

Philippians Notes

Studies completed with Joe Focht, Chuck Smith, Jon Courson, Warren Wiersbe, Matthew Henry, NIV Study Bible, David Guzik, Kenneth Wuest, and Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown.

Introduction:

Paul's experience in Philippi is recorded in Acts 16. Paul and Silas were forbidden by the Spirit to go into Asia, but were instead led to minister in Macedonia. Lydia was among the first converts of Philippi, but Paul and Silas were thrown into a prison for casting a demon out of a young girl. God miraculously freed them from prison by an earthquake. (Acts 20:6)

The occasion for this letter...Paul is in a Roman prison awaiting his first trial before Caesar Nero. The church at Philippi sent Paul some financial support by the hand of Epaphroditus (4:18) and he now writes this letter to thank and encourage that church. (Acts 28:30-31)

Philippi was a Roman colony. It became a place for Roman officials to retire, so they would live in a city very similar to Rome, but some distance from it. There was virtually no Jewish presence there.

Date: Likely 61 AD.

Theme: Joy.

- The words "joy" and "rejoice" are used 17 times in this letter.

Chapter 1:

1:1 – "Paul" – means "little."

- "Timothy" – means "he who honors God."
- "bondservants" – (Greek "doulos") Lit. "slaves."
- "Jesus Christ" – Christ is named 18 times in chapter 1.
- "saints" – (Greek "hagios") Lit. "set apart ones."
- "bishops" – Lit. "overseers."
- "deacons" – Lit. "servants."

1:2 – "Grace...peace" – Always in that order.

1:3 – "remembrance of you" – It's been about 10-15 years since Paul has been in Philippi.

- The Philippian church was one of Paul's main financial supporters. (2 Cor. 8:1-7; 9:1-4; 11:9)

1:4 – "joy" – First mention in the letter.

1:5 – "fellowship" – (Greek "koinonia") Lit. "all things common."

- This refers to their support of Paul and his ministry. He sees them as a part of his ministry team.
- "gospel" – Mentioned 6 times in chapter 1.

1:6 – "confident" – Paul is confident of God's work in these people.

- If it was up to the people to complete themselves, Paul would be much less confident.

1:7 – "partakers with me of grace" – Just as they have supported Paul in the ministry, they have also received from Paul in the ministry.

1:8 – “long” – Lit. “yearn.”

- They have suffered with and supported Paul in ministry. This creates a deep fellowship and affection among believers.

1:9 – “love” – (Greek “agape”) This is love for God and for one another.

- “abound” – Love requires growth.
- “love may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment” – The corresponding growth of the heart and the head.
 - Living the life of Christ is not an either-or condition; all study or all service. Both are necessary to live out the life of Christ designed for you.
 - There are 168 hours in a week...only 3 of those hours are devoted to Bible teaching at the church.
- “knowledge” – (Greek “epignosis”) Lit. “experiential or relational knowledge.”
- “discernment” – Love is not the same to all people. Love demands a different response to different actions. Discernment allows for the right response at the right time.

1:10 – “things that are excellent” – Not just what God requires, but what God desires.

- “sincere” – or “pure.” Lit. “without hypocrisy.”
- “without offense” – or “blameless.”
- “till the day of Christ” – The Rapture of the Church and the Second Coming of Christ.
 - Also mentioned in v. 6.

1:11 – “by Jesus Christ” – The source of this kind of life.

- “to the glory and praise of God” – The goal of this kind of life.

1:12 – “I want you to know” – It seems they are concerned with how this imprisonment will affect Paul’s ministry and the advance of the gospel.

- “furtherance” – Lit. “pioneering.”
 - Breaking new ground is one of the toughest parts of expanding ministry.

1:13 – “palace” – (Greek “praetorium”) Paul is chained to a powerful and influential guard. His testimony before them is impacting the entire palace. (Phil. 4:22)

- “my chains are in Christ” – God is causing those who are watching Paul suffer to know that God is still present and blessing him personally.
 - It’s easy to miss God’s blessing when it doesn’t come in a way we expect.
 - This imprisonment brought the gospel to Rome and Nero.

