

## **PHILIPPIANS**

**Main Theme:** Pursuing Christ likeness

**Primary Reference Source:** The McArthur Study Bible

**Background:** Paul's letter to the Philippian church was written during his first Roman imprisonment between A.D. 60 and A.D. 62. This epistle is referred to as a prison epistle along with Ephesians, Colossians, and Philemon. The church at Philippi was founded by Paul during his second missionary journey (Acts 16:12-40). The church at Philippi was the first one founded in Europe (Macedonia). When Paul, Silas, and Timothy came to Philippi they found devout women outside the city at a place of prayer along the Gangites River. Lydia, a wealthy merchant dealing in expensive purple dyed goods (Acts 16:14), believed the gospel message and accepted the faith. It is likely that the church at Philippi initially met in her home. Satanic opposition manifested itself against Paul, Silas, and Timothy in two ways, while in Philippi. First, a demon possessed fortune-telling slave girl followed Paul and Silas proclaiming their gospel mission. Paul responded by casting out the demon. Second, her enraged masters accused them before the Roman judges (magistrates) of the city resulting in their being beaten and thrown in prison (Acts 16:20-21). Paul and Silas were providentially released from prison at midnight by an earthquake. When the jailer was about to kill himself because he thought that the prisoners had escaped, Paul and Silas stopped him, assuring him that all prisoners were accounted for. The event opened the jailer's heart, and he and his household believed the gospel. The next day the Roman judges of the city panicked when they learned that they had illegally beaten and imprisoned two Roman citizens, and begged Paul and Silas to leave Philippi. Years later, under arrest in Rome, Paul may have remembered that it was Christ-like behavior on the part of Silas and himself that helped win over the jailer to the Christian faith, and incorporated this key teaching as the main theme of his epistle to the Philippians.

Philippi received its name from Philip II of Macedon (the father of Alexander the Great). Philip conquered the region in the fourth century B.C., since there was gold nearby, and Philippi became a part of the Roman Republic in the second century B.C. Philippi was pivotal in terms of Roman history, since it was the first century battle site which determined the form of government Rome would use to rule the world for the next 500 years. In 42 B.C., the forces of Antony and Octavian defeated those of Brutus and Cassius at the Battle of Philippi, thus ending the representative form of government which characterized the Roman Republic, and inaugurating the Caesar dictatorship of the Roman Empire. After this battle, Philippi became a Roman colony.

**Overview of the Text:** Paul presents doctrine and application of doctrine in each chapter of his epistle.

## **SCRIPTURE VERSES AND SCRIPTURE TEXT FROM THE NEW KING JAMES VERSION BIBLE IN BOLD**

### **Philippians Chapter 1**

#### **1. Paul and Timothy, bondservants of Jesus Christ,**

**To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, with the bishops and deacons:**

- 2. Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.**
- 3. I thank my God upon every remembrance of you,**
- 4. always in every prayer of mine making request for you all with joy,**
- 5. for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now,**
- 6. being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ;**
- 7. just as it is right for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart, inasmuch as both in my chains and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, you all are partakers with me of grace.**
- 8. For God is my witness, how greatly I long for you all with the affection of Jesus Christ.**

Philippians 1:1-8 Paul and Timothy address the saints (believers), bishops (overseers, pastors, elders), and deacons (those who serve). Paul states that God, who has begun a good work in the Philippian believers through saving them from their sins, will see it to completion. This means that God will never abandon the believer but bring him or her to complete sanctification. Sanctification is the process through which a person is conformed more and more into having the character of Christ (becoming more Christ like). This maturing process was already at work in the Philippian church because they were in partnership with Paul in the gospel ministry.

- 9. And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment, that you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ,**
- 10. that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ,**
- 11. being filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.**

Philippians 1:9-11 Paul's prayer for the Philippians was that they continue to mature. Perfect love contains all knowledge and discernment (1 Corinthians 13). Specifically, Paul desired the Philippians to grow in their knowledge of Christ, gain discernment, and approve the things that are excellent. This reflects a person who is truly saved (having the righteousness of Christ). Knowledge refers to genuine, full, or advanced understanding of scripture truth. Discernment speaks of perception, insight, and practical application of knowledge. Believers who are filled with knowledge and discernment will recognize and approve of the things that are excellent (worthwhile) and be sincere (genuine) without offense (blameless).

