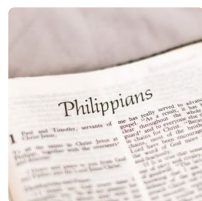


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Philippians Introduction, 1:1 - 2:30



Philippians - Steve Gregg

Explore the insights of Philippians in this fascinating exposition by Steve Gregg, as he delves into the themes of unity, righteousness, and the cost of following God. Discover the significance of Paul's optimism amidst his imprisonment and his gratitude for the support received from the church in Philippi. Gregg highlights the importance of discernment and the ability to appraise what is good and evil. Gain a deeper understanding of the biblical teachings on humility and the exaltation of those who humble themselves.

Transcript

Alright, we'll turn to the epistle of Paul to the Philippians. This is probably the fourth epistle that he wrote from his Roman imprisonment. He was certainly imprisoned when he wrote it.

That's clear enough from what he tells us about himself in the first chapter, especially from verse 12 on for several verses. He talks about his bonds, his chains, the effect of his imprisonment in reaching the king's household with the gospel. So we know he's writing from prison.

Some have felt like he was writing from his imprisonment in Caesarea, where we know that he spent two years in prison awaiting his being sent to Rome. And then after he went to Rome, we know he spent at least two years in prison, according to the Book of Acts, after which we have no definite record, though it is believed by most, I think, that Paul was released from that imprisonment in Rome, traveled a bit more, and then was captured again later when things got hotter against the Christians and was killed by Nero. So according to the scenario most would accept, we know that Paul spent two years in prison in Caesarea, two years at least in Rome, was perhaps released for a period of time, and then had a second Roman imprisonment.

It is believed, as I said, by some, that this is written from his Caesarean imprisonment, but there's hardly any reason to believe it. In fact, in this epistle he has a strong optimism about his soon release. He makes it very clear that he rather expects to be

released soon, especially in chapter 1, verse 26.

He says that your rejoicing may be more abundant in Jesus Christ for me by my coming to you again. He's referring to his expectation that he will be released soon. Elsewhere we will find such statements that through their prayers he hopes that he will be released.

Now, this is very different than the flavor of, for instance, 2 Timothy, which he also wrote from a Roman imprisonment. In 2 Timothy, Paul said, I know I'm not long for this world. I'm soon going to die.

I'm ready to be offered up, and so forth. And it is believed that because of the difference in tone, that this must belong to the earlier Roman imprisonment, where he had optimism of being released, and probably was released, actually, for a period of time. Whereas 1 and 2 Timothy would belong to a later imprisonment when he was recaptured, from which he never was released, but rather ended in martyrdom.

So it would be very surprising if both Philippians and 1 and 2 Timothy came from the same Roman imprisonment, though both of them, almost certainly, he was imprisoned in Rome during the writing of all those epistles. Yet his attitude about how things would turn out is very different in Philippians. In Philippians, it is a very happy epistle, though Paul is writing from a position of being in chains.

It is written probably about the same time, or maybe a little later, than Colossians and Ephesians and Philemon, which are all, along with this epistle, called the prison epistles of Paul. The epistles of Paul are generally divided up into different groups. Of course, Romans stand in a class by itself as a doctrinal treatise.

1 and 2 Corinthians and 1 and 2 Thessalonians obviously belong to groups of their own, usually referred to as the Corinthian correspondence and the Thessalonian correspondence. Then we have what we call the prison epistles, written from his Roman imprisonment. In the first Roman imprisonment, those epistles that I just mentioned are generally considered to be Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon, and Philippians, of which he studied Colossians and Philemon yesterday.

We will save Ephesians for a later date. Ephesians is a very significant epistle. It has much in common with Colossians.

In fact, some passages are almost identically taken from one to the other, only just reworded slightly. But Philippians probably was the fourth of these four prison epistles that were written. Then, of course, we have the pastoral epistles of Paul, which are the ones that he wrote to Timothy and Titus, which we will be studying next week.

The letter to the Philippians is, I would say, the most personal letter that Paul wrote to a church. Certainly, his letter to Philemon is even more personal than this, but it's not written to a church so much as to an individual friend. But in writing to churches, Paul

often would have a very ministerial tone.

The whole tone of his letter would be condescending to the church or one speaking down to the church, whereas here he speaks very intimately and very freely with them. He bears his heart. Of course, he did that in 2 Corinthians quite a bit, too, only he didn't have the same kind of freedom with the Corinthian church.

Though he showed very clearly his emotion with the Philippians, he had nothing but positive emotions. Throughout the epistle, we find joy and rejoicing as the main themes. If you would go through and just mark in your Bible every time the word joy or rejoice or something related to those words is found, you would find that it is the prevailing spirit of the epistle.

That's probably because this church meant so much to him. You must remember that the Philippian church was the first church in Europe. When Paul had been ministering largely in Asia and was even wanting to go further into Asia, but the Holy Spirit forbade him, the Scripture says, finally he was called by a dream to go over into Europe, into Macedonia, where the first city he came to was Philippi.

Philippi was a Roman colony, which means it was not just an ordinary city in the Roman Empire, but it had special status so that people who were born there were counted citizens of Rome. Paul himself had citizenship by virtue of where he was born in Tarsus. Probably not because he was born in Tarsus, probably more because of family privileges that he had.

His father was a citizen. But if a person were born in a Roman colony and were a citizen of that colony, he had the privileges of Roman citizenship. The people of Philippi were largely proud of their Roman citizenship.

We find the story of the founding of the church there in Acts 16. We know that Paul had a very promising beginning of the church there, but he got persecuted there, even thrown in jail for casting a demon out of a young Clairvoyant woman. But the accusations that were brought against him on that occasion were that they were teaching things that were against the law for the Philippians to observe, because, as they said, we are Romans.

They were very proud of the fact that they were Roman. They no doubt highly valued their special privileged status as Romans. The people, though they were not citizens of the city of Rome, yet were Romans by virtue of living in a Roman colony.

Philippi was largely inhabited by retired Roman soldiers, although there were other people there too, as we find just by reading the accounts in Acts 16. You might remember that the city of Philippi, and therefore the church of Philippi, had very few Jews in it, unlike, say, the church of Rome that Paul wrote to, or some of the other

churches which had a strong Jewish element in them, though they were in Gentile areas. Philippi was one town that didn't have many Jews, probably because it was more of a military kind of a city rather than a merchant city.

And we know that the Jews tended to be attracted to those areas where merchandise could be sold. So we know that they had fewer than ten Jewish families in the whole city, because it was customary in any city where there were more than ten heads of household, that is, ten adult male Jews, that they would build a synagogue. But Philippi had no synagogue, and when Paul came there in Acts 16, he found no synagogue, and so he found what Jews there were down by a riverside, meeting on the Sabbath just to rest and meditate on the scriptures.

This was customary in those cities where there was no synagogue, if there were fewer than ten adult male Jews. And that's where Paul found a few Jews when he first came there. The first convert he had in Europe, which was in Philippi, was a woman.