1:14 – “speak the word without fear” – Paul’s imprisonment is freeing others.

1:15 – “preach Christ even from envy and strife” – Some are taking opportunity by Paul’s imprisonment to draw people unto themselves...but still the message of Christ is going forward.

- Paul didn’t mind those “stealing his sheep” as long as Christ was preached.

1:16 – “selfish ambition” – Lit. “politicking for election votes.”

- “to add affliction to my chains” – They are deliberately trying to hurt Paul.
 - They have turned ministry into a contest between believers. Paul never saw it that way.

- 1:18 – “Christ is preached” – Paul was committed to the message of the gospel. He was not concerned with his popularity or with the way people viewed him personally.
- False teachers, legalizers, and heretics didn’t get the same approval from Paul.
- 1:20 – “earnest expectation” – Lit. “looking with outstretched neck.”
- “Christ will be magnified” – Paul just pointed people to Jesus. This was the goal of his life and ministry.
 - “by death” – As Paul awaits trial, he knows a negative verdict by Caesar Nero will result in his execution.
- 1:21 – “to live is Christ, and to die is gain” – It is a win, win situation for Paul.
- 1:23 – “depart and be with Christ” – No soul sleep. (2 Cor. 5:8)
- “depart” – Lit. “to take down the tent.” (2 Pet. 1:14)
 - “far better” – Being with Christ is what Paul most wanted all along.
- 1:24 – “needful for you” – Paul’s life is a benefit and a service to the Philippian believers.
- 1:26 – “coming to you again” – Paul expects to visit Philippi again.
- 1:27 – “worthy” – (Greek “axios”) Lit. “to weigh as much as.”
- “one spirit...one mind” – Unified.
 - “striving together for the faith” – This is to be the central focus of every gathered group of Christians.
 - “striving together” – (Greek “sunathleo”) Lit. “working together as athletes on the same team.
- 1:28 – “not in any way terrified...a proof” – Standing strong in the face of opposition is a great testimony to the deeper reality of Christ in their lives.
- Paul is writing this from prison as he is awaiting trial before Caesar Nero.
- 1:29 – “granted” – Lit. “favored.” (The Greek root word is “charis,” which means grace.)
- “suffer for His sake” – Suffering purifies and clarifies mission and purpose.
- 1:30 – “conflict” – (Greek “agonia”) Lit. “agony.” (Luke 22:44)
- “you saw” – As Paul and Silas were imprisoned in Philippi. (Acts 16)

Chapter 2:

- 2:1 – “If” – This could also be translated “since there is.”
- “consolation” – (Greek “paraklesis”)
 - “love” – (Greek “agape”)
 - “fellowship” – (Greek “koinonia”)
- 2:2 – “like-minded” – He is asking them to be unified in thought.