- 12. But I want you to know, brethren, that the things which happened to me have actually turned out for the furtherance of the gospel,**  
**13. so that it has become evident to the whole palace guard, and to all the rest, that my chains are in Christ;**  
**14. and most of the brethren in the Lord, having become confident by my chains, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.**

Philippians 1:12-14 Paul begins his teaching by instructing the Philippians in the doctrine of divine sovereignty. Paul explains that God is in complete control of his life, and that his Roman imprisonment has resulted in the furtherance of the gospel. The palace guard knew that his chains were in Christ, and other believers were emboldened to preach the gospel without fear due to Paul's imprisonment for the gospel ministry. They knew that Paul was a prisoner because of preaching Jesus Christ and the gospel. "Because Paul was in a private house in Rome, 'palace guard' probably refers to members of the imperial guard who guarded Paul day and night."

- 15. Some indeed preach Christ even from envy and strife, and some also from goodwill:**  
**16. The former preach Christ from selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my chains;**  
**17. but the latter out of love, knowing that I am appointed for the defense of the gospel.**  
**18. What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is preached; and in this I rejoice, yes, and will rejoice.**

Philippians 1:15-18 Some who were emboldened spoke out of envy and strife because they were jealous of Paul's notoriety. These individuals used Paul's incarceration as an opportunity to promote their own prestige by accusing Paul of being so sinful that the Lord had to chasten him by imprisonment. Others preached the gospel out of goodwill and love. These individuals knew, as Paul did, that God sovereignly directed Paul's life for the defense of the gospel. Although those who preached out of goodwill were most favorable to Paul, Paul rejoiced even in those who preached in envy and strife, just as long as Christ was preached.

- 19. For I know that this will turn out for my deliverance through your prayer and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ,**

Philippians 1:19 Paul had no confidence in man for his deliverance, but his confidence was in the Lord. For Paul, deliverance was through prayer and the "supply of the Spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ."

- 20. according to my earnest expectation and hope that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ will be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death.**

Philippians 1:20 For Paul deliverance was to be ashamed in nothing, but with all boldness proclaim Jesus Christ whether in word or deed. This proclamation is what Paul desired for himself, whether he lives or dies.

**21. For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain.**

Philippians 1:21 “For Paul, life is summed up in Jesus Christ; Christ was his reason for being. Death would relieve him of earthly burdens and let him focus totally on glorifying God.”

**22. But if I live on in the flesh, this will mean fruit from my labor; yet what I shall choose I cannot tell.**

Philippians 1:22 “Paul knew that the only reason to remain in this world was to bring souls to Christ and build up believers to do the same.”

**23. For I am hard-pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better.**

Philippians 1:23 “Paul knew if he died he would have complete, conscious, intimate, unhindered fellowship with his Lord.” Paul was under pressure from two sides, his need to be in the world to preach Jesus Christ, and his desire to depart from this world to be with Jesus Christ which is far better.

**24. Nevertheless to remain in the flesh is more needful for you.**

Philippians 1:24 Paul yielded his personal desire to be with his Lord for the necessity of building the church.

**25. And being confident of this, I know that I shall remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy of faith,**

Philippians 1:25 Paul was confident that it was God’s will that he remain on earth to build the church. Paul was convinced that he would remain to assist the Philippian believers in their spiritual growth in Christ.

**26. that your rejoicing for me may be more abundant in Jesus Christ by my coming to you again.**

Philippians 1:26 As the Philippian believers grow in Christ by God’s working through Paul, the Philippian believers would rejoice more abundantly in the Lord. Paul could only build up the Philippian believers as he was enabled by the Spirit of Christ (God).

