do what he did.

There is also the fact that Abraham was not tithing *his* property. The loot that he was tithing consisted of things he had recovered through his military victory. After Abraham gave the tithe he returned the rest of the loot to the kings of Sodom, which is who the goods had been stolen from. The loot he had tithed belonged to *them*, not to Abraham. There are *no* examples of Abraham actually tithing *things that belonged to him*.

In other words, when an enemy nation invaded a neighboring country, Abraham defeated the invaders with an army of his own, recovered the loot they had stolen, gave 10% of that loot to a third party, and returned the rest of it to its original owners. If you are determined to follow Abraham's "tithing" then *that* is how you need to do it.

Some people support the idea of mandatory tithing through this verse in Matthew:

Matthew 23:23: "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and arise and cumin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone."

What we need to remember is that when Jesus said this He had not yet died, and so the Mosaic law was still in force.

Jesus had to perfectly fulfill the entire Mosaic Law, and He did. It's worth noting that Jesus also commanded the lepers He healed to go show themselves to the priests. I have never heard *anyone* suggest that those who have been healed of skin cancer should go to their local pastor before re-entering society – and yet that is also a command found in the Mosaic Law. The reason that people don't do that anymore is because the entire Mosaic Law has been ended – and that includes the sacrificial laws, the ceremonial laws, the dietary laws, and tithing. Since Christ put an end to the Mosaic Law, the only commands that apply to the Church are the ones that were given to the Church in the New Testament.

What Does The New Testament Actually Teach About Giving?

If Christians truly are required to give a tenth of their income to the local church then you would expect that fact to be mentioned *somewhere* in the New Testament, but it's not. *There is not one verse anywhere in the New Testament that commands Christians to tithe.*

Let me give a few examples. In Acts 4:32-5:11 the Bible talks about the financial support of the new church. Instead of tithing, though, Christians did something quite different:

Acts 4:34: "Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold,
35 And laid them down at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto every man

according as he had need."

There is also the case of Ananias and Sapphira. This couple sold a piece of property and gave part of the proceeds to their local church. When they gave the money, though, they lied and said that they were giving the entire amount that they had received. Although the Lord killed them for lying, it's interesting to notice what Peter said:

Acts 5:4: "Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? ..."

Nowhere did Peter even hint that they owed a tithe on it to the church. If tithing was required this would have been a great place to mention it, but the passage is silent.

Another passage that has been used to support tithing is this one:

1 Corinthians 16:1: "Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye.

2 Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.

3 And when I come, whomsoever ye shall approve by your letters, them will I send to bring your liberality unto Jerusalem."

It is important to notice that Paul is asking the Corinthian church to gather together a sum of money that he can send to *destitute people in Jerusalem*. This is *not* being collected for the support of the local church, nor is any amount or percentage specified. Paul is simply asking the Corinthians to get together and provide for the needs of their brothers and sisters in a

distant country. This is *not at all* the same thing as being required to give ten percent of your income to the local church. Once again, if tithing was required then this would have been a good place to mention it, but it wasn't mentioned.

In 1 Corinthians 9 Paul talks at length about giving, and he discusses the fact that it is perfectly right for pastors to receive their income through the generosity of other Christians. Since pastors minister to people's spiritual needs, it makes sense for people to meet the pastor's physical needs:

1 Corinthians 9:9: "For it is written in the law of Moses, Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn. Doth God take care for oxen?"

10 Or saith he it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, this is written: that he that ploweth should plow in hope; and that he that thresheth in hope should be partaker of his hope. ...

14 Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel."

This would have been a perfect time for Paul to bring up tithing, *but he didn't*. Tithing isn't mentioned anywhere in this chapter. Such a teaching is *entirely absent* from this rather lengthy discussion of giving – and, in fact, it is also absent from *all other discussions on giving in the New Testament*. Do you know how many characters in the Bible followed the modern version of "tithing" and gave 10% of their pre-tax income to their local church? **Zero.** There is not a single case in the Bible of anyone ever doing that.

So what is going on? The answer to this riddle can be found earlier in that very same chapter, which says this:

2 Corinthians 9:6: "But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully,

7 Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver."

In the Old Testament the Israelites were *required* to give a tenth of the increase of their crops and herds to the Levites. Anything that they gave above the tithe was a freewill offering, but the tithe was required. If the tithe was given then God would send blessings, and if the tithe was withheld then God would send curses and famine. The tithe was *not* a gift.

In the New Testament things are completely different. God simply wants us to give as we have purposed in our heart, out of love. There is no fixed amount specified, nor does it say that a tenth must be given to the local church before anything can be given to other causes. God wants us to have a heart to meet the needs around us and to give cheerfully out of love. The real issue is the heart, not percentages.

The truth is that *everything* that we have belongs to God. We are stewards, not owners, and are commanded to use our possessions for the honor and glory of God. All of our wealth and energies and hopes and dreams are to be focused on the Lord's kingdom. God doesn't want a tenth of us; He wants *all* of us.

Christians should look at the financial resources they have been given and use them wisely for the Lord's glory. This doesn't just encompass tithing, but everything – paying bills, raising children, investing in education, buying groceries, and so forth. Can't God be glorified when we pay our debts? When we raise our children? When we instruct others in wisdom? When we provide for those in need? When we bring the gospel to those

who need it? God made the oceans, the rivers, the trees, and the fields, but too often Christians view life as being mostly secular with a few religious moments here and there. Being a Christian isn't something that you just do at church; it's the way you live your entire life. It affects how you manage your money, what entertainment you choose, what you do with your free time, how you raise your children, and how you treat your neighbors. For the Christians there is nothing that is purely secular. The Lord has laid a claim to every facet of life, and there is a time for everything.

God wants us to love and enjoy Him with all of our heart, soul, mind, and strength, and to be passionately devoted to following Him and loving our neighbors. That is what life is all about, and that is what life will *always* be about for the rest of time. God does not want a tenth of us; He wants all of us, devoted completely to Him in every way.

It may be that some people can give more and others can give less; in Christ's parables some servants were given more talents than others. God is not nearly as concerned with the *amount* as He is with the *heart*. That is what it is really all about.

Freely Have You Received; Freely Give

The truth is that there is nothing even remotely Biblical about the modern practice of tithing, and pastors who preach tithing are preaching error. The modern practice of tithing bears no resemblance to what the Mosaic Law commanded. No Bible character in the Old or New Testament ever tithed the way that modern pastors command, and no passage in the New Testament commands Christians to give 10% of their pre-tax income to the local church. I think this quote puts it well:

It is very difficult to come up with an exact set of figures on who got how much of the tithes in the end; but one thing is sure: the Temple in Jerusalem was not collecting 10% of the total income of the people, and at least 1/3 of the tithes were given to support education and poor people in their own community. How anyone with an honest mind can take the Mosaic Law of Tithing and come up with, "10 cents out of every dollar that passes through your hands belongs to the local church", eludes me. (apostasynow)

The great tragedy is that the New Testament actually has a lot to say about how Christians should give, but modern Christians have completely ignored its teachings in order to impose a system that has no Biblical foundation. The truth is that God doesn't want 1% of our net increase, or even 10% of our pre-tax income. Instead God wants us to see ourselves as His servants. He wants us to spend our life working for Him, using everything we have and everything we are for His glory. He wants us to think "I exist to glorify God and advance His kingdom, so how can I use my assets and talents to further that purpose?"

God has entrusted us with many things. What He really wants us to do is to realize that we are *managers*, not owners. Think of your assets as something that God has given to you so that you can invest it for His kingdom. What kind of a return are you giving God? When you settle accounts with Him, is He going to be pleased with your decisions?

Preach The Word

There is one final point that I want to mention. One of the reasons pastors continue to teach tithing, despite its blatantly unbiblical nature, is because they believe they have to have tithing in order to survive. They think that if they taught what the Bible actually said, giving would drop and they would be unable to make ends meet. In other words, the heresy of tithing brings in a lot of money and no one wants to jeopardize that cash flow.

But God has called us to preach the truth, not hide from it. Refusing to preach the truth because of its potential impact on your bottom line is a very, very dangerous stance for a pastor to take. Am I supposed to believe that you would gladly give your very life for the sake of the gospel, but you find it impossible to preach the truth because it might impact weekly offerings? If your sermons are based around their impact on the church's budget then there are many things you will never say for fear of offending people and driving them off. You will find yourself compromised, unable to preach the entire truth of the Word for fear of how people will respond. The only "hard truths" you will be willing to preach are the socially-acceptable ones that you believe people won't mind hearing.

And make no mistake – God really *does* require you preach the *entire* counsel of God, and to do so both in season (when people want to hear it) and out of season (when it won't go over well). Jesus never hesitated to do this, even though it drove many people away (for example, see John 6:60-66).