And she was not a European herself, she was an Asiatic herself, but she was living apparently in Philippi. She was a seller of purple, which means a certain kind of dye that was very expensive in those days. Her name was Lydia.

And she was down by the river with the Jews. She may have been a proselyte or a god-hearer, but she was actually from Asia, but she became the first convert in Europe. And she invited Paul and his companions into her home, where they apparently stayed, it would seem, for some time.

And they got into trouble, as we recall, by casting the demon out of this slave girl who had a spirit of divination, or a spirit of python, as the Greek actually reads. And when they were in jail there in Philippi, God sent an earthquake as they sang praises to God in their chains, and their socks broke open, the doors of the cell broke open, and the jailer, thinking the prisoners had escaped attempted to commit suicide, but Paul averted that. And it led to the conversion of the Philippian jailer, who was another of the early converts in Philippi.

We don't know very much about the church in Philippi as far as the individual members. Some of them are named for us here. There were two women in chapter 4, verse 2, named Euodias and Syntyche, and they apparently had some quarrel among themselves, and Paul sends a special message to them in chapter 4, verse 2, to resolve their quarrel and to be of one mind with each other.

There's also someone that he refers to in verse 3 as his true yoke-fellow. A yoke-fellow suggests somebody, if there was a yoke and two oxen were pulling it, if you were one of the oxen, the other oxen would be the yoke-fellow. Though the true yoke-fellow is not named here, it is possible that it's referring to Luke.

Though we certainly couldn't be sure of that. Luke was with Paul in Rome some of the time, but during that two years that Paul was in Rome in prison, we needn't suppose that Luke remained all the time. We know that when Paul first left Philippi, after his persecution there and all, he left Philippi and left Luke there.

Though this is not stated directly in the book of Acts, we find that Luke did not accompany him. As Paul went south from Philippi into Thessalonica and later into Berea and into Athens and into Corinth, as Paul went to all these other places in Greece, he had left Luke there in Philippi, apparently because the church still needed some kind of pastoral leadership. And later, when Paul returned up that same route and came to Philippi, Luke rejoined him.

This we gather from reading Acts, from the we sections and the they sections in Acts. Sometimes Luke in writing Acts says, we did this, and sometimes they did this. We can tell by comparing those we sections that it was we until they came to Philippi, and then it was they who went down to the southern portions of the earth.

A role of leadership in this church, in verse 3 of chapter 4, may be a reference to Luke himself. It has been sometimes thought. A few other people are mentioned by name.

In chapter 3, for instance, there is a mention of a Clement, who should not be mistaken with Clement of Rome or Clement of Alexander, some of the earlier church fathers, but just some other Clements, apparently a rather common name. But it would seem like the church originally was made up of some Jews, some men who joined the church, because of the Philippians who were baptized that night. And one thing about this church, Paul never had the troubles with this church, he had with almost all the others.

We know of his problems with Galatia. We know of his problems with Corinth. We don't really have any reference in the Ephesian epistles to problems he had with them, but we know that he ran into troubles in Ephesus anyway.

And yet the Philippian church always seemed to be supportive of him. They did have a bit of normal troubles with internal quarrels, as we mentioned. Syntyche and Euodius seemed to have had a quarrel that Paul had to intervene to bring reconciliation in.

But nothing like the church splits that were threatening to take place in Corinth. And as far as the intrusion of Judaizers, there were some Judaizers troubling these people, as is declared by chapter 3 and verse 2, where it says, Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision, or the cutters, meaning the circumcision party. And apparently this church was not entirely free from the circumcision party coming in, but it apparently had given no place to them, as for instance the Galatian church has been done.

Probably the circumcision party did not focus much of their attention against Paul in

Philippi, because there were not many Jews in Philippi, and therefore the eyes were attracted there perhaps. They wouldn't have the same Jewish support there as in other cities. But anyway, Paul feels a little relief about this church.

Rather than having a heaviness about him when he writes to them, he's excited, he's encouraged, he's rejoicing. He really doesn't have any negative to say. He has some wonderful things to say positively.

It's a short letter. The occasion of the writing of the letter was apparently that he had received a gift, a financial gift from them, and that he was writing the letter of thanks, and he decided that he was going to send a letter of acknowledgement that he had received a gift. He would also take the opportunity to fill them in, update them on his circumstances, and exhort them about a few important things.

And so this short letter was written. Though short, each chapter has passages in it that are well known. That is to say, each of these chapters has some very quotable material in it, and unlike some epistles where a few chapters and the rest are kind of obscure, this epistle is rich throughout.

Now, the Philippians had sent Paul money more than once. Remember, he told the Corinthians he wouldn't take any money from the church, probably owing to the difference in mentality of the Christians in those two places. Paul said that he wouldn't take money from the Corinthians because he didn't want to give any occasion of accusation against him to those who were looking for such occasions of accusation.

So he just made a false claim that he wouldn't take money from them. Apparently, the tendency to accuse Paul, so he did not turn down their gifts at all. And they had sent to him at least, apparently this would be about the fourth time that they had sent him money.

And he mentions in chapter 4, in verse 10, or not really verse 10, anyway, in verse 4 he brings it out that they had given him money on several occasions. And it's in verse 15, he says, Now you 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 you only. For even in Thessalonica you sent once and again unto my necessity.

So we remember from Acts, when Paul went to Philippi, he went down to Thessalonica. He was only there a short time, but even in the short time he was in Thessalonica, he twice received financial gifts from the church in Philippi. Now we know from what he says in 2 Corinthians that the Macedonian churches were poor.

Remember 2 Corinthians 1, where he's inspiring the Corinthians to give because of the example of the Macedonian churches, which would certainly, Philippi would be the

principal one of those groups. And he insinuates that it was a very costly thing for the Macedonian churches to give because of their poverty. And yet, in spite of the poverty, the Philippian church had twice, or probably by this time, four times sent to him money because twice in Thessalonica, he mentions, they had sent him money.

We know that they sent him money while he was in Corinth because he says that in 2 Corinthians, he says, I didn't take any money from you Corinthians because those things that were sent to me from Macedonia, I used those to support myself with. And now he's in Rome and he's just received another financial gift. This will be at least the fourth time they've sent him money.

And so he's writing the epistle back. Now, there's a man in this epistle, he is described in chapter 2, in verse 25, as Paul's brother, meaning of course, brother in the faith rather than a natural brother, and companion in labor, and a fellow soldier. These are all suggestions that Epaphroditus was a partner on some level with Paul in the ministry.

But he's described as your messenger. That is, Epaphroditus is in some sense a messenger of the church of Philippi. It is clear when we get down to chapter 4, in verse 18, it says, But I am all, and I abound, and I am full, having received from Epaphroditus the things which you have sent unto me.

So it seems clear enough that Epaphroditus was a member of the church in Philippi, and that he, on the occasion that inspired this letter, had been the carrier of the gift. The church of Philippi had sent Epaphroditus to carry this gift to Paul when they heard about his flight in Rome. And apparently Epaphroditus had spent some time with Paul there in Rome, having brought the gift to Epaphroditus.