**27. Only let our conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of your affairs, that you stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel,**

**28. and not in any way terrified by your adversaries, which is to them a proof of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that from God.**

**29. For to you it has been granted on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake,**

**30. having the same conflict which you saw in me and now hear is in me.**

Philippians 1:27-30 Paul's statement concerning how he views his own life and his eternal destiny leads to his doctrinal statement that our conduct should be worthy of the gospel of Christ. This is made particularly apparent through sufferings. "When believers willingly suffer without being terrified, it is a sign that God's enemies will be destroyed and eternally lost." The Greek word translated granted is from the noun for grace. Just as our faith is a gift from God, so also suffering is a gift from God. Suffering for Christ is a manifestation of saving faith. The Philippians were experiencing the same kind of suffering that Paul experienced. This included being beaten and put into prison. The Philippians witnessed the imprisonment of Paul and Silas (Acts 16:19-40).

## **Philippians Chapter 2**

- 1. Therefore if there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy,**
- 2. fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.**
- 3. Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself.**
- 4. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.**

Philippians 2:1-4 Living a life worthy of the gospel by application means that nothing should be done in a self-seeking manner, but in lowliness of mind esteem others better than ourselves. We should not only look out for our own interests but the interests of others. Believers are to love others, especially others of the faith, with the same kind of sacrificial loving service that Christ demonstrated. When believers pursue together living their lives in the faith, they are of one accord and of one mind. For the apostle Paul, this makes his joy complete (fulfills his joy). Paul warns the Philippian believers against selfish ambition. The heart of ambition is pride because people who pursue ambition are pushing for their own way. People who are successful or unsuccessful in getting their way will cause strife and rivalry. Those who get their own way glory in themselves, which is an empty glory. Paul admonishes believers to put away such carnal practices and pursue esteeming others better than yourself. This idea is given particular emphasis in verse 4. In verses 5 through 8 Paul uses Christ as the ultimate example of selfless love.

- 5. Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus,**
- 6. who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God,**

Philippians 2:5-6 Paul describes Jesus Christ as being in the form of God. The Greek word for form which Paul used denotes the essential, unchanging character of something, what it is in and of itself. In the same verse, Paul's use of the word for equal defines things that are exactly the same size, quantity, quality, character, and number. This means that in every sense Jesus is equal to God.

**7. but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men.**

Philippians 2:7 At His incarnation Jesus gave up or set aside His privileges in several areas, including:

1. Heavenly glory
2. Independent authority
3. Divine prerogatives
4. Eternal riches
5. A favorable relationship with God through His death on the cross.

Although He gave up these and other privileges at His incarnation, He was still fully God while at the same time fully human. He took on all the essential attributes of humanity, even to the extent of identifying with basic human needs and weaknesses. He was truly the God-Man: 100% God and 100% Man.

**8. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.**

Philippians 2:8 Paul's statement, "And being found in appearance as a man," means outwardly Jesus looked like a man, but he was no ordinary man. This man Jesus is God. After the humbling incarnation, Jesus humbled Himself to the lowest point by dying on a cross. This is the ultimate form of obedience. Crucifixion was the cruelest, most excruciating, most degrading form of death ever devised. The Jews hated this manner of execution.

**9. Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name,**

Philippians 2:9 Christ's exaltation pertains to His new identity as the God-Man. "Christ's new status as the God-Man meant God gave Him privileges He did not have prior to the Incarnation. If He had not lived among men, He could not have identified with them as the interceding High-Priest. Had He not died on the cross, He could not have been elevated from that lowest degree back to heaven as the substitute for sin. Christ's new name which further describes His essential nature and places Him above and beyond all comparison is 'Lord'. This name is the New Testament synonym for Old Testament descriptions of God as sovereign ruler."

**10. that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth,**

**11. and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.**

Philippians 2:10-11 "The name for Jesus given in the fullest sense after His exaltation, was 'Lord'. "'Lord' primarily refers to the right to rule and in the New Testament it denotes mastery over or ownership of people and property. When applied to Jesus, it certainly implies His deity, but it mainly refers to sovereign authority." The entire intelligent universe will worship Jesus Christ as Lord, whether angels or demons, redeemed man or fallen man.

## SUMMARY:

Philippians 2:5-11 Addressing doctrine, Paul states that although Christ was fully God, He willingly humbled Himself coming in the likeness of men, and He submitted even to death on the cross. This is the key section in Paul's letter to the Philippians which addresses Christ likeness. Paul continues by stating that this humble, obedient submission of Christ led to His exaltation. Paul states:

“Therefore God also has highly exalted him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

Believers are to grow in Christ to have the mind of Christ.