That is a very serious matter because God does hold pastors accountable for what they teach (James 3:1). The job of a pastor is to faithfully preach the entire counsel of God, no matter what the consequences. Pastors may fear what would happen if they were honest with their congregations about the Bible's teachings, but I assure you that the wrath of a congregation is a small thing compared to the wrath of an angry God. Each one of

us will stand before God and give an account of our lives. The day will come when the truth will be revealed:

1 Corinthians 4:5: "Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God."

When that day comes will you have praise of God, or will you instead find yourself explaining why you sold out your congregation for money? Do you actually trust Him enough to preach the entire Word and let come what may? The apostles preached the whole truth and were willing to die for it. What are you going to do?

Resource 1: Chapter Summary

Philippians

Philippians 1

- PAUL AND TIMOTHY, TO THE SAINTS AT PHILIPPI
- HE WHICH BEGAN A GOOD WORK IN YOU WILL PERFORM IT UNTIL THE DAY OF JESUS CHRIST
- PAUL'S IMPRISONMENT HAS FURTHERED THE GOSPEL
- TO LIVE IS CHRIST AND TO DIE IS GAIN
- PAUL DESIRES TO DEPART AND BE WITH CHRIST, BUT HE KNOWS THE CHURCH NEEDS HIM
- TO YOU IT IS GIVEN TO SUFFER FOR THE SAKE OF CHRIST

Philippians 2

- FULFILL MY JOY AND BE LIKEMINDED
- LET EACH ESTEEM OTHERS BETTER THAN THEMSELVES AND CARE ABOUT THE THINGS OF OTHERS
- CHRIST TOOK ON THE FORM OF A SERVANT; HE HUMBLING HIMSELF AND BECAME OBEIENT TO THE DEATH OF THE CROSS – WHEREFORE GOD HAS GIVEN HIM A NAME WHICH IS ABOVE EVERY NAME, THAT AT THE NAME OF JESUS EVERY KNEE SHOULD BOW
- WORK OUT YOUR OWN SALVATION WITH FEAR AND TREMBLING, FOR IT IS GOD WHICH WORKS IN YOU
- DO ALL THINGS WITHOUT MURMURING AND DISPUTING
- PAUL WILL SEND TIMOTHY TO THEM SHORTLY, AND HE HOPES TO COME AND SEE THEM HIMSELF
- PAUL THOUGHT IT NECESSARY TO SEND EPAPHRODITUS TO THEM

Philippians 3

- WE REJOICE IN CHRIST AND HAVE NO CONFIDENCE IN THE FLESH
- IF ANYONE WERE TO HAVE CONFIDENCE IN THE FLESH PAUL HAD REASON TO HAVE EVEN MORE, BUT WHAT THINGS WERE GAIN TO HIM HE COUNTED LOSS FOR CHRIST, SO THAT HE MAY WIN CHRIST AND BE FOUND IN HIM
- I DO NOT COUNT MYSELF TO HAVE APPREHENDED, BUT I PRESS TOWARD THE PRIZE OF THE HIGH CALLING OF GOD IN CHRIST JESUS
- MANY ARE THE ENEMIES OF THE CROSS OF CHRIST; THEIR END IS DESTRUCTION
- THE LORD JESUS CHRIST WILL CHANGE OUR VILE BODY SO THAT IT MAY BE FASHIONED LIKE HIS GLORIOUS BODY

Philippians 4

- STAND FAST IN THE LORD
- EUODIAS AND SYNTYCHE, BE OF THE SAME MIND IN THE LORD
- HELP THE WOMEN WHO LABORED WITH PAUL IN THE GOSPEL
- LET YOUR MODERATION BE KNOWN UNTO ALL MEN
- BE CAREFUL FOR NOTHING, BUT LET YOUR REQUESTS BE MADE KNOWN UNTO GOD
- WHATEVER THINGS ARE TRUE AND OF GOOD REPORT – IF THERE BE ANY VIRTUE OR PRAISE – THINK ON THESE THINGS
- I HAVE LEARNED TO BE CONTENT IN WHATEVER STATE I AM IN
- I CAN DO ALL THINGS THROUGH CHRIST WHICH STRENGTHENS ME

- PAUL PRAISES THE PHILIPPIANS FOR MEETING HIS FINANCIAL NEEDS AND SAYS GOD WILL SUPPLY ALL THEIR NEEDS
- ALL THE SAINTS SALUTE YOU, CHIEFLY THEY THAT ARE OF CAESAR'S HOUSEHOLD

Resource 3: The Teachings Of The Bible

Philippians 1

- This letter was written by Paul and Timothy (v1)
- Paul identified himself and Timothy as the servants of Jesus Christ; he did not emphasize his apostleship (v1)
- Jesus is the Christ (the Messiah) (v1)
- This letter was written to the saints (Christians) who lived at Philippi (v1)
- At the time of Paul, Philippi existed and there were Christians there (v1)
- Paul addressed this letter to the saints (Christians), bishops (elders), and deacons; it wasn't addressed to the pastor, because the role of pastor is not a Biblical role (the pastor wasn't the head of the church, he wasn't in charge, he didn't run things, and he wasn't the only one allowed to speak; the flock was cared for by the elders and deacons, not him) (v1)
- The church at Philippi consisted of saints (Christians), bishops, and elders; it did not consist of a building (v1)
- The church at Philippi had bishops (elders) (v1)
- The church at Philippi had deacons (v1)
- Paul prayed that God would bestow grace upon the Philippian church (v2)

- Paul prayed that God would bestow peace upon the Philippian church (v2)
- God is our Father (v2)
- God gives grace (v2)
- God gives peace (v2)
- Jesus is Lord (v2)
- Paul prayed that grace and peace would be given by God the Father and by the Lord Jesus Christ; he did not mention the Holy Spirit (perhaps because the Spirit points people to Christ) (v2)
- It is good to pray that God would give people grace (v2)
- It is good to pray that God would give people peace (v2)
- It is good to have grace (v2)
- It is good to have peace (v2)
- Paul thanked God for the existence of the Philippian church (v3)
- Paul gave God all the credit for the existence of the Philippian church; he believed that church was the work of God, and so he gave God thanks (v3)
- Churches exist because of God, not because of men (v3)
- It is good to thank God for the existence of godly churches (v3)
- When Paul thought about the Philippian church, he thanked God for them (v3)
- Paul prayed for the Philippian church (v4)

- Paul rejoiced over the Philippian church (v4)
- Paul's prayers for the Philippian church were joyful (v4)
- It is good to pray for churches (v4)
- It is good to pray for a church, even if the church is far away and you don't attend that church (v4)
- Paul rejoiced over the Philippian church because they accepted and believed the gospel (v5)
- Paul had fellowship with the Philippian church because they accepted and believed the gospel (v5)
- The gospel is a source of fellowship (v5)
- God has begun a good work in us (v6)
- God has started a good work in us, but He has not yet finished it (v6)
- God is the one who has begun a good work in us (v6)
- The good work that has begun in us was God's doing, not ours; Paul gives God all of the credit for it (v6)
- We should glorify God for our salvation and our sanctification, not ourselves (v6)
- God will continue the good work that He started in us until the day the Lord Jesus returns (the rapture) (v6)
- The day of the rapture is the day that God's work in us will be completed, and we will be fully mature (v6)
- God will surely finish the good work that He began in us (v6)
- We can be sure that the good work that has been started in us will be finished, because God is the one who started

it and God is the one who will finish it; it is entirely His doing, not our own, and does not depend on us in any way (v6)

- Paul was confident that the Philippian believers were genuine, and that God would continue to perfect them (v6)
- Paul wrote this letter while he was in prison (v7)
- Paul prayed for the Philippian church even though he was in prison (v7)
- Paul cared about the Philippian church and loved them even though he was in prison (v7)
- Paul had the Philippian church in his heart (v7)
- Paul wanted the Philippian church to know that he was confident in their salvation, and confident that God would continue to work in them (v7)
- Paul said that the saints of the Philippian church were partakers in his grace (v7)
- The Philippian church joined with Paul to defend the gospel (v7)
- The Philippian church joined with Paul to confirm the gospel (v7)
- It is good to defend the gospel (v7)
- Churches should defend the gospel (v7)
- Paul longed after the Philippian church with the love of Jesus (v8)
- God knew that Paul longed after the Philippian church (v8)