But apparently he got sick in Rome. It mentions that in chapter 2, in verse 26. Chapter 2, verse 26, it says, For he longed after you all, and he was full of heaviness, because indeed he was sick, not only to death, but God had mercy on him, and not on him only, but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow.

I sent him therefore more carefully, that when ye see him again ye may rejoice, and that I may be the less sorrowful. So, what it appears is that Epaphroditus came to Paul as a gift, and either on the trip or while in Rome, he contracted some kind of a sickness that nearly killed him. Paul speaks of it in a rather matter-of-fact sort of way, as though sickness was just the kind of thing that Christians were accustomed to, not as though it was strange for a Christian to be sick nearly to death, but the Lord was merciful and spared him, and me too by sparing him.

But the point is that Epaphroditus must have stayed long enough in Rome for the Philippian church to get news back from Rome that Epaphroditus was sick there. And then Paul got news back that the Philippian church was concerned about Epaphroditus, and when Epaphroditus heard that, he was concerned for the church. So he must have

been in Rome for a while with Paul, therefore all this news would go back and forth.

And finally, when he recovered, Paul said, you know, I'm going to send you right back to Philippi. I mean, I don't want you dying here in Rome. That would just bring so much sorrow to me.

And so he did. And so this man Epaphroditus, about whom we know little else from what we have in this epistle, was apparently a significant messenger of the church of Philippi. Some feel like he was maybe the principal pastor of the church, but that would only be a guess, and it hardly seems likely that they would send the pastor of the church on a weeks-long mission to Rome when they would probably be making use of him rather.

Besides which, I had my doubts that Philippi had a single pastor. An interesting thing, in the first verse of the epistle, it meant that he sends his greetings to all the saints who are at Philippi with bishops and deacons. This is the only one of his epistles that he actually speaks of the church officers, the bishops and deacons, and addresses them in his salutation.

We know what bishops and deacons are only from the Book of Acts and from the pastoral epistles. The pastoral epistles, meaning 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1, which in both cases give a description of the office and the qualifications of an elder, which Paul equates with a bishop. An elder and a bishop are the same thing.

The word bishop is literally an overseer. Episkopos in the Greek, from which the word Episcopalian comes, means an overseer, and that's the Greek word that's translated bishop. It describes the function of a bishop, whereas the other word, elder, comes from the Greek word presbuteros, which is obviously related to our modern word presbyterian.

Presbuteros means elder. It literally means an older man, and probably the title of the office was presbuteros, an elder, whereas the description of his office was overseer. He would oversee the church.

For example, in Acts 20, if you turn there just for a moment, Paul had called the elders of the church of Ephesus to meet with him, and he was not going to Ephesus personally, so he sent for them to come to him in Miletus. They came to him and he gave a final farewell message to them, and he says to the elders of Ephesus in Acts 20.28, Take heed, therefore, unto yourselves and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost has made you overseers, or episkopos, bishops. So he's actually running to the elders.

We have that very plainly stated to us in verse 17. From Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called the elders of the church to whom this address was made. So to the elders he said, the Holy Spirit has made you bishops, or has made you overseers.

So it's clear that the word bishop is identical to the word elder as far as the office is concerned. We have further confirmation of that fact in 1 Timothy. I guess it's 1 Timothy.

No, I guess it's Titus. It's Titus chapter 1. In his list of qualifications for elders, he says in Titus chapter 1 verse 5, For this cause lest I be increased, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are lacking, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee, if any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children, not accused of bribe or unruly. For a bishop must be blameless as the steward of God.

Notice he says in verse 5, appoint elders. Name some of the qualifications, because a bishop must be blameless. That is to say, an elder is a bishop, and therefore because a bishop must be blameless, elders must meet these qualifications.

An overseer must have no occasion for people to blame him. So we find that, biblically speaking, the word bishop... Now, in the scriptures we find no case of a church that had just one bishop, or just one elder. In every case, the churches had a number of elders or bishops.

In the verse we just read, Titus 1 verse 5, it says to appoint elders, plural, in every city. Though there was only one church in each city, he would appoint elders. In James chapter 5, it says, If any be sick, let him call for the elders, plural, of the church, singular.

Elders of the church, as though a church had many elders. The first reference to elders in the book of Acts, which is in the 14th chapter of Acts, actually says that as Paul and Barabbas were returning on their first missionary journey, that they stopped in each city they had been to before, and they appointed elders in every city, elders in every church. That's in the 14th chapter, I believe.

It must be. Let me find it here. Yeah, Acts 14.23. So every individual church had elders, plural, or bishops in it.

Now, what did a bishop do? You'll get more of this when you get into the pastoral officials, which dwells on this subject more. But a bishop apparently did the pastoral work. Now, that tells us that the individual churches did not have a pastor, but had a board of pastors, a board of elders.

The reason I know that they did pastoral work is because we already read, just a moment ago, in Acts 20.28, when Paul was addressing the elders of Ephesus, to take heed to the flock, shepherd the flock. Well, that's what a pastor is. The word pastor just means shepherd.

And Peter wrote to the elders in 1 Peter 5, verses 1-3, feed the flock, in other words, pastor the flock, shepherd the flock. So it was the function of the elders to be the... So each church had elders, plural, which were also called bishops, which were what we would now call pastors. It's interesting, though the word pastor among Protestants is probably the most common designation for a church officer, for usually the chief officer of a given church.

Usually we call them a pastor. Yet the word pastor does not appear in the New Testament for church officials, except in one place, and only there in the plural. And that's, of course, Ephesians 4, verse 11, which says, that he gave some apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers.

Pastors and teachers are sometimes thought to be two descriptions of the same office, a person being both a pastor and a teacher. In any case, the word pastors appears only there with reference to a church official, and there in the plural. So there's no reference anywhere in the Bible to a church having one pastor.

But there are certain references to them having a body of elders, an eldership, or as Paul uses the word, a presbytery. When he talks to Timothy and says, Stir up the gift that's in you, which you receive by the laying on of hands of the presbytery, in the eldership. The elders, plural, lay hands on Timothy.

So this much we get from our search and our study of the word deacon, or bishops, and elders. Now deacons, on the other hand, were those persons who, the word deacon simply means servant, the miscellaneous service of the church. The question of whether the seven that were appointed in Acts chapter 6 were deacons or not, it cannot finally be solved.

It is generally considered that they were. I know Jim was sharing when he was a teacher of Acts, he felt like those men did pastoral ministry, and that assertion could not be disproven, nor proven as far as that goes. All we know is that, and whether they did pastoral ministry, we do know that the church in Jerusalem was somewhat different than others in the permanent resident apostles, whereas most of the other churches didn't.

And so the thing in Jerusalem was a little different, who did the pastoral work and deacons, who apparently did miscellaneous things for the church. Now it's interesting that Paul, when he addresses the church in chapter 1 and verse 1 of Philippians, says, Paul and Timotheus, which is of course the longer form of the name Timothy, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus, which are, because apparently they don't have one, they have only bishops and deacons. So this gives us again some idea of the structure of the church.

Grace be unto you and peace from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ. I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, unlike some of the churches. Some of the remembrances of some of the churches was not missed.