- 2:3 – “selfish ambition” – Striving for a place, a position, and recognition that God has not called, gifted, or given to a person.
- “conceit” – Empty glory and empty pride.
 - The definition of the English word “conceit” is “an excessively favorable opinion of oneself.”
 - Selfish ambition and conceit are the two great enemies of unity in the Body of Christ.
 - “lowliness of mind” – Holding a humble view of ourselves.
 - “esteem others better than himself” – This flies in the face of the self-esteem push of the modern culture.
 - What most people call self-esteem is usually self-perception. God is not asking us to see ourselves as invaluable and therefore unworthy to live. He is asking us to refuse to elevate ourselves at all, but rather to use our abilities to elevate others.
- 2:4 – “but also” – We are not to disregard our own needs entirely. We can still provide and care for our own (1 Tim. 5:8), but not to the exclusion of others and their needs.
- 2:5 – “Let this mind be in you” – The tense is to “continually let this mind be in you...”
- 2:6 – “form” – (Greek “morphe”) Lit. “the form which truly and fully expresses the being which underlies it.”
- The form is the essential nature of God. In the incarnation, Jesus took the form of God and displayed it in and through human flesh.
 - “robbery” – Lit. “something to be grasped at.”
 - In Isa. 14, Satan “grasps at” trying to be like God.
 - “equal with God” – Jesus is God. (John 1:1; Rom. 9:5)
- 2:7 – “made...of no reputation” – (Greek “kenoo”) This is the great “kenosis.”
- “learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart.” (Matt. 11:29)
 - “no reputation” – This is not a “bad reputation.”
 - “the form of a bondservant” – He changed forms. (John 1:14)
 - Jesus emptied Himself of the expression of deity, not the possession of deity. He never ceased to be God, but He veiled the display of His God-nature through human flesh.
 - The transfiguration is an example of a time when Jesus chose to allow the God-nature to show through his human flesh. But during the incarnation, this was the exception and not the rule.
 - “bondservant” – Lit. “slave.”
 - “the likeness of men” – This is an eternal sacrifice.
 - Jesus will bear this likeness of humanity and the marks of slaughter throughout eternity. (Rev. 5:6)
- 2:8 – “humiliated Himself” – Another step down.
- “the death of the cross” – He bore the sin of humanity to provide a way of salvation. (2 Cor. 5:21)

- 2:9 – “Therefore” – As a direct result of His humbling of Himself. (v. 6-8)
- “Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.” (Heb. 12:2)
 - “Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He might exalt you in due time.” (2 Pet. 5:6)
 - “the name” – The name is worthy to be exalted.
- 2:10 – “the name of Jesus” – That is “the name which is above every name.” (Phil. 2:9)
- “every” – Each and every created being will submit to the Lord of Glory.
 - “in heaven” – Saints and angels.
 - “on earth” – Humans.
 - “under the earth” – Unsaved men and demonic realm.
- 2:11 – “to the glory of God” – All human and spiritual creation will worship and glorify God, but not all will be redeemed to eternity with God.
- 2:12 – “Therefore” – In light of Jesus Christ’s future dominion over all things, Paul calls us to let Jesus have that same dominion over us presently. Surrender...
- “work out” – It literally means “bring to completion.”
 - “your own salvation” – We can’t work out someone else’s salvation.
 - “fear and trembling” – With reverence and awe...because every knee will bow.
- 2:13 – “it is God who works in you” – We only ever work out what God has previously worked in us through Jesus Christ.
- God supplies everything necessary for a Christ-like life through our faith in Jesus Christ.
 - “works” – (Greek “energeo”) God energizes us in Godly things.
 - “to will and to do” – God gives us both the desire and the opportunity to do things that please Him.
 - Making dad happy.
- 2:14 – “complaining” – Lit. “a secret debate.” Not going to the person you’re upset with.
- The salvation of Christ works out of a believer through their mouths.
 - “disputing” – or “making excuses.” This Greek word refers to the thought-life.
 - Those who get to be good at making excuses will never be good at anything else.
 - There is a difference between submitting and being okay with submitting.
- 2:15 – “blameless” – This speaks to our moral character.
- “harmless” – Lit. “pure, without mixture.” This speaks to how we treat others.
 - “in the midst” – God doesn’t remove us from the world, but He changes us in it. (John 17:15)
 - In complete darkness, you can see a match lit from 11 miles away.
- 2:16 – “labored in vain” – Paul is afraid that if the Philippians don’t endure that he would’ve spent his time and energy with them in vain.
- 2:17 – “if I am being poured out” – Paul does not know how his trial before Caesar Nero will go.
- “a drink offering” – This is a sacrifice that never comes back to the one offering the sacrifice. (Exod. 29:38-41; Num. 15:4-50; 2 Tim. 4:6)
 - “sacrifice and service” – The salvation of Christ also works out of believers through ministry and service.