### **12. Therefore, my beloved, as you 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;**

Philippians 2:12 “The Greek verb rendered ‘work out’ means to continually work to bring something to fulfillment or completion.” This is not salvation by works, but the believer's active pursuit of obedience in the process of sanctification. This obedience involves a healthy fear of offending God and having a righteous awe and respect for Him.

### **13. for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.**

Philippians 2:13 The Lord, through the indwelling Holy Spirit, produces the good works and spiritual fruit in the lives of believers. “The Greek word for will indicates that He is not focusing on mere desires or whimsical emotions but on the studied intent to fulfill a planned purpose. God's power makes His church willing to live godly lives.”

### **14. Do all things without complaining and disputing,**

Philippians 2:14 Complaining, like muttering or grumbling, refers to an emotional rejection of God's providence. Disputing is more intellectual and in this context means questionings or criticisms directed negatively toward God.

### **15. that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world,**

Philippians 2:15 This verse identifies part of the sanctifying work that goes on in a believers life. Our sanctification is a process. The word become is used in the sense that we are growing toward something that we do not fully possess as children of God. As children of God we want to be blameless and without fault. A believer is blameless if he leads a life that cannot be criticized as being sinful or evil. A believer is without fault if he is above reproach. When these

attributes are present in the life of believers, the church stands out as a light in the midst of a dark culture. Paul describes the dark culture of unbelief as crooked and perverse. Crooked describes something that has deviated from the standard. Perverse describes one who has strayed so far off the path of godly living that his deviation is severely twisted and distorted.

**16. holding fast the word of life, so that I may rejoice in the day of Christ that I have not run in vain or labored in vain.**

Philippians 2:16 Holding forth is the literal translation. Here it refers to believers holding out or offering the gospel (word of life) for others to take. Paul faithfully handled the gospel, which when believed, produces spiritual and eternal life.

**17. Yes, and if I am being poured out as a drink offering on the sacrifice and service of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all.**

Philippians 2:17 Paul recognized that his commitment to the gospel and its propagation came at a price. Through his execution, his own life would be poured out as a drink offering over his sacrificial efforts to advance the Kingdom of God. This effort included his work in the gospel ministry among the Philippian believers. The drink offering refers to the poured out wine either in front of or on top of the burning animal sacrifice causing the wine to vaporize. The resulting steam symbolized the rising of the offering to God for whom the sacrifice was made.

**18. For the same reason you also be glad and rejoice with me.**

Philippians 2:18 Paul invites the Philippians to rejoice with him.

**SUMMARY:**

Philippians 2:12-18 By application Paul commands the Philippians to do all things without complaining and disputing so as to appear without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation. By holding fast to the word of life you will appear as lights in the world.

**19. But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you shortly, that I also may be encouraged when I know your state.**

**20. For I have no one like-minded, who will sincerely care for your state.**

**21. For all seek their own, not the things which are of Christ Jesus.**

**22. But you know his proven character, that as a son with his father he served with me in the gospel.**

Philippians 2:19-22 Timothy, whom Paul was sending to the Philippians, exemplifies one who walks in a manner worthy of the gospel. Timothy's character was proven. He was committed to the things of Jesus Christ as evidenced by his partnership with Paul in the gospel ministry. Paul said that he could find no other like Timothy who would sincerely care for them. This indicates that Timothy would be their leader and would be accountable to Paul (Philippians 2:19). Sadly, all the others in the Philippian church were devoted to their own purposes rather than the purposes of Christ.

- 23. Therefore I hope to send him at once, as soon as I see how it goes with me.**
- 24. But I trust in the Lord that I myself shall also come shortly.**

Philippians 2:23-24 “Paul was eventually released from prison after which he may have visited the church at Philippi.”