But every time he thought about this group, they were always supporters of him, always positive. They never tolerated any opposition to Paul in this church. They were very supportive, which was always because of course if people voluntarily send you money, it's a token of general attitude of supportiveness in general.

And so whenever he thought of this church, he always thought of the Galatian churches, which was getting kind of heavy, so he called them by the Philippians. At least there's something I can be happy about. And so I thank God whenever I remember you, he said.

Always in every prayer of mine for you all, making requests with joy for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now, unlike some of these other churches that his fellowship was on again and off again with them. But these people have always been one, united with him from the first day until now. Being confident of this very thing, that he which has begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ, even as it is meek for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart, inasmuch as both in my bonds and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, ye are all partakers of my grace.

For God is my record. How greatly I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ. And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment, that ye may approve things that are excellent, that ye may be sincere and without offense until the day of Christ, being filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ unto the glory and praise of God.

Now this is his end. It has to do with his longing, his thankfulness over the church and hopes for them. He says he's confident about them in verse 6, that God, who has begun a good work in them, would continue to perform what he has begun to do until the day of Christ Jesus, meaning of course that until Jesus returns, God will be continually working in this church.

And we, of course, a lot of people think it's quite correct to do so also, although that may not be his primary thought. But we thought, God, once you've been converted, he's wrought a work of grace in you, of repentance, and has given you a gift of faith, and you've become a Christian. He's begun a work in you, and sometimes that work doesn't seem like it will ever really be.

And this verse has given much comfort to Christians throughout the ages, just as an individual promise, not taken so much as a promise to a church, as in this case. But as opposed to you as an individual, God began a work in you. He wouldn't have done that unless he planned to finish it.

Now, it's debatable whether you have any power toward his purpose in your life. I feel like you do, some people feel you don't, but the point is, we're assuming that we're not going to do that. I mean, the whole question of whether or not we can stop God's work in our life is a question for Backsliders to be concerned.

As far as we're concerned, we can be confident that God's not going to give up on us. He's not going to depart from us. And so, God is very important for us, because we sometimes have impressed upon our conscience our unworthiness for him to continue

working with us.

Normally, every time we have a significant failure, we think, wow, I wonder if God's getting tired of me. I wonder if God's reaching the end of his patience with me. Paul's confidence here is that God is not going to give up.

He is the one doing the work in you. He stresses this again in chapter 2, verse 13, where he says, "...to do is good pleasure." Realize that in order for God even to begin to work in your life, he had to pay a great price. Namely, he had to send his son to die.

The ultimate price he could have paid. There's nothing else he could have paid that would have cost him more. He could have paid, if it were possible, to redeem us with silver and gold, as 1 Peter tells us we were not redeemed with silver and gold.

But if he could have redeemed us with silver and gold, it would have cost him nothing, because he can create such things, planets of salt and gold, if he wished, effortlessly. But he gave that which alone could cost him something, namely his own blood. He became human and then gave his own life.

So you see that it's a costly thing for God to even begin to initiate activity with us. And now that he has begun it, we can't imagine he's going to throw it away lightly. That which you pay a great price for, you will not likely cause to be lost or to slip out of your eyes.

Just this morning, my wife told me to pick up a cup of coffee for her in town. I went in town and I had some of the stuff that was setting down there. I got a cup of coffee to go and walked off without it.

And I didn't go back for it either. To get that, it wasn't worth that much, because it didn't cost that much, a cup of coffee to go. In fact, I just bought another one down the street here for her instead.

That which cost me little, I will easily let go. I won't inconvenience her. But if I had paid \$10 for that cup of coffee, I would have driven all the way back to our town to get it.

That which cost me, I will not likely depart with. And that's what we need to understand about God. It's the price he's paid to begin a work in us.

It's such a price that he's gotten involved. More than he can afford to back out of. And therefore, we can appreciate the fact that we are of great value to him.

Verse 7 says, even as it is meek for us to think this of you all, in other words, it's only natural. But the reason I have this confidence about you, he says in verse 7, is because you obviously are receiving grace even as I am. And you're walking in grace.

He says, you are partakers with me of grace. For God is my record how greatly I long

after you in the bowels of Jesus Christ. He has a prayer for them both.

Even though he has confidence in them, he does have a prayer for them. And that is, apparently, that there will be some judgment added to their love. It says, if I pray, verse 9, that you'll acknowledge and that you may approve the things that are excellent.

That is, the ability to judge things. Remember how he talked to the Corinthians about that. He said, he that is spiritual judges all things.

And he indicated that Christians should be able to exercise a certain critical faculty, a certain discernment, an ability to appraise things, to know whether they are good or evil. This comes up in more than one or two of the epistles. And it clearly is something desirable.

He says, he has no question, but that they already have a great swathing agape kind of love that just kind of spills over on everything indiscriminately. And just says, oh, we just love you, brother. It doesn't matter.

Come on in, you know. There needs to be a certain judgment. Which, even though sometimes we might think of love and judgment as two opposite things, it's very evident that both are important.

God loves us. God is the God of judgment. And it's that balance.

It will be judgment that governs our love, that puts the structure on it, that gives it responsibilities. Because love itself is like, you know, jello. It won't take any form of its own.

It just will kind of gush out and encompass everything. But judgment gives us some kind of a perimeter to the exercise of love. That's where discipline is found, when you mix love and judgment.

And you see that what they're doing is wrong, and therefore discipline has to be. Really, ultimately, the loving thing is not carried out. So Paul wishes for this.

Apparently they have no deficiency in love, but he's judging things as they need to. He desires that they might abound in love with all knowledge and judgment, so that they may approve the things that are excellent. That is to say, so they'll have things for their value, their moral and spiritual value.

That you may be sincere and without offense until the day of Christ, being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God. I don't think we should be mentioning Galatians. The fact that there's different wording is not as significant as the fact that there's similar wording.

The fact that Bowerton referred to it as the fruit of a Christian life indicates that he's

talking about the same thing in both places. In one case, in Galatians, he's emphasizing the source of the fruit. That is, it's brought forth by the Spirit, so it's called the fruit of the Spirit.

In this case, he's emphasizing that it is seen in righteousness of conduct, therefore it is the fruit of righteousness. Actually, James uses a similar expression in his epistle also, about the fruit of righteousness. In chapter 3, in verse 18, it says, by peacemakers, or of them that make peace.

So, he indicates that we have to be people who are peacemakers in order to bring forth this fruit of righteousness. And that is at the end of the discussion about the wisdom from above and the wisdom from below. And the wisdom from below is full of strife and envy and confusion and so forth, but the wisdom from above is peace.

As we operate in peacefulness and in the desire for reconciliation, for right relationships, then it brings forth the fruit of righteousness in our lives. And of course, the result of that is nothing but peace. Now he gets into current events and talks about his circumstances as a prisoner.

Paul was not in wonderful circumstances. We don't know exactly how he was in his first moment in prison. We just don't have that much information.