- 2:19 – “Timothy” – He is only about 35-40 years old at this time.
- Paul is in prison, but he still has a heart to minister to the people in Philippi. But because he can't do it himself, he is relying on other faithful men to carry on the rest of this ministry.
 - Any ministry in the body of Christ happens in the context of a team.
- 2:20 – “like-minded” – (Greek “isopsychos”) Lit. “equal in mind.”
- In 1:27, “one mind” is “mia psyche,” which means “one (singular) mind.”
 - In 2:2, “one mind” is “sympsychos,” which means “united in mind.”
 - One of the most important, but rarely talked about, qualities of ministry partners is their ability to “get it.”
 - “care for your state” – Timothy is able to put the needs of the people above his own.
 - In this, Timothy demonstrates the mind of Christ. (v. 5)
- 2:21 – “their own” – Most put their own personal needs and desires above the needs of those they are supposed to be ministering to.
- “Most help only when Christ's gain is compatible with their own” – Jamieson, Fausset, & Brown.
 - “the things which are of Christ Jesus” – Timothy and Paul are so unified in ministry because both seek God's things above their own.
- 2:22 – “proven character” – Timothy has been tested.
- Ministry partners cannot be trusted if they will not be tested.
 - “as a son with his father” – The level of relational intimacy that develops between two serving the Lord together with like minds is on par with the best of parent-child relationships.
- 2:25 – “Epaphroditus” – His name means “charming.”
- He may have been the Philippian pastor. He was sent to Paul with a financial gift to help support Paul while he was in prison. (Phil. 4:18)
 - “my brother, fellow worker, and fellow soldier” – Paul's opinion of Epaphroditus.
- 2:26 – “longing for you all” – He was homesick, because he was sick away from home. (Matt. 26:37; Mark 14:33)
- “you had heard that he was sick” – The people fear losing Epaphroditus.
- 2:27 – “sick almost unto death” – Paul, who healed many before, was not the means by which Epaphroditus was healed this time.
- Paul did not practice positive confession.
- 2:29 – “hold such men in esteem” – In our culture, we don't always recognize it when people really are loving and serving us. We tend to honor celebrity more than sacrifice.
- 2:30 – “not regarding his life” – This was a Greek phrase that referred to a gambler risking it all on the roll of the dice.
- Like Timothy (v. 21), he too set aside his own needs and desires to fulfill his ministry for another.
 - In this, Epaphroditus too demonstrates the mind of Christ. (v. 5)
 - “what was lacking in your service toward me” – Because they couldn't physically be there.

Chapter 3:

3:1 – “rejoice in the Lord” – That is difficult to do with Judaizers coming after you.

- Imagine being a new believer at Philippi...Paul has just come through the area and spoke to you and your Roman friends about the possibility of a relationship with God, you loved it and received it with joy. Immediately, Paul gets thrown into prison by the Roman authorities for casting a demon out of a young girl. God miraculously releases Paul from prison and Paul uses that to oppose the Roman authorities in an effort to thwart any future attack against the Christians there. Then Paul eventually leaves town and almost immediately these very religious Jews stroll into town. At first, it sounds like they are talking about the same things Paul was talking about, but then they get out their knives.
- We are to rejoice “in the Lord,” not in our circumstances.
- “write the same things” – Paul has warned the Philippians about the Judaizers before.
 - “Repetition is the key to learning. I repeat, repetition is the key to learning.” (Neil Turner)

3:2 – “Beware” – Paul is talking about the Judaizers who were placing heavy, legalistic burdens on the relatively new believers of Paul’s ministry.

- Paul is warning them against those people who will mix Jesus with obligatory religious practice...which is more deceptive than a decision between the two.
- “We are bidden, therefore, to beware of men of a quarrelsome and contentious spirit, who under the guise of religion hide impure and unclean things.” (Meyer)
- “dogs” – The Jews often called the Gentiles “goyim” – dogs. Paul turns the tables.
- “evil workers” – And Paul is referring to religious teachers.
- “mutilation” – This is Paul’s unflattering reference to circumcision, the main outward mark that the Judaizers tried to impose on these new Gentile believers.
 - Paul equates the Jewish rite of circumcision to the unjust practice of cutting mentioned in Lev. 21:5.