- 25. Yet I considered it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother, fellow worker, and fellow soldier, but your messenger and the one who ministered to my need;**
- 26. since he was longing for you all, and was distressed because you had heard that he was sick.**
- 27. For indeed he was sick almost unto death; but God had mercy on him, and not only him but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow.**
- 28. Therefore I sent him the more eagerly, that when you see him again you may rejoice, and I may be less sorrowful.**
- 29. Receive him therefore in the Lord with all gladness, and hold such men in esteem;**
- 30. because for the work of Christ he came close to death, not regarding his life, to supply what was lacking in your service toward me.**

Philippians 2:25-30 Paul sent his epistle to the Philippians through Epaphroditus. Paul praised this man since he almost lost his life to sickness in the service of ministering to Paul. For Paul this man was very special, and he held up this man as a faithful co-laborer in the gospel ministry even to the point of almost dying. The church at Philippi had sent Epaphroditus to Paul with gifts (Philippians 4:18) and he was to remain and serve Paul as he could during his incarceration (Philippians 2:30). Paul’s sending him back to the church with the Philippian epistle (letter) required explanation, lest they think that Epaphroditus had not served Paul well. In doing this, he held up Epaphroditus as an example to the Philippian believers.

### **Philippians Chapter 3**

- 1. Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. For me to write the same things to you is not tedious, but for you it is safe.**
- 2. Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the mutilation!**

Philippians 3:1-2 Paul begins chapter 3 addressing doctrine. Paul instructs the Philippians to beware of the Judaizers. The Judaizers believed, among other things, that physical circumcision was a prerequisite to receiving Christ and salvation. The teachings of the Judaizers were to be rejected, since they taught a false gospel. Paul’s reference to dogs, evil workers, and the mutilation describe the Judaizers. “The Judaizers prided themselves on being workers of righteousness. Yet Paul described their works as evil, since any attempt to please God by one’s own efforts and draw attention away from Christ’s accomplished redemption is the worst kind of wickedness.”

- 3. For we are the circumcision, who worship God the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh,**

Philippians 3:3 Those who receive Christ's gift of salvation through His finished work at the cross are the circumcision. These true believers worship (render respectful service) to God. The capital "S" in Spirit should be a small "s" for spirit of the inner man. Converted and regenerate people alone can truly worship God from the heart (inner man), because only believers understand and believe in the redemptive love God has for fallen, sinful man. In this believers are to rejoice (boast with exultant joy). All our hope and confidence is to be in Christ, and believers are to have no confidence in the flesh (our own human abilities). "The Jews placed their confidence in being circumcised, being descendants of Abraham, and performing the external ceremonies and duties of the Mosaic law – things that could not save them."

- 4. though I also might have confidence in the flesh. If anyone else thinks he may have confidence in the flesh, I more so:**
- 5. circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, or the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; concerning the law, a Pharisee;**

Philippians 3:4-5

Circumcised the eighth day – Paul was circumcised on the prescribed day according to tradition and Scripture (Genesis 17:12, Genesis 21:4, and Leviticus 12:3).

Of the stock of Israel – Paul, as every true Jew, was a direct descendant of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Of the tribe of Benjamin – Benjamin was the second son of Rachel (the favored wife of Jacob). This was one of the elite tribes of Israel, who along with Judah, remained loyal to the Davidic dynasty and formed the southern kingdom.

Hebrew of the Hebrews – Paul was born to Hebrew parents and maintained the Hebrew tradition and language, even while living in a pagan city.

A Pharisee – The legalistic fundamentalists of Judaism, whose zeal to apply the Old Testament Scriptures directly to life led to a complex system of tradition and works righteousness.

- 6. concerning zeal, persecuting the church; concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.**

Philippians 3:6

Concerning zeal, persecuting the church – Paul had a strong zeal for his Jewish faith, which for the Jew, was the highest single virtue of religion. Zeal combines love and hate. Paul loved Judaism and hated whatever might threaten it.

The righteousness which is in the law, blameless – According to the standard of the Scribes and Pharisees concerning outward conformance to the law, Paul was blameless. What Paul and the other religious leaders of Judaism did not realize was that the whole man (inner and outer) was to follow the law not just the outward portion. This, of course, is impossible.

**7. But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ.**

Philippians 3:7 The Greek word for gain is an accounting term which means net income or profit. The Greek word for loss is an accounting term which means net loss. “Paul used the language of business to describe the spiritual transaction that occurred when Christ redeemed him.” Compared to God’s grace in Jesus Christ which Paul considered gain, all his Jewish religious credentials that he previously thought were in his profit column, were actually worthless and damning.