We know that in his first moment in prison, according to Acts chapter 28, for at least two years he was in a relatively easy situation. Not the most enviable, but he wasn't able to receive guests. He wasn't exactly in solitary confinement or in some kind of a torture camp or something.

And yet there were more unpleasant selves in Rome, and we don't know after the first two years there whether Paul was put into a harder situation. At any rate, whether it was in his own rented house receiving guests or not, it still was a lack of freedom. We know he was a bird that wanted Spain, and he wanted to carry the gospel of Christ westward, and to have a ball and chain on him would be kind of a strong deterrent to his vision.

And therefore he probably had temptations, like anyone would, to be discontented and maybe angry or hostile toward those who had caused him this unnecessary imprisonment, or maybe just bitter or depressed, or any number of negative emotions he might have had in the circumstance. And yet he's just the opposite. It says in verse 12, that I would that ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happen to men have fallen out rather than come back.

Always the optimist, it would seem. He sees this really bad situation, as it would appear in the natural, yet he sees it from God's point of view. This really ended up to bring the gospel to new regions.

By the way, the word furthers there, which specifically means an advance, when an army

presses into new territory that has not previously been conquered. That's this Greek word furthers or advance. So he's actually seeing this as a military conquest.

Here he seems to be the prisoner, and yet in fact he is the attacker. He is pressing into new territory, namely Caesar's household. Now, you see, where could Paul get right inside of Caesar's government quicker than to be put right inside of his own government? And very possibly politicians, no doubt people of that interest.

And he had a tremendous beachhead from which to infiltrate the Roman government at its very core, the palace of Caesar. I have no doubt that Paul would have the tendency to convert a lot of these people, since Gentiles like these Romans tend to be more receptive to the gospel than the Jewish people Paul talked to were. And it's probable that Paul converted a number of soldiers in this way, a number of guards, when he was imprisoned there, so that these guards, they might even be replaced because they were getting converted.

So news had spread throughout the palace. One way or another, Paul being imprisoned had caused him to advance with the gospel into enemy territory in a way. So he saw this as beneficial.

He says, this all of a sudden has happened to me, as bad as it may seem, and for the beloved apostle Paul to be rotting in prison as it would seem, and he says, well hey, God really had a great purpose in this. We've just penetrated enemy territory. And he says, so that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace, or all the praetorium, and in all other places, and many of the brethren in the Lord.

Now, he says the gospel on his bonds, that is the fact that he's in prison, is common knowledge throughout the whole household of Caesar, the palace. And this we know had led to many converts, because in chapter 4, at the end of the epistle, in chapter 4 verse 22, it says, "...all the saints, the luteus, chiefly those who are Caesar's household." So this palace of Caesar had been infiltrated by Paul, the prisoner, but really the aggressor. Always the aggressor when it comes to the gospel.

And having penetrated it, he had won converts who were now saints in Caesar's household. These would be not only Caesar's relatives in the house, but his members of his administration, his guard, some of his soldiers perhaps, it's hard to say who all would be involved, but anyone who resided in the Caesar's palace would have heard. He says everyone in the palace has heard, and many of them are now called saints.

But besides the benefit of having evangelized Caesar's palace, some other good things have happened because of it. He said in verse 14, "...many of the brethren of the Lord are lacking confidence by my bonds, and are much more bold to speak the word of God, are encouraged when they say, Wow, here's Paul, he's laying everything down, he's a prisoner, yet he's still preaching the gospel. If he can do that while being persecuted, I

should be able to do that while I'm here at liberty.

And I know that it does have this effect of studying the life of suffering Christians. And just reading about the suffering he went through, really encouraged me, I thought, when they're being tortured, I ought to be able to do that when I'm not being tortured. And it does have that effect, at least on someone who's sincere, who sort of wants to serve God.

When they hear heroes, heroes who are suffering for their faith and remaining faithful, it just encourages you to be more faithful yourself. And that's what was happening. He says there's a good effect here.

It's not only to be more diligent and be more bold. They're seeing, of course, the grace that's upon me in my suffering, and that makes suffering less fearful. When you read about how God gave grace to the martyrs, that makes you fear martyrdom less than you did before, because you see the faithfulness of God.

And so these people were breaking free from the fear of man, though he was suffering, was yet receiving great grace and being a faithful. He just threw off all constraints or restraint and would preach more boldly. And then he mentions, verse 15, "...and some also of good will.

The one preached Christ out of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds, but the other out of love, knowing that I am set for the defense." Now, it's hard to know exactly what he's referring to when he says that some of them are preaching Christ out of contention, hoping to add affliction to his bonds, and that they are preaching out of envy and strife. He might just be saying that not everyone who's preaching the gospel is necessarily a good testimony. But it seems more specifically that he might be saying there are some who see themselves as rivals of Paul, maybe some who are jealous of Paul in some way, and maybe jealous of his success, and see his being put out of commission in prison as an opportunity to promote their own ministries and their own apostolship or their own whatever.

We were preaching the gospel for wrong reasons, even with some kind of measure of rivalry or contention against Paul himself. And he says, hoping to add affliction to my bonds. Whether they really wanted to, I mean, whether they're bummed out about it is questionable.

It might simply mean that they're getting, you know, they're out there in some way preaching the gospel. One way or another, the gospel is being preached, and that's good. In verse 18 it says, "...what then, notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretense or in truth." Christ is being preached, and I do think that he is a very optimistic person.

He's got these people who are in some way rivals of his, advancing their ministry while

he's out of commission. A lot of guys in his position might be jealous. They can hear, you know, God sent me as the apostle to the Gentiles to have an influence on them, advancing their ministry.

But he was so confident in God, they just figured, well, good's going to come from it, because after all, whatever their reasons, they are preaching the gospel. Maybe not in the best of circumstances, but I can rejoice just in the fact that it is being heard. It's the power of God and salvation, even if it's preached by a non-Christian.

Do you know that? There are some people who got saved, or evangelized by people who turned out not to be Christian, but they got saved anyway, because the gospel itself is the power of God and the salvation. So Paul could rejoice that it was at least received. It says, "...for I know that this shall turn to my salvation through prison." The word salvation, *soteria*, is the regular word for salvation, but its primary meaning in the Greek is deliverance.

More often, the Greek language has the concept of deliverance from some temporal, earthly problem than the eternal salvation that we think of by using the word. It's the same word in either case in the Greek. *Soteria* means deliverance or salvation.

In this case, probably deliverance would be more Paul's thought. He thinks that through the prayers of the Philippian church and other Christians like him, that he will be delivered or set free from prison through their prayers in the supply of the spirit of Christ. "...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, whether it be by life or by death." That is to say, I hope that through your prayers I'll be released, but if it happens that I die instead, well, that's fine anyway.

So, as long as Christ is saying that, one thing we find about this situation, maybe we see the key to rejoicing in suffering, because that's the way he was suffering. But throughout the epistle, we find that which makes this rejoicing possible, just surrender to the same God as sovereign in all things, and we see it in so many ways in this epistle. We see it here, right from the beginning where it says, right, God is sovereign, he's doing what he wants to do.