- God knew Paul's desires (and He knows ours as well) (v8)
- Paul had a deep love for the churches; he cared about them, he wrote to them, he tried to help them, and he wanted to visit them in person (v8)
- Paul prayed that the love of the Philippian church would continue to increase and abound (v9)
- Churches should be characterized by love (v9)
- The love of the church should abound (v9)
- The love of the church should grow over time (v9)
- Paul prayed that the love of the church would be rooted in knowledge, not ignorance or compromise or sin (v9)
- Churches should have knowledge (v9)
- Paul prayed that the love of the church would be rooted in sound judgment (v9)
- Churches should exercise judgment, even when showing love (v9)
- Churches are not called to be non-judgmental; instead they are called to exercise judgment (v9)
- Churches should approve things that are excellent (v10)
- Churches should exercise knowledge and judgment by taking care to only approve things that are excellent (v10)
- Churches should be sincere (v10)
- Churches should be blameless (without offense) (v10)
- Paul did not tell the church that as long as they didn't compromise anything related to the doctrines of salvation they were fine; instead the standard was to be blameless

and without offense in the sight of God; this means churches were to observe everything and leave nothing out (v10)

- Paul wanted the church to be faithful unto the Lord Jesus appeared (v10)
- Paul viewed Christianity as a race that we run until the Lord Jesus appears; at that point the race is over and the work is done (v10)
- The return of Jesus (the rapture) is the end point; it is the finish line (v10)
- In order for the church to be sincere, it must have a love that is grounded in knowledge and judgment, and it must only approve things that are excellent; that is the sort of sincerity that God is looking for (v10)
- If something is not excellent then the church should not approve it (v10)
- Paul wanted the Philippian church to be filled with the fruits of righteousness (v11)
- There are fruits of righteousness; those who are righteous will bear fruit (v11)
- The fruits of righteousness come from Jesus; they do not come from ourselves (v11)
- The fruits of righteousness are for the glory of God, not for our own glory (v11)
- The fruits of righteousness are for the praise of God, not for our own praise (v11)
- We bear fruit for the sake of God, not for ourselves (v11)

- Paul wanted the Philippian church to understand that his imprisonment had actually furthered the gospel; it hadn't hindered it (v12)
- Paul referred to the Philippian church as his brethren (v12)
- Paul didn't call the Philippian saints his "brothers and sisters"; instead he used the term "brethren"; that wasn't seen as sexist or inappropriate (v12)
- God used Paul's imprisonment to advance the gospel (v12)
- Being imprisoned does not always hinder the spread of the gospel (v12)
- The reason Paul was in prison was for the sake of the gospel (v13)
- Paul's imprisonment was manifested in the palace; the people of the palace knew that Paul was in prison because of the gospel (v13)
- Paul's imprisonment was manifested far beyond the palace; many people in many places knew that Paul was in prison because of the gospel (v13)
- Being imprisoned may advertise the gospel more widely than it had been advertised before (v13)
- Paul refers to other Christians as his brethren in the Lord (v14)
- Paul never refers to anyone as "pastor so-and-so" or "reverend so-and-so" or "father so-and-so"; there is no Biblical support for those titles; instead he calls them his brothers (v14)

- Because Paul was in prison, other people preached the gospel with greater boldness (v14)
- Because Paul was in prison, other people preached the gospel without fear (v14)
- It is good to preach the gospel with boldness (v14)
- It is good to preach the gospel without fear (v14)
- Some people preached Christ out of envy (v15)
- Some people preached Christ out of strife (v15)
- Some people preached Christ out of good will (v15)
- Some people preached Christ with bad motives, and some people preached Christ with good motives (v15)
- Not everyone who preaches Christ has good motives (v15)
- Some people did not preach Christ from a position of sincerity (v16)
- Some people preached Christ in order to afflict Paul as he was in prison (v16)
- There are some people who proclaim the truths of the gospel in order to hurt Christians and oppress them (v16)
- Some people preached Christ out of a position of love (v17)
- Paul viewed himself as a defender of the gospel; he believed he had a responsibility to defend it (v17)
- Some people understood that Paul was a defender of the gospel, and so they preached the gospel themselves (v17)
- Paul rejoiced when Christ was preached out of a position

of love and sincerity (v18)

- Paul rejoiced when Christ was preached from a position of envy and strife, because in that case Christ was still being preached (v18)
- Paul had no objections when Christ was preached out of bad motives; instead he rejoiced that Christ was being preached; the bad motives did not bother him (v18)
- Paul rejoiced when Christ was preached, even if it was being done in pretence (v18)
- Paul rejoiced when Christ was preached in truth (v18)
- It is good to preach Christ (v18)
- It is good to rejoice when Christ is preached (v18)
- Paul expected the Philippian church to pray for him (v19)
- Paul expected the prayers of the Philippian church to make a difference and help him (v19)
- Paul had confidence in the Spirit of Jesus (v19)
- Paul believed that the prayers of the Philippian church would help him remain faithful (v20)
- Paul believed that the supply of the Spirit of Jesus would help him remain faithful (v20)
- Paul earnestly expected that he would remain faithful (v20)
- Paul had hope that he would remain faithful (v20)
- Paul's desire was to remain faithful (v20)
- Paul's desire was that he would not be ashamed in anything (v20)

- Paul's desire was that he would remain bold (v20)
- Paul wanted Christ to be magnified by his life (v20)
- Paul wanted Christ to be magnified by his death (v20)
- Paul wanted to use his body to magnify Christ (v20)
- To live is Christ (v21)
- To die is gain (v21)
- For Christians, the point of living is to glorify Christ (v21)
- For Christians, dying is gain; death is not a loss, but is instead a source of gain (v21)
- Paul knew that he might live, or he might die (v22)
- It was difficult for Paul to decide if he wanted to continue to live, or if he wanted to die (v22)
- Paul knew that if he continued to live then he would labor and bear fruit, and he knew that was a good thing (v22)
- Paul's heart was on the things above (v22)
- Paul did not fear death; he did not see it as a negative thing, or as a loss (v22)
- Paul knew that even if he died he would continue to live; the question was whether he would continue to live in this world, in his fleshly and mortal body, or if he would die and depart this world (v22)
- Those who have died do not have a body of flesh (v22)
- Paul wanted to depart from this world and be with Christ, because that was far better than life in this world (v23)
- The reason that dying is gain for a Christian is because

departing and being with Christ is better than anything this world has to offer (v23)

- Those who have died are not experiencing "soul sleep", or unconsciousness until the resurrection; instead they are with Christ (v23)
- It is far better to be with Christ in Heaven than to be here (v23)
- Paul had a desire to depart from this world and be with Christ (v23)
- The reason Paul wanted to depart from this world was so he could be with Christ (v23)
- It was difficult for Paul to decide if he wanted to remain in this world, or if he wanted to depart it; this is because he knew that departing it was far better (v23)
- Paul knew that remaining alive was more useful to the Philippian church than departing and being with Christ (v24)
- Paul did not believe that going to Heaven would make him more useful to the Philippian church; instead he believed that in order to help them he had to remain alive in this world; this indicates that the living can help the saints, but the dead cannot (v24)
- Paul referred to living as abiding in the flesh; those who are living are in the flesh, and those who are dead have departed from this fleshly body and gone to be with Christ (where they do not have a body of flesh) (v24)
- Even though Paul wanted to depart and be with Christ, he knew that the churches needed him; he prioritized their needs ahead of his desires (v24)

- Paul never taught that the saints in Heaven are praying for the church, or interceding with Jesus on their behalf, or are doing anything for the good of the church; instead he taught that only the people who are living in this world could help the church, and that our prayers should only be to God, not to the departed saints (v24)
- It seems that the dead cannot do anything to help the living (v24)
- Paul believed that since the churches needed him, he would not be killed; he believed that he would continue to live in this world so that he could serve the churches and help them grow in the faith (v25)
- Paul believed that the reason he would continue to live was so that he could further the faith of the churches (v25)
- Paul spoke of the faith as a source of joy; he wanted to help the church grow in that joy (v25)
- Paul wanted to visit the Philippian church in person again (v26)
- Paul had apparently visited the Philippian church before he wrote this letter from prison, and he wanted to see them again (v26)
- Paul believed that his coming to the Philippian church would be a source of abundant rejoicing for them (v26)
- Paul had hope that God would free him from prison so that he could visit the churches (v26)
- Paul did not believe that his current imprisonment would end in death (v26)

- Paul wanted the conversation of the Philippian church to be appropriate for those who believed in the gospel (v27)
- Paul wanted the church to be unified in one spirit; this was true if he came to see them, or if he did not (v27)
- Paul wanted the church to be unified in one mind (v27)
- Paul wanted the church to strive together for the faith of the gospel (v27)
- Paul did not want the church to achieve unity through compromise or pragmatism; instead he wanted them to unify in the truth of the gospel, and to be unified because they were of one mind about it (v27)
- Paul wanted the Philippian church to have a reputation for being unified in one spirit, and for having one mind about the gospel (v27)
- The church needs to strive together (v27)
- The church needs to strive (v27)
- The thing that the church needs to be striving for is the gospel, not something else; Paul never even suggested that the church should be striving after some sort of social or environmental cause (v27)
- Paul did not say that the church should be striving for both the gospel and for other things as well; instead the focus of the church was to be on the gospel (v27)
- The gospel of Christ teaches unity - on spirit, one mind, one faith, one gospel (v27)
- Paul did not want the church to be terrified by their adversaries (v28)