3:3 – “no confidence in the flesh” – “It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing.” (John 6:63)

- Paul said, “I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells.” (Rom. 7:18)
- “the flesh” – Those who feel they are pleasing God as a result of their great sacrifices for Him.
 - Feeding the poor, giving money to the church, serving in a ministry...these things can be of the flesh if not properly motivated.
 - Doing things “for God” vs. doing things “with God.”

3:4 – “I also might have confidence in the flesh” – Paul, too, made himself of “no reputation.” (Phil. 2:7)

3:5 – “circumcised the eighth day” – Paul was not a proselyte, he was born into it.

- “Benjamin” – The tribe faithful to Judah and Jerusalem.
- “Hebrew of the Hebrews” – Both of Paul’s parents were Jews.
- “Pharisee” – That was the strictest sect of Judaism.

3:6 – “persecuting the church” – Paul was not simply trying to persuade Christians to become Jews, he was trying to kill Christians. (Acts 22:4)

- 3:8 – “count all things loss” – Paul surrendered these things to the Lord long ago.
- “knowledge” – (Greek “gnosis”) Lit. “personal knowledge.”
 - Biblically, to know God is not informational, but relational.
 - All religious activity means nothing compared to a genuine, living relationship with God through Jesus Christ.
 - “suffered the loss of all things” – Paul not only surrendered these things, but he lost them forever.
 - “rubbish” – (Greek “skubala”) Lit. “dung, manure.”
 - Isaiah 64:6 – “all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags.”
- 3:9 – “in Him” – As we are wrapped in the righteousness of Christ.
- “through faith in Christ” – Trusting Jesus.
 - “Whatever is not from faith is sin.” (Rom. 14:23)
 - “Without faith it is impossible to please Him.” (Heb. 11:6)
- 3:10 – “power of His resurrection...fellowship of His sufferings” – They go together. (Gal. 2:20)
- Life isn’t found in the absence of pain, but in going through all of it with Jesus. (2 Cor. 11)
 - Paul started off this section by saying, “rejoice in the Lord.” (v. 1)
- 3:11 – “if” – Lit. “since.” Paul does not doubt that he will be resurrected.
- “the resurrection from the dead” – Paul is looking to heaven.
 - Resurrection requires death.
- 3:12 – “Not that I have already attained” – Paul knows there is more of the Lord to know and more of God’s life to be lived out in his own life. (v. 10-11)
- And Paul had a most miraculous conversion experience. (Acts 9)
 - “or am already perfected” – In opposition to the doctrine of sinless perfection.
 - “lay hold” – Lit. “capture.”
- 3:13 – “forgetting...reaching...” – Present tense. These things must be done repeatedly.
- “forgetting” – The idea is “disregarding.” Paul remembered who he was before Christ (v. 5-6), but he chose to not let it affect his life.
 - The world says we are sum total of what has been done to us. The Bible says we are the sum total of what Jesus has done for us.
 - “No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of heaven.” (Luke 9:62)
 - “reaching forward” – Lit. “stretching as in a race.”
 - Nobody can run well who is constantly looking over their shoulder.
- 3:14 – “press” – Lit. “run swiftly.” Most often translated “persecute.”
- “Lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us.” (Heb. 12:1)
 - “the upward call” – The call comes from heaven and leads us to heaven. (Col. 3:2)
 - “prize” – The wreath or medal that goes to the winner of the games. (1 Cor. 9:24)
- 3:15 – “mature” – Maturity as marked by forgetting and reaching. (v. 13)
- Those who are mature in Christ know they have been apprehended by Jesus and strive to fully apprehend all Jesus has for them in this life and in the next.
 - “have this mind” – Paul knows the mature believer will agree with his approach to his relationship with Jesus.