**8. Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ**

Philippians 3:8 Knowledge of Christ means to know Him personally or experientially. This can only be realized through love and obedience to Him, as taught through Scripture. Paul considered every philosophical system outside of Jesus Christ to be rubbish. Rubbish refers to garbage, waste, and can even be translated dung or manure. When you place yourself in opposition to the world’s philosophical system through faith in Christ, you can lose all your personal possessions. You can even lose your own life.

**9. and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith;**

Philippians 3:9 Rather than have the self-righteous external morality of the law which manifests itself in religious ritual, ceremony, and good works, Paul boasted of the righteousness of Jesus Christ which is imputed to the believer by faith. “Faith is the confident, continuous confession of total dependence on and trust in Jesus Christ for the necessary requirement to enter God’s kingdom.” “And that requirement is the righteousness of Christ, which God imputes to every believer.”

**10. that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death,**

Philippians 3:10 Paul desired to know Christ through the power of His resurrection, partnership in His sufferings, and being conformed to His death.

the power of His resurrection – “Christ’s resurrection most graphically demonstrated the extent of His power. By raising Himself from the dead, Christ displayed His power over both the physical and spiritual worlds.”

fellowship of His sufferings – Paul desired to suffer for the cause of the gospel (salvation through Jesus Christ alone). In doing this, he partners with Christ in accomplishing the redemptive plan.

conformed to His death – “As Christ died for the purpose of redeeming sinners, so Paul had that same purpose in a lesser sense; he lived and would willingly die to reach sinners with the gospel. His life and death, though not redemptive, were for the same purpose as his Lord’s.”

**11. if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.**

Philippians 3:11 Paul longed for the fulfillment of his salvation in his resurrection body. The resurrection from the dead is a reference to the first resurrection, which is the rapture of the church when believers are united with their glorified bodies (1 Thessalonians 4:13-17).

SUMMARY:

Philippians 3:4-11 In contrast to Judaizer teaching Paul states that true righteousness is not your own righteousness from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ. It is the righteousness of Christ imputed to the believer by faith that is the heart of true Christ likeness. Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by allowing Himself to be cursed by the law instead. “To counteract the Judaizers’ claim that certain ceremonies and rituals of Judaism were necessary for salvation, Paul described his own lofty attainments as a Jew, which were greater than those his opponents could claim, but were of no benefit for salvation.”

**12. Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me.**

Philippians 3:12 The Greek word for press on refers to aggressive energetic action. Paul pursued sanctification with all his ability to acquire (lay hold) of Christ likeness as his possession. Just as Christ had made Paul His possession, Paul desired to make Christ likeness his possession.

**13. Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead,**

Philippians 3:13 The Greek word for apprehended means laid hold. Paul states that he has not fully apprehended the whole of sanctification (Christ likeness). Paul states that he is in active pursuit of total Christ likeness. He is not relying on past virtuous deeds and accomplishments, nor does he dwell on past sins and failures.

**14. I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.**

Philippians 3:14 Paul presses on toward the goal, Christ likeness in this life and in the life to come. The fullness of Christ likeness and eternal life will be realized in heaven. Total Christ likeness and being one with Christ will take place the moment God calls each believer up to heaven. This goal or prize is not fully attainable on earth.

**15. Therefore let us, as many as are mature, have this mind; and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal even this to you.**

Philippians 3:15 The pursuit of godliness and Christ likeness is the mark of spiritual maturity. Those who pursue Christ likeness are of the same mind as Paul. Those who do not think in this manner are not spiritually mature and God will reveal this to them, even through chastening.

**16. Nevertheless, to the degree that we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us be of the same mind.**

Philippians 3:16 To the degree that the Philippian believers had attained sanctification, this is the degree to which they were to conduct themselves in righteousness and be of the same mind as Paul himself.

**17. Brethren, join in following my example, and note those who so walk, as you have us for a pattern.**

Philippians 3:17 The Philippian believers were to focus on other godly examples, such as Paul, Timothy, and Epaphroditus, and see how they conducted themselves in service to Christ.