- The Philippian church had adversaries (v28)
- The adversaries of the church should not make us afraid (v28)
- The reason the church should not be terrified of its adversaries is not because those adversaries aren't going to imprison or kill the saints; instead it is because to live is Christ and to die is gain (v28)
- Even though God has not promised to rescue us from our adversaries, He has told us to not be afraid of them (v28)
- The church should not be afraid (v28)
- The adversaries of the church are doomed to go into perdition; they are going to be cast into Hell (v28)
- The church is going to receive salvation; it will be saved, but its adversaries will not (v28)
- When the church is not afraid of its adversaries, that is a sign to those adversaries that they are going to go into perdition (v28)
- The world needs to see that the church is not afraid; that lack of fear is a sign to them from God (v28)
- God is the one who gives the church the ability to not be afraid of its adversaries (v28)
- The reason the Philippian church believed on Christ was because God gave them the grace to do so; their belief came from God (v29)
- Christians do not choose God; instead God chooses us, and gives us the grace to believe and have faith in Him (v29)

- The reason the Philippian church was suffering persecution was because that was God's will for them (v29)
- It was God's will for the Philippians to believe the gospel and be saved, and it was also God's will for them to suffer and be persecuted (v29)
- The Philippian church was suffering for the sake of Christ (v29)
- The Philippian church believed on Christ and suffered for Him as well (v29)
- Believing on Christ brought suffering into the life of the Philippian church (v29)
- God gives some people grace, so they might believe and be saved (v29)
- God does not give His grace to everyone (v29)
- Some Christians must suffer for the sake of Christ; this is from the hand of God (v29)
- God never promised that Christians wouldn't have to suffer; instead He said that some people would have to suffer (v29)
- Paul told the Philippian church that suffering was a part of Christianity; he did not hide that from them, and he also did not tell them there was something they could do to get out of it; instead he taught them that suffering was from the hand of God, and it was something they needed to endure, and in Paul's case it had furthered the gospel (v29)
- The Philippian church faced the same conflict that Paul

faced; Paul was persecuted, and they were as well (v30)

- The Philippian church had seen the suffering of Paul, and had heard about it; now they were experiencing it for themselves (v30)

[Last updated 10/18/2022]

Philippians 2

- There is consolation in Christ (v1)
- There is comfort in Christ (v1)
- There is love in Christ (v1)
- There is fellowship in the Spirit (v1)
- There is mercy in Christ (v1)
- Giving consolation to people is a good thing (v1)
- Comforting people is a good thing (v1)
- Fellowship is a good thing (v1)
- Mercy is a good thing (v1)
- The church should give consolation to those who need it (v1)
- The church should comfort those who need it (v1)
- People within the church should have fellowship with one another (v1)
- The Spirit is the source of fellowship (v1)

- The church should be characterized by mercy (v1)
- Paul earnestly desired that the church be likeminded (v2)
- Paul took joy in the likemindedness of churches (v2)
- People in the church should not be at odds with one another; instead they should be likeminded (v2)
- Paul did not desire a unity that was based on pragmatism, or the lowest common denominator; instead he sought a unity that was based on everyone having the same mind (v2)
- It is very important for churches to be unified; that unity needs to come from everyone having the same mind, not everyone agreeing to disagree (v2)
- People within the church need to have the same love (v2)
- People within the church need to be of one accord (v2)
- There should not be strife in churches (v3)
- Christians should not do things through strife (v3)
- Christians should not do things to glorify themselves (v3)
- Christians should be humble (v3)
- Christians should esteem other people as being better than themselves (v3)
- Christians should not seek to glorify themselves (v3)
- Christians should not be putting themselves above others, or thinking that they are better than other people (v3)
- Christians should care about one another (v4)

- Christians should be aware of the problems of other people who are within the church, and should do what they can to help them (v4)
- Christians must not ignore the problems that are going on in the lives of other Christians; instead they should bear one another's burdens (v4)
- God has given Christians the responsibility of caring for one another (v4)
- Christians must not ignore what is going on in the church, and must not simply focus on their own problems (v4)
- Christians should seek to have the same mind as Jesus (v5)
- Jesus is the Christ (the Messiah) (v5)
- Jesus is divine (v6)
- Jesus is equal to God (v6)
- It was not wrong for Jesus to say that He was equal to God (v6)
- Jesus told people that He was equal to God (v6)
- Even though Jesus was God, He made Himself of no reputation (v7)
- Even though Jesus was God, He took upon Himself the form of a servant (v7)
- Even though Jesus was God, He came into this world and took upon Himself the likeness of men (v7)
- Even though Jesus was God, He humbled Himself (v7)
- Christians should follow the example of Jesus; just as He

humbled Himself and took on the form of a servant, so we should as well (v7)

- Jesus humbled Himself (v8)
- Jesus was God, but He became a man; (however, He did not stop being God) (v8)
- Jesus was obedient to God the Father (v8)
- Jesus was obedient to death (v8)
- Jesus died on the cross (v8)
- Jesus truly died on the cross; He did not just appear to die (v8)
- The death of Jesus on the cross was an act of obedience (v8)
- Jesus humbled Himself to such a great degree that He went to the cross and died; Christians should likewise humble themselves and obey the Lord (v8)
- God has highly exalted Jesus (v9)
- The reason God highly exalted Jesus was because He humbled Himself and was obedient to death (v9)
- God has given Jesus a name that is above every name (v9)
- Jesus humbled Himself, and God exalted Him for that (v9)
- If we want God to exalt us then we must humble ourselves and be obedient to Him (v9)
- At the name of Jesus, every knee will bow (v10)
- At the name of Jesus, everything in Heaven will bow (v10)
- At the name of Jesus, everything in the earth will bow

(v10)

- At the name of Jesus, everything under the earth will bow (v10)
- There are things in Heaven (v10)
- There are things in earth (v10)
- There are things under the earth (v10)
- There is nothing (and no one) that will not bow down to Jesus (v10)
- One day even those who are not Christians will bow down to Jesus; (however, this will not save them) (v10)
- Every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord (v11)
- Jesus is Lord (v11)
- One day every single person will confess that Jesus is Lord; this includes all atheists and pagans, and all those who hate God (v11)
- Although the wicked rage against the Lord in this world, the day is coming when they will be forced to bow down to Him and confess that He is Lord (v11)
- When everyone bows down to Jesus and confesses that He is Lord, God the Father will be glorified (v11)
- Paul calls the Philippian church "beloved"; he refers to them with great affection, and this is not seen as inappropriate (v12)
- Christians should be affectionate to one another (v12)
- The Philippian church was obedient when Paul was with them (v12)

- The Philippian church was obedient when Paul was not with them (v12)
- The church needs to obey the Lord (v12)
- We must work out our own salvation with fear; we need to fear the Lord and seek to obey Him, and humble ourselves and walk in His ways (v12)
- We must work out our own salvation with trembling; we must tremble before God and obey His commands, and not dismiss Him and live as we please (v12)
- Paul says that we must work out our own salvation, but he also says that God is the one who works in us; that means we need to strive to be obedient, but at the same time God is working in us to make us obedient (v12)
- Paul does not say that we can simply do nothing while God works within us; instead he tells us to fear the Lord and actively seek to obey God and do what is right (v12)
- Although we are not saved by our works, God does call those who are saved to tremble before Him and to do good works; we are not called to sit around and do nothing (v12)
- God works in us; He is actively working in the lives of Christians (v13)
- God works His will in us; He is carrying out His will in our life, and doing as He pleases in our life (v13)
- We can seek God with confidence because we know that God is working in us (v13)
- God has not abandoned us to try to live a Christian life as best we can, on our own; instead He is actively working

within us (v13)

- Our lives are in the hands of God; He is actively involved in our life (v13)
- Christians must not murmur (complain) (v14)
- Murmuring (complaining) is bad (v14)
- Christians must avoid having disputes with one another; the way to do this is to all be of one mind, not by compromise and pragmatism (v14)
- Christians should be characterized by love, not by strife and disputes and arguments (v14)
- It is bad for a church to have disputes (v14)
- A church that has disputes is not blameless in the sight of God (v14)
- The church must be blameless (v15)
- Paul does not say that the church should get the major things right, or seek to be pretty good; instead the standard is to be blameless (v15)
- Paul did not think it was unreasonable to say that the church needed to be blameless; he did not think that this was a ridiculous standard that was obviously impossible for a church to meet; he also never said that since it was impossible to be blameless, churches should just do the best they could and that would be fine (v15)
- The church must be harmless (v15)
- The church must not do harm (v15)
- Christians are the sons of God (v15)