Secondly, another problem, there are people out there preaching the gospel, but I'm resigned to it. At least I know the gospel is being preached and God is in control, so I'll just resign myself to that, I'll just rejoice in it. Thirdly, I'm in prison.

I could possibly die, I trust God. Whether I live or die, it doesn't matter as long as I bring glory to God. See how frequently, different ways he speaks brings up the fact of his resignation to God.

The ultimate passage in the whole Bible on resignation to God, a well-known passage on

it, in chapter 4, verse 11 and 12, he says, Not that I speak in respect of me, for I have learned in whatsoever state I am therewith to be content, or to be resigned to the will of God. I know both how to be abased and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.

I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me. So here's the secret of rejoicing in suffering, I'm content. I have been instructed, he says, God has taught me a very important lesson which has given me the victory in all my trials.

And that is, whatever state I'm in, it's okay with me. Because God hasn't promised me that I won't have any trials, but he has promised me that I will be content. I know this expression, I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me, has been used in a variety of ways.

Sometimes rather opposite of what Paul has in mind. I can do all things, namely I can be hungry, or I can be full, I can be abased, or I can be abound. I can endure anything.

I can remain content, and those circumstances weigh against me heavily because I'm given an inner strength of grace from Christ that makes it possible for me to be entirely resigned. And of course if I'm resigned, then I can rejoice. Now how can I be resigned to the will of God? I can only be resigned if I am absolutely convinced of the sovereignty of God.

And that is the key to Christian victory, is a total conviction about the sovereignty of God. That is to say that God has everything in control. No matter what man does, even what man does against the will of God, turns out to be for the will of God.

In a sense, like Joseph's brothers selling him into slavery was something they did sin, and sin is never the will of God, in my opinion. It was not the will of God that these men sinned. If it was, then it wouldn't be sin, because sin is against God's will.

If you sin, you're not doing God's will. They were sinning, and therefore they weren't doing His will, and yet God used it to bring about His will. Namely, Joseph became the deliverer of the people in Egypt.

And Paul, I believe, it was not God's will, in the ultimate sense, for the Jews to be evil, for the Jews to throw Paul into jail, but ultimately it was God's will for him to go to jail and to go into Rome and to flee. Even though man rebels against God and does things which cannot be described as evil, yet God's will is taking place. I'm so convinced of the sovereignty of God that I find no circumstance in which I cannot rejoice or be content.

I can be content knowing that God has it in His hands. Of course, I'm ultimately convinced of God's goodness as well, not only His sovereignty, but also His will for me to be content. So that knowing that He has everything in control and that He wants

everything to work together for my good, I can live in absolute peace and contentment, yet I know the things that happen to me, and I think Christ is always based on my ultimate personal advancement in His kingdom.

So, the resignation of Paul again appears here. He says, All I want now is so that also in the end of verse 20, So now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, for to me tremendous Christ, by which I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labor. Yet what shall I choose? I cannot choose.

For I am a stray between the two, having a desire to depart, which is far better. Nevertheless, to abide in the flesh is more needful for you. And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide and continue with you all for your fervent and joy of faith.

So, he says, I'm certainly convinced that I'm not going to die at this time. I really would like to, he says. For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

I mean, living is great, really, because for me living is just Jesus, just promoting Jesus. That's all it is, just letting Jesus live through me. It's really a great life, but really nothing greater except to die.

And dying I get to go and see Him, so that can be an advantage. I look forward to dying. I wish to die.

In some ways I long for it. I have a desire to depart and to be with Christ. But, he says, I'm not really sure if I could choose that, because weighing one against the other, I realize that the same in this world is for your benefit and to continue for the fervent of your joy and faith.

So that for the benefit of the church, I suppose the one thing that matters is that it will, otherwise you just go and end it all. Verse 26. That you rejoice in making more abundant in Jesus Christ for me by my coming again to you.

So that is again through their prayers, as he says in verse 19, he expects to be released and come again to them, as he points out here. Verse 27. Only let your conversation, which should be better termed as behavior, let your behavior be as it become of the gospel of Christ.

This is roughly equivalent to Ephesians 4.1, where he says, I beseech you that you would walk worthy of the calling, wherewith you are called, and the vocation, wherewith you are called. God has called us in Christ, and there's a certain behavior, a certain walk, that is worthy of that. And there's, of course, another way to walk, and Paul always urges us to consider the high calling we have and to cause our moment by moment decision making and our choices and our actions to be based on an appreciation for the high calling that we're given.

Let your behavior be as it become of, as it is appropriate to the gospel of Christ. So that whether I come and see you, or else be asked, meaning if he doesn't get released immediately, I may hear of your affairs that you stand fast in one spirit, with one mind, striving together for the faith of the gospel. And nothing terrified by your adversaries.

Remember that was Paul when he was in Tel Aviv, and probably against the church after he left. So they have adversaries, and he says, don't be terrified of them. That's what I want to hear.

I want to hear that you're bold, that you're not succumbing to the fear of man, and you're not terrified of anything by your adversaries, which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation and that of God. Now what it means there is that if you stand up boldly, it will be a token to them that they are lost. I mean, it unnerves them when they're trying to make you terrified by persecution, and you stand firmly and you don't back down.

Just like when Peter and John were called before the Sanhedrin to accept the whore and accept her father, they were threatened with death, they were beaten, and yet they stood up to these men, and they said, hey, when the Sanhedrin, looking on them, saw their boldness and perceived that they had been with Jesus, and saw that they were also ignorant and unworthy men, and they could say nothing. It's like they shook up, they didn't know what to do. You know, you can't intimidate them.

It just shows that they're right, and when Christians in the arena were fed to the lions and burned to the stake, and their boldness and their lack of terror converted thousands over the period of a couple of hundred years, thousands of people were converted to Christ in the stands, watching Christians burn, because they said, these people must be right. They must have something real, because look how they faced death without terror. And, of course, the assumption that the Christians had something real, and their rejection of the Christian message was sin, and they'd be convicted, it was inevitable, and that they were dared.

And he says, if you're not terrified, and you're the ones who really know God, that to you, that your absence of fear, to you is a token of salvation, and that of God. That is to say, it's a work of God, a fruit of salvation in your life. So that your lack of fear is really one of the ways of the world.

And verse 29 says, for unto you it has been given... Some people like to underline all the promises of the Bible, all the things God has given us. He's given us many wonderful things, including this. Unto you it is given to suffer, not only to believe, but also to suffer.

It's one of the precious promises of the Scripture. To suffer for his sake. Remember when the apostles were beaten by the Ten Commandments? So that is a gift.

It's something that is a flattery. If people beat me up because they hate Christ, they're flattering me, because they're saying they see the same thing in me that they see in him. If they hate him and they like me, that's an insult.

Since my life's goal is to be like him, if I'm so unlike him that they enjoy my company, I'm insulted. But if the same people who would beat up Jesus beat me up, it's a flattery. I'm rejected to become... that I'm in good company.

I'm enough like him that those who can't tolerate him also refuse to tolerate me. And so I can suffer for his sake and rejoice in the blessing and gift from God. Having the same complex that you saw in me and now hear to be in me.