**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 set their mind on earthly things.**

Philippians 3:18-19 The enemies of the cross could have been the Judaizers or Gentile libertines. Gentile libertines were the precursors of Gnosticism. Gnosticism maintains a dualistic philosophy that tended toward antinomianism (the discard of any moral law). The Judaizers were preoccupied with such earthly things as ceremonies, feasts, sacrifices, and other kinds of physical observances, including dietary laws. Such things the Judaizers thought were necessary for salvation. This was the shame of the Judaizers. The Gentile libertines sought to satisfy sensual desires and fleshly appetites. In general, the Gentile libertines simply loved the world itself and all things in it. “The Gentile libertines boasted about their sin and abused Christian liberty to defend their behavior.”

**20. For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ,**

Philippians 3:20 True believers obey heaven’s laws because true believers are citizens of heaven. The believer’s true home is where Christ is present and where eternal life awaits. It is for God’s presence, the glories of heaven, and eternal life that true believers await with great expectation.

**21. who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.**

Philippians 3:21 The Lord Jesus Christ is able to transform our bodies making them like His own resurrected body. This body will be designed and adapted for heaven. The resurrected bodies will be given to believers when the church is raptured and resurrected. The Lord Jesus is able to do this because He manages or sets in order all things.

## **Philippians Chapter 4**

### **1. Therefore, my beloved and longed-for brethren, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, beloved.**

Philippians 4:1 Paul had a deep affection for his fellow Philippian believers. When separated from them, he longed to be with them. Paul compared the Philippian believers to a laurel wreath (crown) received by an athlete for winning a contest. The Philippian believers were Paul's prize. Paul therefore desired that the Philippians believers be at peace with one another and be of one mind.

### **2. I implore Euodia and I implore Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord.**

Philippians 4:2 Paul urged Euodia and Syntyche, two prominent church members in the Philippian church to be at peace (of the same mind) with one another. Apparently, these women were leading two opposing factions in the church, most likely over a personal conflict.

### **3. And I urge you also, true companion, help these women who labored with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the Book of Life.**

Philippians 4:3 The unnamed individual (true companion) is probably one of the church elders. Nothing is known of this individual nor Clement, both of whom were instructed by Paul to help the two women to get along. Paul reminds these men that they and other fellow workers with Paul have their names written in the "Book of Life." "In eternity past, God registered all the names of His elect in that book which identifies those inheritors of eternal life."

### **4. Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say rejoice!**

Philippians 4:4 The believer's joy is in the Lord not in outward circumstances. We are, therefore, to rejoice in the Lord always.

### **5. Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord is at hand.**

Philippians 4:5 Gentleness refers to contentment with and generosity toward others. "It can also refer to mercy or leniency toward the faults and failures of others." It can even refer to patience in someone who submits to injustice or mistreatment without retaliating." "Graciousness with humility encompasses all of the above." The context for "The Lord is at hand" suggests the nearness or closeness of the Lord's presence to all believers.

**6. Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God;**

Philippians 4:6 “Fret and worry indicate a lack of trust in God’s wisdom, sovereignty, or power.” Paul instructs the Philippian believers not to worry, but turn over their needs and concerns to God in prayer. Prayer includes the study of the word of God which is a great antidote for anxiety. Paul also instructs the Philippian believers to always give thanks to God for everything that He has already provided.

**7. and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.**

Philippians 4:7 Confidence toward God, reliance on Him through prayer, study of the word of God, and maintaining a thankful attitude produces the peace of God in the believer. This peace transcends human intellect, analysis, and insight. This peace keeps watch over (guards) believers’ inner person protecting them from anxiety, doubt, fear, and distress. The terms hearts and minds refers to the whole person.

**8. Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy – meditate on these things.**

Philippians 4:8 Paul instructs the Philippian believers to meditate on that which is true, noble, just, pure, lovely, and of good report. These terms are defined as follows:

1. True – What is true is found in God and the word of God.
2. Noble – The Greek term means worthy of respect.
3. Just – This term refers to what is right.
4. Pure – That which is morally clean and undefiled.
5. Lovely – The Greek term means pleasing or amiable. This can also mean being kind or gracious.
6. Good Report – “That which is highly regarded or thought well of.” “It refers to what is generally considered reputable in the world, such as kindness, courtesy, and respect for others.”