- The people who are the sons of God are Christians, not pagans (v15)
- Paul refers to Christians as the sons of God, not the sons and daughters of God; this is not seen as sexist or rude (v15)
- Christians must strive to be blameless; this means being obedient and faithful in all things, not just a few things (or the most important things) (v15)
- Christians must live lives that are godly, and who do not need to be rebuked; Christians must not lead lives of sin and depravity (v15)
- The standard that God has set is one of being blameless, and without rebuke; He requires faithfulness and obedience in all things; there are no areas where faithfulness and obedience are optional, or are not important (v15)
- Christians live in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation (v15)
- Christians must seek to be blameless while living in the midst of a perverse nation (v15)
- Christians must not seek to be like the perverse nation around them; instead we must be wholly different (v15)
- Christians must shine as lights in the world; that means Christians must be different from the world, and must be a contrast to the world, and must live the sort of life where the world can see that difference (v15)
- The world is a dark and perverse place (v15)
- Christians need to shine their light into the world; that

light must not be hidden, for we are the light of the world (v15)

- Christians have the word of life; (this is a reference to the gospel) (v16)
- The gospel is the word of life (v16)
- Christians need to shine the light of the gospel into the world, for the gospel is the word of life (v16)
- The world needs the light of the gospel, for it is in darkness (v16)
- If a church has remained faithful then Paul will rejoice over that church at the rapture, when the Lord returns (v16)
- Churches must remain faithful until the Lord returns; (this is a reference to the rapture) (v16)
- The rapture is depicted as the finish line for the race that the church is running (v16)
- At the rapture, there will be rejoicing over churches that remained faithful (v16)
- Paul did not want to labor in vain; he did not want to build up a faithless and worthless church (v16)
- Paul believed it was extremely important for churches to remain faithful until the Lord returned, and to be found faithful in that day (v16)
- Paul frequently referred to the return of Christ at the rapture; he did not avoid the subject of end times (v16)
- Paul was not opposed to the idea of becoming a martyr (v17)

- Paul said that if he had to be martyr for the sake of the church then he would find joy in that (v17)
- Paul put the welfare of the church above his own life; he was willing to die for the sake of the church (v17)
- Paul rejoiced with the Philippian church (v17)
- Paul looked at martyrdom as a sacrifice where he was being offered (v17)
- Paul did not think that the prospect of being a martyr was unfair, or that it was cruel of God to put him through that; instead Paul was willing to die for the sake of the church (v17)
- Paul saw martyrdom as a way to strengthen the faith of the church (v17)
- Paul saw martyrdom as an act of service to the church (v17)
- The Philippian church had joy in the midst of persecution (v18)
- Paul had joy in the midst of persecution (v18)
- Paul rejoiced with the church, and the church rejoiced with Paul (v18)
- Both Paul and the Philippian church saw persecution (and even martyrdom) as a source of joy (v18)
- When Paul wrote this letter, Timothy was not in prison (v19)
- Paul was shortly going to send Timothy to the Philippian church (v19)
- The reason Paul was sending Timothy to the Philippian

church was to find out how they were doing (v19)

- Paul wanted to know how the church was doing (v19)
- In order to find out how the church was doing, he wanted to send someone to visit them in person (v19)
- Paul believed that visiting churches in person was very important (v19)
- Even though Paul was in prison, and even though he was being persecuted, he wanted to know the state of the Philippian church (v19)
- If the church was doing well then Paul would take comfort in that, even though he was in prison and being persecuted (v19)
- Paul cared about the state of churches (v19)
- Timothy had the same mind as Paul, in that he naturally cared for the churches the same way that Paul did (v20)
- Paul said that Timothy was the only person he knew who cared for the Philippian church as much as he did (v20)
- Timothy naturally cared about the state of the Philippian church (v20)
- The reason Paul chose Timothy for this trip was because of how much Timothy cared about the state of the Philippian church (v20)
- When Paul wanted to know how the Philippian church was doing, he sent someone to them who cared deeply about the church (v20)
- It is good to care for the wellbeing of churches (v20)
- People seek after their own things; they are interested in

themselves (v21)

- People do not seek after the things that pertain to Christ (v21)
- Christians should seek after the things of Christ, instead of just the things that pertain to their own life (v21)
- Timothy was unique because he sought after the things of Christ; that's why Paul sent him on trips to the churches (v21)
- There are things that pertain to Christ (v21)
- The Philippian church already knew about Timothy; they are familiar with him (v22)
- Paul compared Timothy to his son, and himself to his father; he saw Timothy as his son in the faith, and he as his father in the faith (v22)
- Timothy served Paul in the faith the way a son serves his father (v22)
- Timothy served with Paul in the gospel (v22)
- The proof of Timothy's sincerity and love were his actions; it was the way he worked with Paul in the gospel (v22)
- Paul labored in the gospel (v22)
- Timothy labored in the gospel (v22)
- Paul was planning on sending Timothy as soon as he found out what was going to become of him (v23)
- When Paul wrote this letter he didn't know what was going to happen to him (v23)

- Even though Paul didn't know what was going to happen to him, this letter was not written from a point of despair or hopelessness or fear (v23)
- Paul hoped that he would be set free (v24)
- Paul hoped that he would soon be able to visit the Philippian church in person (v24)
- Paul wanted to visit the Philippian church in person (v24)
- Paul believed that his freedom was up to the Lord; God had the power to set him free (v24)
- Paul trusted in the Lord (v24)
- When Paul wrote this letter he had already sent Epaphroditus to the Philippian church (v25)
- Paul referred to Epaphroditus as his brother in the faith (v25)
- Paul referred to Epaphroditus as his fellow laborer in the faith (v25)
- Paul referred to Epaphroditus as his fellow soldier in the faith (v25)
- Paul said that Epaphroditus was the messenger of the Philippian church (v25)
- Epaphroditus ministered to the needs of Paul (v25)
- Even though Paul was in prison, there were people who helped him and ministered to his needs (v25)
- Epaphroditus had been sick (v26)
- The Philippian church had heard that Epaphroditus had been sick (v26)

- It seems that Paul had not been able to heal Epaphroditus (v26)
- Epaphroditus was full of heaviness because he knew the Philippian church had heard about his illness; what upset him was not that he had been sick, but that the church had heard about his illness (v26)
- Epaphroditus longed to visit the Philippian church (v26)
- Epaphroditus nearly died from his illness (v27)
- God had mercy on Epaphroditus and healed him (v27)
- Paul does not say that he healed Epaphroditus; it seems that Paul had nothing to do with his recovery (v27)
- Paul was grateful that God healed Epaphroditus (v27)
- God's healing of Epaphroditus was an act of mercy toward him (v27)
- God's healing of Epaphroditus was an act of mercy toward Paul (v27)
- If Epaphroditus had died then Paul would have had sorrow upon sorrow, but God was merciful and healed Epaphroditus (v27)
- Sometimes when God heals a person, that is an act of mercy toward someone else (who would be filled with sorrow and greatly troubled if that person died) (v27)
- Paul did not believe that God owed healing to Epaphroditus, or that it was natural to expect God to heal him; instead he saw it as an act of mercy (v27)
- Epaphroditus had already been sent to the Philippian church (v28)

- When Epaphroditus reached the Philippian church, the church was going to rejoice (v28)
- When Epaphroditus reached the Philippian church and they saw him again, Paul would be less sorrowful (v28)
- Paul was sorrowful (v28)
- Paul told the Philippian church to receive Epaphroditus in the Lord with all gladness (v29)
- Paul told the Philippian church to hold Epaphroditus in esteem (v29)
- The reason Epaphroditus nearly died was because of his labor for Christ (v30)
- The reason Epaphroditus nearly died was because he was trying to meet the needs of Paul (v30)
- The reason Epaphroditus was trying to meet the needs of Paul was because the Philippian church had not met them; since the church had done nothing to help Paul, Epaphroditus stepped in and nearly died as a result of it (v30)
- The illness of Epaphroditus, and his close brush with death, was actually the fault of the Philippian church; Epaphroditus was doing the work that they had neglected to do (v30)
- Epaphroditus worked without regard for his life, in order to meet the needs of Paul (v30)
- The Philippian church had not been meeting Paul's needs (v30)
- Although Paul did not condemn the Philippian church for not meeting his needs, he did tell them that their inaction

almost got Epaphroditus killed (v30)