The Church in Tel Aviv was experiencing similar persecutions to what he had experienced when he was there, which they saw him undergo. And he said, essentially, you're going to... but also to suffer for his sake. Chapter 2. If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, that is, in the midst of suffering, there is tremendously.

If there be any comfort... also gives us comfort in our afflictions. If any fellowship of the Spirit, if any vows and mercies, which really means just tender affections and mercies, fulfill my joy, that is, love, being of one accord, of one mind. That is to say, if you already have these... add this one to it.

There's something more. This, you know, I'm really joyful about mercy, the comfort of love. These things really give me joy.

But my joy is not quite full right now. There's one thing more that I really... Seeing you in unity. Again, the contention between Julius and Sintike, or Sintike, seems to have been on his heart, and perhaps there were other quarrels in the Church.

Not Church-wide quarrels, such as I'm a Paul and I'm Paul's, but rather individual quarrels. There was some deficiency in the area of problem-solving and relationships in the Church. And so he says, what will really fulfill my joy will be to see that you are really of one accord and loving each other and like-minded.

Let nothing be done through strife or vain glory, that is, through personal aggrandizement, personal promotion. But in loneliness of mind, which means humility, let each esteem the other better than themselves. That means I consider that you're better than... Now, it may be that you're not better than me.

Maybe you are, maybe you're not. I don't know. But I know myself.

I know how bad I am. I alone know how bad I am. No one else by looking at me can... And knowing myself is a safe assumption that almost anyone else is better than me.

It may not be true. I'm not beginning with that. It's a good state of mind to have.

Because as soon as I begin to think I'm as good as they are, or worse yet, I'm better than they are, I'm incapable of operating in humility and, of course, of conducting relations. The idea here is laying down your rights, saying, well, I have a right to be pleased in this matter, but I'm going to consider that they have a greater right than I do. Even if they don't, I'm just going to consider them better than myself.

I'm going to lay down my rights for them. I'll put them above myself. That's what Paul said is the secret to solving these conflicts in the church.

You want to be like-minded? What you have to do is lay down your case against someone else and put them above yourself and basically submit to them. That's how you become greater anyway. Look not ever yet on his own things, or don't look after your own rights and your own privileges, but ever then also on the things of others.

Essentially what he's saying in the context is that don't seek to defend your own rights, but seek to extend to others the privilege and the rights, even if it's at your own expense. This is his teaching on unity in verses 1-4. Basically his teaching on unity is for unity you need humility.

You humbly are seeing the other person better than yourself and seeking their benefit instead of your own. This agrees of course with the proverb that I quoted before that says only by pride comes contention. Pride is always at the root of contention.

If you get rid of the pride you get rid of the contention. Therefore humility must resolve in unity. So in saying I want you to be like-minded, of one heart, loving one another, in unity in other words, he says in loneliness of mind, humility, seeing the other better than yourself.

Now, he gives the example of Jesus, not in the sense of unity, but in the sense of humility. In verse 5 he says, "...but to be prophetic with attitude." This mentality that he had. "...who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery." This expression, thought it not robbery, to be equal with God, is an unusual translation from the Greek phrase.

The more exact translation from the Greek would be, he thought not equality with God a thing to be grasped, which is a little bit ambiguous. And those who don't believe that Jesus was God, namely for instance the Jehovah's Witnesses, they've rendered it even more awkwardly, they've rendered it in their Bible something like, he did not seek to effect a use of pain. But that's a wrong translation.

Though he existed in the form of God, he did not think of equality with God as a thing to be grasped. Now what he means by that is that he's not saying that Jesus didn't try to obtain equality with God, he already had that. He didn't see it as something to cling to, is what he said.

He had every right that God had, but he gave up his rights. This is the key to Christian

humility in Jesus' model. He was God.

Who could have more rights than God had? He had equality with God, but he didn't see that as something to be grasped, something to be hung on to. Instead he released his grasp and allowed himself to be humbled and to lose his privileges as God. And it says in verse 7, that he made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and he was made in the likeness of men, and being found in fashion as a man.

He humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Now this just shows by stages the degree to which Jesus... First of all, he's at the very top. He is God.

He is equal with God. But he releases his grasp of his privileges as God in order to move down the ladder of humility unto what Ephesians 4 says, in that he had come down to the lower parts of the earth, meaning he came down to the lowest classes of people. He became a Jew, a Nazarene, a poor man.

That which would be least esteemed in the eyes of man he became. He put aside his reputation. He took on him the form of a servant, that is, the form of a man, the likeness of men.

But once he was in that form, he humbled himself further, even to die, which is a very humbling thing. Remember, one's such afraid of death as embarrassed by it. Because it's very humbling.

Death is embarrassing. A proud man must live for the moment as though he'll always live. Death is a very rude awakening, in a sense.

It reminds us that. And Jesus humbled himself, though he was immune to death, when he existed in the form of God, a great humbling of himself. But not only death.

Even if he had died of old age, you know, in his sleep, that would have been humbling enough for someone who had once been in the form of God. But he reduced himself to the most humiliating death known to man at the time. Nakedly, dying as a criminal publicly, on a cross with spit upon him, having been rudely treated, his dear ones being plucked out by handfuls.

The death on the cross was the ultimate humiliation. And that's what Jesus humbled himself to. So Paul is essentially saying, look how low he came from how high it began.

He humbled himself. Therefore, God also highly exalted him. Now, a number of times he said, whosoever exalts himself shall be obeyed.

And whosoever humbles himself shall be exalted. He said that when he gave the parable about the Pharisees taking the highest seats at the feast and so forth. He said, if you

take the high seat, someone's going to come along more noble than you, and you'll have to, in embarrassment, have to be... Then you'll be honored when people say, oh, you're more honorable than that.

Come up. So also, everyone that exalts himself shall be obeyed, and everyone that humbles himself shall be exalted. That's chapter 14 of Luke, in verse 11.

And he also makes the statement elsewhere in the teaching. So Jesus taught it as a principle and demonstrated it. By the way, both James and Peter make reference to this.

James says, humble yourself on the side of God, and he shall raise you up. Peter says, in 1 Peter 5, humble yourself, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time. So both Peter and James, Paul and Jesus make reference to this principle.

There can hardly be a more widely, biblically attested principle than this. Jesus demonstrated it in teaching and in his conduct. The apostle Paul, in a sense, in his conduct, showed it, too.

He was humiliated. He was a base, a mint. But he is one of the most highly esteemed Christians that ever lived in the eyes of the Church today.

And rightly so, because this is the way it is. First, God will exalt. Here, Jesus humbled himself from the highest place to the lowest place.

What Paul is giving is an extreme example of personal laying down of one's rights. Because he realizes that none of us really start out as low as Jesus thought we started to sink. The difference from Jesus is that it's greater than any of us would ever be expected to abase ourselves, even if we abased ourselves, we didn't start out of time.

So that the humility of Jesus is exemplary, is greater than any man's humility could ever be. And of course, in order to be like Christ, we should consider that no amount of self-abasement, no amount of self-humbling is too much. If we do it 100%, we still won't do it as much as Jesus did.