- 3:16 – “walk by the same rule” – “As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him.” (Col. 2:6)
- 3:17 – “my example” – Paul lived out a surrendered and serving life.
- “note those who so walk” – Keep an eye on those who are living like this.
 - Our attention can be attracted by a lot of foolish things. We need to choose to turn our eyes to God, His things, and His people.
- 3:18 – “enemies of the cross of Christ” – This is what Paul calls those who “mind earthly things” (v. 19). We call them materialists.
- “the cross of Christ” – It is only through the cross of Christ that we have access to God.
- 3:19 – “god is their belly” – They serve their bodies, rather than submitting their bodies to God.
- “glory is in their shame” – They celebrate shameful things.
 - “set their mind on earthly things” – This is an accurate description of the natural man.
- 3:20 – “our citizenship is in heaven” – This is where we are going. (v. 13-14)
- Citizens of Philippi greatly valued their Roman citizenship. Even though they were at a distance from Rome, they still lived as if they were in Rome. Christians are expected to do the same regarding heaven.
- 3:21 – “transform” – (Greek “metaschematizo”) Lit. “change in form from the inside-out.”
- Our transformation is likened to an acorn becoming an oak tree. (1 Cor. 15)
 - “lowly body” – The body of our humiliation. (Phil. 2:7)
 - “His glorious body” – This phrase carries the idea of “shining.” (Matt. 17:2)
 - “Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.” (1 John 3:2)
 - In heaven, every fiber of our being will agree with every single thing we experience in that place.

Chapter 4:

- 4:1 – “Therefore” – In the context of pressing on to know Christ. (Phil. 3:8,10,12,14,16)
- “stand fast in the Lord” – Those who are looking to “press on” in Christ are not going to fall from standing fast in the Lord.
- 4:2 – “Euodia” – means “successful.”
- “Syntyche” – means “fortunate.”
 - Women had a key place in the founding of this church. Lydia was saved at Philippi. (Acts 16:11-15)
 - “the same mind” – The mind of Christ. (Phil. 2:5-8)
 - It is nearly impossible to argue when you are trying to be a servant.
- 4:3 – “help these women” – He is to help them work out their problems and get along.
- Few things sap the joy and passion for Christian ministry like interpersonal conflict.
 - “these women who labored with me” – Euodia and Syntyche can both work with and in agreement with Paul, but they struggle with getting along with one another.
 - “my fellow workers” – Relationships among ministry partners need consistent maintenance.

- 4:4 – “Rejoice in the Lord” – There is always something “in the Lord” to rejoice in.
- Paul was in prison when he wrote this.
 - The context in which Paul writes this is when dealing with the conflict between Euodia and Syntyche. “Joy in the Lord is the cure to all discord” – (Charles Spurgeon).
- 4:5 – “gentleness” – It means “reasonable, not unduly rigid, giving way.”
- Relationally and personally.
 - We cannot fight about that which doesn’t matter.
 - “Blessed are the flexible, for they shall not be broken” – Chuck Smith.
- 4:6 – “Be anxious for nothing” – Lit. “stop being anxious for anything.”
- This is not a formula to cure anxiety. Anxiety is alleviated relationally; primarily by getting our minds off the things we are anxious about and focusing on that which brings us peace.
 - “anxious” – (Greek “mirimnao”) Lit. “to be pulled in many different directions.”
 - Unreasonable expectations regarding others and striving after stuff will lead to anxiety.
 - God’s gifts of grace are the greatest gifts...live in relationship with Jesus and let Him work things out as He desires.
 - “but” – In contrast to being anxious.
 - Anxiety is not alleviated in a vacuum; our minds must be filled with good things. (v. 8)
 - “let your requests” – Lit. “continually let your requests.”
- 4:7 – “the peace of God” – Positionally, we have “peace with God” through our faith in Jesus Christ. But experientially, we have “the peace of God” through fellowship with Jesus. (“the God of peace” – v. 9)
- “Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you.” (John 14:27) The peace of Christ is not based in circumstances, but in relationship.
 - “surpasses all understanding” – This peace literally “goes beyond all capacity to understand,” because of the limited-ness of our minds.
 - “guard” – Lit. “garrison.” It is a military word.
- 4:8 – “meditate on these things” – “Bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.” (2 Cor. 10:5)
- Filling our minds with a lot of junk will not help us walk in peace.
 - “Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.” (Col. 3:2)
 - “...but be transformed by the renewing of your mind...” (Rom. 12:2)
- 4:9 – “these do” – Paul could encourage others, not simply to do what he said, but to live like he lived.
- “the God of peace” – You cannot have the peace of God without the God of peace.
 - In 2 Cor. 1:3, God is called “the God of all comforts.” The problem in our lives is that we often look for comfort apart from God (ex. - would someone help me...) and it never really works. The same is true of peace.
 - “Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.” (John 14:27)
 - “with you” – “I will never leave you, nor forsake you.” (Heb. 13:5)
 - “Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; For you are with me.” (Ps. 23:4)

