

Intro 1: The church at Philippi understood sacrifice.

- Began in adverse circumstances during Paul's first visit to the city (Acts 16:11-40)
- Sacrificed financially to aid the churches in Judaea (2 Cor. 8:1-5)
- Sacrificed financially to support Paul in his Roman imprisonment (Phil. 4:18)
- They faced challenges to the gospel itself (Phil. 1:15-18, 27-30; 3:2, 18-19) and dissension in the church (Phil. 2:1-4; 2:14-16; 4:2-3).

At the same time, Paul faced difficulties largely relating to his Roman imprisonment. He conspicuously avoids complaining about his physical limitations or his tentative future, and focuses on a deeper concern.

As he attempted to comfort the people of Philippi with the hope that buoyed him in prison, he chose to emphasize the glory of Christ in the gospel.

No other topic could better capture his passions (even in the worst of circumstances), and as a result his letter to the Philippians yields an enduring lesson – **because Christ has saved you from the dominion of sin, you can pursue peace even in difficulty.**

I. Because Christ has saved you, you must prioritize the right things. (1:1-26)

A. Your personal goal should be to know Christ and show it. (1-11)

1. Displaying your relationship with Christ involves sacrifice. (1-6)

a. Paul's relationship to the Philippians was fellowship underneath the rule of Christ (1-4).

1) His vision of the church placed Christ at the head. (1-2)

a) Paul and Timothy were "servants of Jesus Christ."

i) Paul never refers to his apostolic authority in this letter.

ii) The term he uses here reflects the humility and servitude of a common household servant.

b) The people of the church were God's holy people.

2) His attitude toward the Philippians evoked constant giving of thanks. (3-4)

b. Paul rejoiced over the Philippians' participation in the gospel. (5-6)

2. Displaying your relationship with Christ involves growth that bears fruit. (7-11)
 - a. True fellowship with God links the hearts of believers in fellowship. (7-8)
 - b. True fellowship with God requires that you love Him. (9-10)
 - 1) This love grows over time (it abounds “more and more”). (9)
 - 2) This love affects your decision making. (10)
 - c. True fellowship with God shows itself in the fruit of righteousness which brings glory to God. (11)

B. Your goal for others should be that they too develop a relationship with Christ. (12-18)

1. Look for witnessing opportunities in every situation. (12-14)
 - a. For Paul, prison was not a place to languish, but a place to witness. (12-13)
 - 1) This was contrary to typical expectations. (12)
 - 2) Paul realized that it was unlikely that he could have penetrated the palaces of Rome with the gospel any other way. (13)
 - b. For others, Paul’s example was a motivation to fervent evangelism. (14)
2. Learn to praise God for wrong-hearted good deeds. (15-18)
 - a. Some were preaching Christ with the wrong motivations. (15-17)
 - 1) Paul deliberately does not identify these people or denounce their teaching.
 - 2) Their message was the true gospel.
 - 3) They were motivated by envy. (O’Brien, 105)
 - b. Paul rejoiced that they were preaching the gospel. (18)

C. Your ultimate goal should be that all things magnify God’s glory. (19-26)

1. Live (or die) for the ultimate exaltation of Christ. (19-20)

- a. Paul expected to be released from prison. (19)
 - b. Paul's only concern was that God be glorified whether he lived or died. (20)
2. Live for the spiritual growth of believers. (21-26)
- a. Paul's greatest struggle was that he actually wanted to die! (21-23)
 - b. Paul realized that God had another purpose for him at that time. (24-26)
 - 1) He knew that his task was to strengthen the church (24)
 - 2) He realized that his release would give him another opportunity to display the glory of Christ. (25-26)

II. Because Christ has saved you, you must adopt the right attitudes. (1:27-2:18)

A. Remember that you are a kingdom citizen. (1:27-2:4)

1. Keep a firm testimony for Christ when you suffer (1:27-30)
 - a. Christian living is a distinctive way of behaving that endures. (27-28)
 - 1) Your "conversation" (or "conduct") refers to the deeds that are expected of a law-abiding citizen (27a).
 - a) Philippi was an official Roman colony.
 - b) Citizens of Christ's kingdom are responsible for their conduct.
 - 2) Living this way requires every Christian to "stand" firmly together for Christ. (27b-28)
 - a) There is no reason to be dismayed. ("in nothing terrified")
 - b) Difficulties come as a result of faithfulness.
 - c) Difficulties show that they are on the "winning team."
 - b. Suffering is a gift given for the purpose of growth. (29-30)
 - 1) The reality of suffering (29)
 - a) Faith is a gift of God to every believer, but *some*

believers (like these Philippians) face suffering as an *additional* blessing from God.