**9. The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you.**

Philippians 4:9 The Philippians were to follow the truth of God proclaimed, along with the example of that truth lived out by Paul. God is referred to by Paul as the God of peace since God makes peace with sinners through Jesus Christ. In Christ, God gives the believer peace even in times of trouble.

**10. But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now at last your care for me has flourished again; though you surely did care, but you lacked opportunity.**

Philippians 4:10 As referenced in verses 15 and 16 of chapter 4, the Philippians had assisted Paul to help meet his needs when he was first in Thessalonica. Paul realized that the Philippians desired to continue to help, but that they lacked opportunity.

**11. Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content:**

Philippians 4:11 The term content means to be self-sufficient or to be satisfied. It is the same word translated sufficiency. Paul's sufficiency and satisfaction comes from Jesus Christ. Whatever God's promises for him, Paul was satisfied.

**12. I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.**

Philippians 4:12 Paul knew how to be content when he had plenty to eat and when he was deprived of enough to eat.

**13. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.**

Philippians 4:13 Paul was given the power by Christ to withstand all things. "Because believers are in Christ (Galatians 2:20), He infuses them with His strength to sustain them until they receive some provision." (Ephesians 3:16-20, 2 Corinthians 12:10)

**14. Nevertheless you have done well that you shared in my distress.**

Philippians 4:14 Paul commends the Philippians for assisting him in his time of need. Paul adds this commendation so the Philippians do not think that he is ungrateful for their assistance or their assistance does not matter based on what he wrote in verses 11-13 of chapter 4.

**15. Now you Philippians know also that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church shared with me concerning giving and receiving but you only.**

Philippians 4:15 Paul's reference to the beginning of the gospel refers to when he first preached the gospel in Philippi. "In addition to Philippi, Paul also ministered in two other towns in Macedonia: Thessalonica and Berea." Paul was a faithful steward of God's resources and kept careful records of what he received and spent." "Only the Philippians sent Paul provisions to meet his needs."

**16. For even in Thessalonica you sent aid once and again for my necessities.**

Philippians 4:16 Even when Paul was in Thessalonica, the Philippians supplied Paul with assistance.

**17. Not that I seek the gift , but I seek the fruit that abounds to your account.**

Philippians 4:17 The Greek word for fruit can be translated profit. Paul is stating that the Philippians were storing up for themselves treasure in heaven. The gifts they gave to Paul were accruing eternal dividends to their spiritual account. (1 Corinthians 9:6, Matthew 6:20, Luke 6:38)

**18. Indeed I have all and abound. I am full, having received from Epaphroditus the things sent from you, a sweet-smelling aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well pleasing to God.**

Philippians 4:18 “In the Old Testament sacrificial system, every sacrifice was to provide a fragrant aroma and be acceptable to God. Only if it is offered with the correct attitude would it be pleasing to Him. The Philippians gift was a spiritual sacrifice that pleased God.

**19. And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.**

Philippians 4:19 Paul comes full circle. Just as Paul knew that God would supply all his needs, so also God would supply all the needs of the Philippian brethren. In the case of Paul as an individual or the group of believers in the Philippian church, God is faithful to meet all needs.

**20. Now to our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen.**

Philippians 4:20 This doxology is Paul’s praise to God for His faithfulness, which includes supplying all the needs of the saints.

**21. Greet every saint in Christ Jesus. The brethren who are with me greet you.**

Philippians 4:21 “Instead of using the collective “all”, Paul used the individualistic “every” to declare that each saint was worthy of his concern.”

**22. All the saints greet you, but especially those who are of Caesar’s household.**

Philippians 4:22 Since the Philippian letter is a prison epistle, written while Paul was a prisoner in Rome, Paul sent greetings from the saints in Rome. The saints in Caesar’s household included not only his immediate family but also those who worked for him. Paul had in mind those who, through the proclamation of the gospel by members of the church at Rome, had been saved prior to his coming. “Newly added to their number were those led to Christ by Paul himself, including those soldiers who were chained to him while he was a prisoner.”

**23. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.**

Philippians 4:23 The common conclusion to Paul’s epistles is his commendation of believers to the grace of God.