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Philippians 3

- Paul once again refers to the members of the Philippian church as his brothers in Christ (v1)
- Christians should rejoice in the Lord (v1)
- Christians should be characterized by rejoicing (v1)
- Paul did not consider it grievous to write this letter to the church (v1)
- Paul wrote this letter to the church in order to protect them and keep them safe (v1)
- The things Paul said in his letter seem to be the same things he told them in person the last time he visited them (v1)
- Christians should beware of homosexuals (v2)
- Christians should beware of evil workers (v2)
- Christians should beware of those who teach that people should be circumcised (v2)
- Homosexuals are dangerous to Christians (v2)
- The church should be treating homosexuals as a source of great danger, not as fellow workers in Christ (v2)
- Paul told the church exactly what to beware of; he did not give vague warnings (v2)

- The leadership of churches need to warn people in very clear terms about dangers that can harm them (v2)
- Those who teach obedience to the Mosaic Law are dangerous (v2)
- Those who worship God in the spirit are the true circumcision (v3)
- Being circumcised in the flesh does not please God; He instead seeks those who worship Him in the spirit (v3)
- It is not an advantage to obey the Mosaic Law; that is not what God is looking for (v3)
- It is not an advantage for Christians to be circumcised (v3)
- God seeks those who worship Him in the spirit (v3)
- Christians should rejoice in Jesus (v3)
- Jesus is the Christ (the Messiah) (v3)
- Christians must have no confidence in the flesh; instead our confidence (and rejoicing) is in Jesus (v3)
- The flesh does not save us (v3)
- Our help and strength does not come from the flesh (v3)
- Paul had many reasons to have confidence in the flesh (v4)
- Even though Paul had reasons to be confident in the flesh, he was not; instead he put his confidence in Christ (v4)
- Paul had more reasons to be confident in the flesh than other people, and yet he didn't do that (v4)
- It is bad to trust in the flesh (v4)

- Paul was circumcised (v5)
- Paul was circumcised on the eighth day (v5)
- Paul was an Israelite (v5)
- Paul was from the tribe of Benjamin (v5)
- Paul was a Pharisee (v5)
- Paul was an Israelite, and yet he did not trust in that to save him (v5)
- Paul once followed the rules of the Pharisees, and yet he did not trust in that to save him (v5)
- Paul was once zealous for keeping the Mosaic Law (v6)
- Paul was so zealous for the Mosaic Law that he persecuted the church (v6)
- Paul once persecuted the church (v6)
- Paul kept the Mosaic Law; from the standpoint of the Mosaic Law he was blameless, and yet that did not save him (v6)
- Even though Paul kept the Mosaic Law, he did not trust in that to save him (v6)
- Being a Pharisee was a gain to Paul in the society of ancient Israel, but he counted that as a loss for Christ (v7)
- Keeping the Mosaic Law was a loss for Christ; that is not what God seeks (v7)
- Persecuting the church was a loss for Christ (v7)
- The things that Paul was once zealous for ended up being a loss for Christ (v7)

- Seeing righteousness from the Mosaic Law was a loss for Christ; that is not the path to righteousness (v7)
- Paul's conversion to Christianity cost him everything; he lost everything that he once had (v8)
- Paul counted everything that he once had as dung; he cast all of it away as worthless for the sake of Christ (v8)
- Paul was willing to give up everything for the sake of Christ (v8)
- Paul did not regret becoming a Christian, even though it cost him everything that he once had (v8)
- Jesus is Lord (v8)
- It is better to have Christ than to have the riches and honor of this world (v8)
- The knowledge of Christ is an excellent thing; it is better to have that than any of the material things of this world (v8)
- Paul's conversion to Christianity brought great suffering into his life; it did not make his life circumstances better, or increase his wealth (v8)
- The righteousness that comes from keeping the Law is worthless in the sight of God; it cannot save us (v9)
- The only righteousness that can save us is that which is obtained through Christ (v9)
- Saving righteousness comes through the faith of Christ; in other words, it comes from Christ's own faith (v9)
- We should seek the righteousness that comes from Christ, not the righteousness that comes from keeping

the Law (v9)

- Saving righteousness comes from God, not from our own works (v9)
- Saving righteousness comes by faith, not by obedience to the Law (v9)
- It is better to lose everything and be found in Him, than to gain this world and be cast into Hell (v9)
- Christ is worth the loss of all things (v9)
- Paul wanted to know Christ (v10)
- Knowing Christ is worth losing everything else (v10)
- It is better to know Christ than to have all the riches of this world; knowing Christ is greater riches (v10)
- Even though Paul lost everything and was in prison when he wrote this letter, he didn't regret anything; he felt that he made a good trade, for knowing Christ is better (v10)
- Paul wanted to partake in the power of Christ's resurrection (v10)
- In order to partake of the resurrection we must go through Christ by faith; Christ is the only way (v10)
- The cost of serving Christ may be very high, and may cost us everything (as it did Paul), but Christ is the only path to the resurrection (v10)
- Paul wanted to partake in the sufferings of Christ; he wanted to have fellowship with Him through suffering (v10)
- Paul viewed his sufferings as a way to gain fellowship with Christ (v10)

- Paul saw value in suffering as a means of drawing closer to Christ (v10)
- Christ suffered greatly (v10)
- Christ died; He did not just appear to die, but He actually died (v10)
- Christ rose again; the resurrection truly happened (v10)
- Christians have been made conformable until the death of Christ; the old man has been crucified with Him, and we have been made new (v10)
- The only way to be saved is by being made conformable to the death of Christ; our old man must die so that we can be made new (v10)
- Paul was willing to lose everything in order to gain the resurrection (v11)
- Eternal life is a good thing (v11)
- Eternal life is so valuable that it is worth losing everything else in order to obtain (v11)
- There are some who will participate in the resurrection, but there are others who will not; Jesus will not raise everyone from the dead on the day of the rapture (v11)
- There is going to be a physical resurrection of the saints (v11)
- The resurrection was very important to Paul; it was why he was willing to suffer so much (v11)
- The only way to obtain the resurrection is by faith through Christ; it cannot be obtained through the righteousness that comes from obeying the Mosaic Law

(v11)

- Christ is the only way to obtain the resurrection; there are no other paths (v11)
- Paul did not want to act like he had already obtained the resurrection; instead he wanted to keep running the race and keep striving to be faithful (v12)
- Paul did not agree with the modern attitude of "Since I'm saved and going to Heaven, I can do whatever I want"; instead he pressed on (v12)
- Paul did not claim to be already perfect; instead he continually sought to become more faithful to God (v12)
- We should not use our salvation, and the promise of everlasting life, as an excuse for sin; instead we must try to grow in faithfulness (v12)
- Christians are called to seek perfection; instead of accepting our sins we must fight against them and seek to grow in obedience to God (v12)
- God's standard is perfection; He wants us to be spotless and blameless (v12)
- Paul wanted to apprehend the resurrection (v12)
- Christ is the one who apprehended Paul; Christ is the reason that Paul was saved (v12)
- Even though Paul understood that Jesus is the one who saved him, and that Jesus would one day resurrect him, Paul did not want to take that for granted; instead he wanted to continually strive to be a better servant of Jesus (v12)
- Paul did not believe that since he was saved, he didn't

have to worry about being faithful and could live however he wanted; he refused to use his salvation as an excuse to sin, or to be lazy, or to stop seeking after God (v13)

- Even though Paul understood that we are not saved by keeping the Law, he still wanted to obey the Lord and grow in faithfulness; he saw enormous value in faithfulness, even though being faithful to Jesus cost him everything (v13)
- Paul did not believe that the race was over as soon as people became a Christian; instead he taught that the race lasts our entire lives (v13)
- Paul did not want to give any attention to his old life, and who he used to be; instead he wanted to focus on the race that was still ahead of him (v13)
- Paul did not believe the race was over; instead he pressed on (v14)
- Jesus has given a calling to Christians; He has called us to pursue righteousness, to walk in His ways, and to shine the light of the gospel in this world (v14)
- Paul passionately pursued the calling that God gave him; he pressed on in spite of great suffering (v14)
- The calling that God has given Christians is a high calling; it is one that we must not neglect (v14)
- Paul believed that there was a prize waiting for those who were faithful to the high calling of God, and he wanted to win it (v14)
- Paul referred to Christians as those who are perfect; this is not because we perfectly keep the Law, but because of the righteousness that comes through Christ by faith

(v15)

- Christians must have the same mindset as Paul; we must press on and be faithful to the high calling of God (v15)
- Only Christians can be faithful to the calling of God (v15)
- Paul believed that God would reveal to Christians their need to be faithful to the high calling that He had given them (v15)
- Regardless of whatever we have already attained, we need to press on; we cannot stop running the race (v16)
- All Christians need to be faithful to the high calling of God; we must all live by that same rule, and seek after the same thing (v16)
- There is no point in the Christian life when we can slack off and pursue something other than the high calling that God has given us (v16)
- Paul wanted the Philippian church to follow after his example (v17)
- Paul wanted the Philippian church to take note of those who followed his example, and to look to them as examples as well (v17)
- Christians should follow the example of those who are faithful to Christ (v17)
- It is good for Christians to have examples of faithfulness (v17)
- Paul did not say that the church should only follow his example; instead he wanted them to follow the example of those who lived faithfully (v17)