And that's the point. Now, the sequel to that in verse 9 is, Therefore God has highly exalted him and given him a name which is above every name, so that it's the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, things on earth, and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father. So, because he's humbled himself more than any man, God has exalted him more than any man.

And given him a name, which means a status and an authority above every other name that there is. In speaking about this in 1 Peter, that apostle, in the third chapter of 1 Peter, describes the exalting of Jesus in this. In verse 18 of chapter 3, he says, For Christ

also has once suffered for sins, but just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit.

That is, Jesus humbled himself, laid down his life, he was just, but he took on the penalty of those who were not just. And then it speaks of him in verse 22, 1 Peter 3.22, Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God, angels and authorities, that is, everything is subject to him. Angels, authorities, powers, everything is under him.

His name is above everything. In Ephesians chapter 1, Paul speaks similarly about him. Ephesians 1, verses 20 and 21, says, Which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power, and might and dominion, in every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in the world to come, and hath put all things under his feet, which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all.

So, Paul stresses in all these places, and here also, that Jesus is given the name above all principalities, all powers, all authorities, but in 1 Corinthians 15, we should have the balance that Paul gives, of course, to that. In 1 Corinthians 15, which we studied not too long ago, it says, in verses 27 and 28, where verse 27 says, For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he sayeth that all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is accepted, who did put all things under him.

That is, the Father is not under his feet. Jesus has a name above every name. It's no higher than the Father's name, but it can't be any lower either, because it's above every name.

In a sense, the name of Jesus must be equivalent to that of the Father, because the Father can't be under him, and yet the Father can't be over him in a sense either, because Jesus' name is above every name. So it would seem that Paul is saying that the name and authority of Jesus is basically equivalent to that of the Father, and when people bow to Jesus, they are giving glory to the Father. When every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess that Jesus is Lord, which speaks of that very mysterious equality and union between Jesus and the Father, and it's very difficult for us to sort out whatever difference may exist in those two identities.

He says in verse 12, Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always been, so is God which worketh in you, both to will and to do, as is good pleasure. Now, God's working in you, therefore you work out your own salvation. Meaning, not that you work to earn your salvation, but you have your salvation already.

God has worked it in you. He has changed your will. He has changed your whole direction of life, your whole behavior.

He is at work in you, changing the way you will and the way you do, so that you now will

and do with His good pleasure. But because He's bringing changes inwardly, it's necessary for you to make outward decisions in your conduct that are equal to that and correspond to that. You do have some say over the way you act as a Christian, which is obvious by the fact that so many exhortations are given just in the Scripture, which address themselves to our will.

God has given us a will to obey, but He doesn't make us obey. That is something that we must do ourselves. He says, Do all things without whimpering and disputings.

Again, there's a suggestion there that there were some disputes in the Church between individuals. 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, holding forth the word that I have not run in vain, neither labored in vain. Now, He said earlier in chapter 2, at the beginning, that seemingly all they lacked, really, to make His joy full, was the total harmony in the Church was missing.

And now He indicates the same thing when He says, Acquire this unity, this harmony in the Church, so that you'll be blameless, implying that really you don't have anything else that could bring blame upon you. There's nothing else. And I want you to be blameless and without rebuke.

No one finding anything they can rightly speak against you. He says, in a sense, that gives me a certain pride also. He says, so that I may rejoice in their Christ.

That is, if good fruit comes out of the Church, then it obviously shows that my labors have been fruitful and not for nothing. I haven't wasted my life. Yea, and if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy and rejoice.

For the same cause also do ye joy and rejoice with me. He speaks of being offered upon the sacrifice and service of their faith. The word offered there in the Greek actually means poured forth or poured out, like a drink offering.

There are times in the Old Testament when an offering of wine would be offered and poured out before the altar as an oblation to the Lord. And Paul sees himself, his own life, being poured out like a drink offering before the Lord, but for the sake of the Church. He says, but I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy as shortly unto you, that I also may be of good comfort when I know your state.

For I have no man like mine that will naturally care for your state. For all seek their own, not the things of Jesus Christ. That's an interesting thing.

He says, I have no one like my own. This may indicate that Luke was not with Paul at this time, and may well have been in Philippi, which could be the yoke fellow mentioned in chapter 4, verse 3. Paul's true yoke fellow, because Luke certainly would have had the Philippians on his heart, and he was their first pastor, who had a natural concern for

them. So probably Luke was in Philippi, Paul probably had no one with him who fits this description, like-minded with me in my feelings toward you, who appreciates you as much as I do.

He says, for all seek their own, and not the things of Jesus Christ. This is a frustration Paul felt with many of his companions. He had many people who started running well, but were hindered, or were driven back by worldliness.

We know of Demas, for instance, who was with him when he wrote to the Colossians, but who later on in 2 Timothy, Paul had to say, Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world. That's in 2 Timothy chapter 4, that he makes that statement. So there were people that forsook him.

Also in 2 Timothy, he said, all who are in Asia have forsaken me, have turned from me. So you can see that not everyone who was once loyal to Paul, remained loyal to the end. The reference to Demas is in 2 Timothy 4.10, Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world.

He also mentions that when he first went to trial, in 2 Timothy 4.16, he says, all men forsook me when I first went to trial. So he had a lot of people who didn't stick with him, didn't have a heart for the work that Paul had. He said, I have only Timothy with me, who really has a mind like mine about this.

All the other people really are sticking their own. Implying all the other Christians that he had worked with, really were worthless. Kind of a depressing situation when you think about it.

But ye know the proof of him, that is of Timothy, that as a son of the Father, he has served me, with me in the gospel. Him, therefore, I hope to send, will go with me. But I trust in the Lord that I also myself shall come shortly, again hoping to be released from prison.

Yet I suppose it necessary to send to you half the diet of my brother, and companion in labor, and fellow soldier, but your messenger. And he that ministered to my wants, for he longed after you all, and was full of pettiness because that ye had heard that he was sick. For indeed he was sick, nor in the death, but God had mercy upon him, and not on him only, but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow.

I sent him, therefore, that more carefully, that when ye shall see him again, ye may rejoice, and that I may be the less sorrowful. Receive him, therefore, in the Lord with all gladness, and hold such in reputation, because for the work of Christ he was nigh unto death, not regarding his life, to supply your lack of service toward me." So he says, essentially, I hope to come to you soon, in verse 24, but just in case I don't come soon, I'm sending the papadaisis ahead. I might prefer to keep them with me until I can come

with them, but I don't know if I'll be out soon, so I'm sending them out.

I don't want them to get sick again, and I want them to go back. You just hold them in a high regard. In Acts 15, that these were men that endangered their lives for the gospel, and that was always a high commendation in Revelation 12.

It says, they overcame by the blood of the Lamb, by the withered testimony, and they leavened out their lives unto the death. That's the mark of a Christian hero, is that they endangered their lives for the sake of the gospel. Not only a Christian hero, but a normal Christian, hopefully.

Well, we'll take a break there. It's time to do so.