- b) The exact nature of this gift still troubles us. How can suffering be a blessing?
- 2) The purpose of suffering (30)
 - a) God can use suffering to strengthen faith and unite believers in fellowship.
 - b) Because they suffered like Paul did, the Philippians now had closer fellowship with him than before.
- 2. Keep a warm heart of unity with your brothers when you serve (2:1-4)
 - a. Because there is comfort in Christ, every believer should seek unity in the Spirit. (1-2)
 - 1) Paul lists several “ifs” which the Philippians would recognize as realities. (1)
 - 2) Their response to these realities was to make [his] joy complete by living in one-minded unity (φρονέω) with each other. (2)
 - b. Unity is only possible for mutually humbled believers. (3-4)
 - 1) Humility is the essential key to one-minded unity (3)
 - a) This has to do with your thoughts, not your actions.
 - b) This leaves no room for selfish ambition (ἐριθεία) and empty conceit (κενοδοξία).
 - 2) Humility means considering or noticing (σκοπέω) the needs of others. (4)

B. Humble yourself in submission to Christ. (2:5-11)

- 1. Humble yourself because your Lord made the supreme sacrifice (2:5-8)
 - a. It is perfectly legitimate for believers to attempt to “be like Christ.” (5)
 - 1) The mindset that the Philippians were to have (2:2) is similar to the mindset of Jesus Christ.
 - 2) This does not mean that the Philippians could assume

Christ's divine omniscience.

- 3) Christ's humble choice is an example of the self-sacrificing way that every believer should sacrifice for the good of his brothers.
- b. Christ's humiliation found its culmination in his sacrifice on the cross. (6-8)
 - 1) Christ did not consider his equality with the Father so important that He could not humble Himself to save mankind. (6)
 - 2) Christ took the form of a servant and appeared in human flesh. (7-8a)

- Christ became a literal man, not just a divine spirit wrapped up in an appearance of flesh. (8a)

NET He "emptied himself by taking on the form of a slave, *by looking like other men, and by sharing in human nature.*"

- 3) Christ obeyed His Father "to the point of death" (NASB) in the ultimate humiliation of the cross. (8b)
2. Humble yourself because your Lord is the supreme ruler (2:9-11)
 - a. Christ's supreme humiliation caused the Father to supremely exalt Him. (9)
 - 1) Christ has been exalted by the Father because of His humble obedience.
 - 2) Christ's received the exalted gift (χαρίζομαι) of the name above all other names.
 - b. Christ's supreme position means that all will someday submit to Him. (10-11)
 - 1) Christ is no longer in humble submission but instead receives the submission of every creature.
 - 2) There is no escape from ultimate submission to Christ.

C. Fear God and submit to others. (2:12-18)

1. Obey God in your actions as He works out His good purposes in you (2:12-13)
 - a. Our responsibility is to demonstrate our salvation by humbly submitting to God in all things. (12)

- 1) True fear of God requires belief in Him.
 - 2) Only true fear of God can produce works of humility.
 - 3) This is not a proof-text for salvation by works.
- b. Only God can enable this obedience, and He does this for his own glory. (13)
2. Obey God in your attitudes as you serve among fellow sinners (2:14-18)
- a. The church has a number of responsibilities to execute together:
 - 1) Maintaining a good spirit together. (14)
 - 2) Pursuing a sterling testimony. (15)
 - 3) Firmly submitting to the gospel. (16)
 - b. True Christian joy comes from serving one another. (17-18)

Conclusion: As Paul closes this section of his letter to the Philippians, it is important to notice that he has presented a compelling and motivating case for his thesis that every Christian pursue peace with his brothers for the sake of the Gospel itself.

Paul makes only the rarest and most cautious references to his apostolic authority. Paul has instead chosen to argue from a far higher and more motivating standard.

He lives as a picture of humble contentment, desiring only to be with Christ or to be helping the Philippian believers. This reminds him of his citizenship in God's kingdom and points him to the supreme submission of his Lord Jesus Christ.

If you choose to remain proud and self-sufficient, you have much to fear. You will have to face the judgment of God for your failure to demonstrate your salvation in fear and trembling.

The demands of Christian living are high. You must humbly seek to glorify Christ as you follow Paul's example.

Because Christ willingly humbled Himself and has since been exalted, you can have tremendous hope, for He is your sovereign Lord who has saved you from sin!