- Those who are faithful should serve as examples to others (v17)
- It is not wrong to look to other people as examples of faithfulness (v17)
- There are many people who are the enemies of the cross of Christ; they object to the cross, and hate it (v18)
- Paul seems to be saying that there are many people within the church who were actually enemies of the gospel (v18)
- Paul warned the church about false converts in their midst who were the enemies of the gospel (v18)
- Paul wanted the church to be on guard against those in their midst who hated the gospel (v18)
- Paul told the Philippian church many times about the dangers of false converts (v18)
- It is very important for the church leadership to warn about false converts, and to protect the congregation from them (v18)
- False converts are very dangerous (v18)
- Those who hate the gospel are very dangerous to the church (v18)
- Even though Paul had warned the church of false converts many times in the past, he warned them again in this letter (v18)
- Paul warned against false converts with weeping; he gave them this warning with tears (v18)
- It is a terrible thing to be an enemy of the cross of Christ

(v18)

- Those who are an enemy of the cross of Christ are dangerous (v18)
- All those who are enemies of the gospel will be destroyed; their end is destruction (v19)
- Those who are enemies of the cross of Christ will face destruction; their path leads only to Hell (v19)
- Those who are enemies of the gospel have made their belly (their desires) their God (v19)
- It is important to understand that those who are opposed to the gospel are slaves to their own desires; instead of serving God, they are serving their own belly (v19)
- Those who are enemies of the gospel take glory in something that is actually a source of shame; the thing they are glorying in is shameful (v19)
- Those who are enemies of the gospel are carnally minded; they seek after earthly things, not the things of God (v19)
- It is a terrible thing to take glory in something that God views as shameful (v19)
- The world will take glory in terrible things; however, we must reject their values and instead see things from God's perspective (v19)
- It is a terrible thing to be earthly minded; we must press on toward our high calling, and not seek after carnal things (v19)
- We must not allow our carnal desires to be our God; instead we must count all things as loss for Christ (v19)

- The thing that we serve and submit to and obey is our God; since these false converts submitted to their carnal desires, those desires were their God (v19)
- Paul had nothing positive to say about those who hated the gospel; instead he warned that they were dangerous and were going to be destroyed, and that their motives were carnal and wicked (v19)
- None of the apostles ever painted a good picture of a false teacher; instead the apostles warned about them and said they were both evil and dangerous, and were headed to everlasting destruction (v19)
- The conversation (manner of living) of Christians is in Heaven (v20)
- Christians should desire Heavenly things, not earthly things (v20)
- Christians should live as citizens of Heaven, not citizens of this world (v20)
- Christians should follow after righteousness instead of pursuing sinful desires (v20)
- The focus of Christians should be Heaven, not earth (v20)
- Jesus is in Heaven (v20)
- Jesus is not dead; instead He is in Heaven (v20)
- One day Jesus is going to return to this world; (this is a reference to the rapture) (v20)
- Jesus is our Savior (v20)
- Jesus is our Lord (v20)
- Our Savior, Jesus, is going to come to us from Heaven

(v20)

- Paul expected the church to be actively looking for the return of Jesus (v20)
- Paul repeatedly referred to the rapture and the return of Jesus in his letters; he never discouraged anyone from talking about it, he didn't say the subject was a distraction, and he never discouraged people from studying end times prophecy; instead he taught that it was a very important topic and was a source of great hope for the church (v20)
- Paul called our current physical body a vile body (v21)
- Our current physical body is vile in comparison to the one that Jesus will give us at the rapture (v21)
- When Jesus returns (at the rapture) He will change our physical body into something different (v21)
- When Jesus returns, He will change our physical body into one that is like His glorious body (v21)
- The Bible does not say that Jesus will give us a different body; instead it teaches that Jesus will change the body that we currently have (v21)
- The body that Christians will be given at the resurrection will be like the one that Jesus had when He was resurrected (v21)
- It is not the destiny of Christians to live as disembodied spirits in Heaven for all of eternity; instead Jesus will raise us from the dead and transform our physical body into something much better (v21)
- There is going to be a physical resurrection of the saints

(v21)

- God has promised a new body to the saints (v21)
- Jesus is going to subdue all things unto Himself (v21)
- Jesus is the one who is going to give us our resurrection body; it will be done by His power (v21)
- Jesus has the power to subdue all things unto Himself (v21)
- The resurrection is part of Christ's work to subdue all things unto Himself (v21)
- The rebellion of the wicked will not last forever; one day Christ will subdue all things unto Himself, and all rebellion against Him will be over forever (v21)
- The resurrection body of Jesus is glorious (v21)
- The body that Jesus will give us when He raises us up from the dead will be glorious (v21)

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Philippians 4

- Paul calls the members of the Philippian church dearly beloved (v1)
- Paul did not think it was inappropriate to show great affection to the saints (v1)
- Paul told the Philippian church that he longed for them (v1)

- Paul told the Philippian church that they were his joy (v1)
- Paul told the Philippian church that they were his crown (v1)
- It is not wrong to show great affection to the saints (v1)
- It is not wrong to long for the saints (v1)
- It is not wrong to take joy in the saints (v1)
- A godly church is a crown (v1)
- It is not wrong to tell the saints that you take great joy in them, and you long for them (v1)
- Paul said that since the Lord is coming for us, and since there is a resurrection ahead, we should stand fast in the Lord (v1)
- Christians must stand fast in the Lord (v1)
- Paul did not teach that since we're going to Heaven we can live as we please; instead he said that since the Lord is coming, we must stand fast (v1)
- Paul called the Philippian church "dearly beloved" twice in the same verse (v1)
- The fact that the Lord is coming should drive us to obedience and faithfulness (v1)
- Euodias was a member of the Philippian church (v2)
- Syntyche was a member of the Philippian church (v2)
- Apparently Euodias and Syntyche were not in agreement with one another (v2)
- Paul told Euodias and Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord (v2)

- When Euodias and Syntyche had disagreements, Paul didn't tell them to compromise or find the lowest common denominator, or that they should major on the majors and minor on the minors; instead he told them to be of the same mind in the Lord (v2)
- It is not good for Christians to have disagreements (v2)
- Disagreements among Christians need to be resolved (v2)
- The way disagreements in the churches should be resolved is by being of the same mind in the Lord; they should not be resolved through compromise or pragmatism, or by disregarding doctrine or ignoring the Scriptures (v2)
- Christians should be of the same mind in the Lord; this means accepting the doctrines and commandments of the Scriptures, and having the same mind (interpretation) about them (v2)
- When Euodias and Syntyche disagreed, Paul did not tell them to agree to disagree, or to live with their disagreements; instead he told them to have the same mind (v2)
- Paul sought church unity that was based in everyone having the same mind, and everyone looking at the things of God the same way (v2)
- There were women who labored with Paul in the gospel (v3)
- Paul wanted the Philippian church to help the women who were helping Paul spread the gospel (v3)
- Clement was laboring with Paul in the gospel (v3)

- Paul wanted the Philippian church to help Clement (v3)
- It is good for churches to help those who are laboring in the gospel (v3)
- Besides Clement and the women, there were others who were also helping Paul; the apostle wanted the Philippian church to help them as well (v3)
- Paul called those who were helping him in the gospel his "fellowlabourers" (v3)
- The book of life is a real thing (v3)
- There are names in the book of life (v3)
- The names of Paul's fellow laborers are in the book of life (v3)
- There is an implication that all those whose names are in the book of life are saved (v3)
- Even though Paul was in prison, he tried to get help for the people who were helping him; he was concerned about the needs of others (v3)
- Christians should rejoice in the Lord (v4)
- Christians should always rejoice in the Lord (v4)
- Christians should be characterized by rejoicing (v4)
- Even though Paul was in prison, and was being persecuted for his faith in Jesus, he rejoiced and he told others to rejoice with him (v4)
- Christians should practice moderation (restraint) (v5)
- Christians should live in such a way that other people can see how they are living (v5)

- The moderation (restraint) of Christians should be made known unto all men (v5)
- Paul expected the virtuous life of Christians to be visible to everyone, including those who are outside the church (v5)
- The Lord is at hand; although He is not visibly present with us, He is near us and is not far from us (v5)
- Christians should pray to God (v6)
- Christians should make supplications to God (v6)
- Christians should make their requests known to God (v6)
- When Christians pray, they are making requests, not demands; God may grant them or He may not (v6)
- When Christians pray, their prayers should include thanksgiving (v6)
- When Christians cry out to God and make supplications to Him, their supplications should include thanksgiving (v6)
- Paul said that we should make our requests known to God, but he did not say that God would give us everything we ask for (v6)
- Instead of being full of worries and cares, we should make our requests known to God (v6)
- The antidote to being full of worry and care is to bring our requests to God (v6)
- When Christians are full of worries and cares, they should pray; although God may not grant our requests, He will give us peace (v7)
- God is the one who gives us peace (v7)