- 4:10 – “your care for me” – Epaphroditus brought financial support from the Philippian church to Paul while he was in prison in Rome. (v. 18)
- “flourished again” – Lit. “bloomed anew.”
 - “lacked opportunity” – Resources were tight for the Philippians too.
- 4:11 – “learned” – (Greek “manthano”) Lit. “to increase in knowledge.” The word speaks of process.
- These lessons were not intuitive to Paul and they are not innate in any of us.
 - “content” – Lit. “to be independent of external circumstances.” Paul is self-sufficient because he is God-dependent.
 - “Now godliness with contentment is great gain.” (1 Tim. 6:6)
 - The wealthiest person in the world is not the one who has the most, but the one who is satisfied with the least.
- 4:12 – “abased...abound” – Both have their difficulties.
- The challenge is to do all phases and states of life in fellowship with Jesus.
 - “abased” – Lit. “to live on a very small income.”
 - “abound” – Lit. “to overflow.”
- 4:13 – “all things” – We can do all things with Christ, but without Him, we can do nothing. (John 15:5)
- “Christ who strengthens me” – Abiding in Christ was the secret to Paul’s continued contentment and strength. (2 Cor. 12:9-10)
 - “strengthens” – Lit. “continually strengthens.”
 - “But those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength.” (Isa. 40:31)
- 4:14 – “shared” – (Greek “sygkoinoneo”) Lit. “fellowship together.”
- 4:15 – “when I departed from Macedonia, no church shared with me” – Paul didn’t raise support before going to do what God wanted him to do.
- So few of those Paul poured his life into ever supported him in return. And Paul seems ok with that, while at the same time being blessed by those who did offer something in return.
- 4:17 – “I seek the fruit” – Paul doesn’t want them to give for his sake, but he realizes that their giving will be rewarded to them by God.
- Many motivate others to give so that they can get. But the Bible tells us that we give because we have already gotten.
- 4:18 – “I have all and abound” – Paul has all he needs...and more.
- “sweet-smelling aroma” – The phrase used of the OT sacrifices.
- 4:19 – “God shall supply” – Paul knew God was the most trustworthy source of support.
- Far too much ministry in God’s name is dependent on people’s giving and/or human government.
 - “need” – Our needs are defined by what God wants us to do. Our needs are not our wants.
 - God will give us all the resources necessary to do what we are called to do.
 - Rule of thumb: “If I don’t have it, I don’t need it.”
 - “according to His riches in glory” – God’s supply is consistent with and in proportion to heavenly riches.

4:20 – “to our God and Father be glory” – Our lives are for the glory of God.

4:21 – “brethren who are with me” – Including Timothy. (Phil. 1:1; 2:19)

4:22 – “Caesar’s household” – The “palace guard.” (Phil. 1:13)

- The prison was Paul’s new mission field.

4:23 – “grace” – Paul’s common salutation.