- The peace of God passes all understanding (v7)
- The peace of God will keep (protect) our hearts (v7)
- The peace of God will keep (protect) our minds (v7)
- Christians need peace (v7)
- Our hearts are kept through Christ (v7)
- Our minds are kept through Christ (v7)
- Christ is the source of our protection (v7)
- Paul once again refers to the members of the Philippian church as "brethren" (v8)
- Christians should think on whatever things are true (v8)
- Christians should think on whatever things are honest (v8)
- Christians should think on whatever things are just (v8)
- Christians should think on whatever things are pure (v8)
- Christians should think on whatever things are lovely (v8)
- Christians should think on whatever things are of good report (v8)
- Christians should think on virtuous things (v8)
- Christians should think on praiseworthy things (v8)
- Christians should think (v8)
- Paul wanted the Philippian church to think on good and virtuous and pure things (v8)
- Christians should be careful about the sort of things they think about (v8)

- Paul does not mock the Philippian church for thinking about things that are pure and lovely; instead he encourages it (v8)
- Paul wanted the church to practice the things they had learned from him (v9)
- Paul wanted the church to practice the things they had received from him (v9)
- Paul wanted the church to practice the things they had heard from him (v9)
- Paul wanted the church to follow his example (v9)
- Paul was very clear that the teachings he had given to the church were binding, and the church needed to follow them; obedience to his words and teachings was not optional, and his words and teachings could not be disregarded (v9)
- Paul said that if the church obeyed his teachings then God would be with them; this implies that if they rejected his teachings then God would not be with them (v9)
- It is a very serious matter to disregard the teachings of Paul and go another way (v9)
- If we want God to be with us then we need to obey Him (v9)
- The Philippian church was taking care of Paul's needs (v10)
- Previously the Philippian church had not taken care of Paul's needs, but now that had changed (v10)
- Previously the Philippian church had been concerned about Paul, but they had lacked the opportunity to help

him (v10)

- Paul rejoiced that the Philippian church was helping to meet his needs (v10)
- There may be times when people want to help, but lack the opportunity to do so (v10)
- When a church takes care of the needs of a suffering saint, that is a cause for rejoicing (v10)
- Paul had learned to be content in whatever state he found himself (v11)
- Even though Paul was in prison, he was content (v11)
- Paul rejoiced that the Philippian church was helping him, but that was not because he wanted their stuff; he had learned to be content with what he had (v11)
- It is good to be content with whatever state we are in (v11)
- Contentment is something we need to learn (v11)
- Paul was content when his life circumstances brought him very low (v12)
- Paul was content when his life abounded with great blessings (v12)
- Christians should be content regardless of their circumstances; we should be content in good situations and in bad situations, in rich situations and poor situations (v12)
- The quality of our life circumstances should not impact our ability to be content; we must be content regardless of how well off we are (v12)

- It is not a sin to have a life that abounds in blessings and prosperity; God does not require Christians to take a vow of poverty and suffering (v12)
- Christians must be content wherever they are (v12)
- Christians must be content in all things (v12)
- Paul said he was instructed to be both full and hungry (v12)
- Paul said he was instructed to both abound and suffer need (v12)
- Paul knew how to be full when he was hungry (v12)
- Paul knew how to abound when he was suffering (v12)
- Paul did not need the riches of this world in order to be content (v12)
- We can do all things through Christ who strengthens us (v13)
- Christ is the one who strengthens us (v13)
- We can do all things through Christ (not through our own abilities) (v13)
- We need Christ in order to do all things (v13)
- Christ enables us to do all things; there are no things that we cannot do with Christ (v13)
- In order to do all things we need the strength that comes only from Christ (v13)
- When Paul said that he can do all things through Christ, he was talking about being content while suffering in prison (v13)

- Christ can give us the strength to be content in very terrible situations, where we are suffering greatly (v13)
- Even though Paul was content while suffering in prison, the Philippian church did the right thing when they helped ease his afflictions (v14)
- It is not wrong to ease the afflictions of suffering saints (v14)
- Churches who ease the affliction of suffering saints are doing a good thing (v14)
- Paul was being afflicted (v14)
- The Philippian church helped Paul when he was being afflicted (v14)
- When Paul left Macedonia, the only church that wrote to Paul about meeting his needs was the Philippian church (v15)
- At some point in the past, before Paul wrote this letter from prison, he departed from Macedonia (v15)
- When Paul left Macedonia, the Philippian church wrote to him about giving to him in order to meet his needs (v15)
- The Philippian church sought out Paul in order to help meet his financial needs (v15)
- Paul did not reach out to the Philippian church in order to have his needs met; instead they wrote to him (v15)
- When Paul talks about giving and receiving, he never mentions tithing; there is never a hint that Christians are supposed to pay the tithe of the Mosaic Law (v15)
- It seems that the Philippian church gave money to Paul,

and met his financial needs in some way (v15)

- The Philippian church knew that they were the only church that reached out to Paul to help him (v15)
- Although Paul worked with many churches, the only church that reached out to help him was the Philippian church (v15)
- At some point before Paul wrote this letter from prison he was in Thessalonica (v16)
- While Paul was in Thessalonica, the Philippian church gave him a gift to help meet his needs (v16)
- God used the Philippian church to help meet the financial needs of Paul (v16)
- Paul did not supply all of his financial needs himself; there were times when the Philippian church helped him by giving to him (v16)
- Paul was grateful for their gift, but it was not because he wanted money or coveted their stuff; instead Paul desired that the church bear fruit (v17)
- When the church gave to Paul, the church was actually bearing fruit (v17)
- Paul desired that the church bear fruit (v17)
- Churches should bear fruit (v17)
- Churches that give to the needs of suffering saints are bearing fruit (v17)
- Paul wanted the churches to abound in bearing fruit (v17)
- Even though Paul was suffering in prison and had nothing, he said he had everything (v18)

- Even though Paul was suffering in prison, he said that he abounded (v18)
- Paul said that he was full because he received the gift that the Philippian church had given to him (v18)
- It seems that Epaphroditus was the person who delivered the gift from the Philippian church to Paul (v18)
- The Philippian church sent a gift to Paul (v18)
- The gift that the Philippian church gave to Paul was pleasing to God (v18)
- It pleases God when churches take care of suffering saints (v18)
- The gift that the Philippian church gave to Paul was an acceptable sacrifice (v18)
- The gifts that churches give are a sacrifice (v18)
- The gift that the Philippian church gave to Paul was a sweet smell (v18)
- Paul told the Philippian church, who had met his needs when he was in prison, that God would meet their needs (v19)
- God is the one who meets our needs (v19)
- God has wealth (v19)
- God has glory (v19)
- God will use Jesus to meet our needs (v19)
- God will meet our needs by His riches and His glory (v19)
- God will meet all of our needs; (it does not say He will meet all of our desires or wishes) (v19)

- Unto God be glory forever and ever (v20)
- Unto our heavenly Father be glory forever and ever (v20)
- God has everlasting glory (v20)
- While Paul was in prison, he glorified God (v20)
- Paul referred to God as our Father (v20)
- Paul told the Philippian church to salute (greet) every Christian (v21)
- The Christians are the saints; the saints are not a special group of people, but are all Christians (v21)
- It is good to greet other Christians (v21)
- Paul wanted the church to greet all of the saints (v21)
- The Christians who were with Paul sent their greetings to the Philippian church (v21)
- There were other Christians who were with Paul (v21)
- Paul was not alone; he had other Christians with him (v21)
- Paul saw value in sending greetings to other Christians (v21)
- Paul wrote this letter while he was in prison in Rome (v22)
- There were Christians who were part of Caesar's household (v22)
- The Christians who were in Caesar's household had contact with Paul (v22)
- The Christians who were in Caesar's household sent their

greetings to the Philippian church (v22)

- All of the Christians who were with Paul sent their greetings (v22)
- Sending greetings to someone is not a meaningless gesture (v22)
- Paul did not think it was wrong for a Christian to work in Caesar's household (v22)
- Paul prayed that the grace of Jesus would be with the Philippian church (v23)
- It is good to pray that God would give grace to churches (v23)
- Churches need the grace of God (v23)
- Jesus is Lord (v23)
- Jesus is the Messiah (the Christ) (v23)
- Paul ends his letter with "amen" (let it be) (v23)

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