

A Walk Through Philippians

Introduction

Paul was moving from city to city, meeting in the synagogue and proclaiming faith in Jesus. On his second Missionary Journey, he traveled through Asia, and wanted to go north to Asia, but was prevented. He couldn't get there. And then he had a vision, a beckoning from a "Man of Macedonia" to go come and help us".

Paul and his band took a boat and headed to what is Northern Greece, and preached the good news of Jesus in Philippi. They stayed several days, teaching about Jesus. Lydia is a well known businesswoman who listened, and believed. She welcomed the good news, and these teachers. Hearing of Jesus, she became a follower and was baptized. Paul and his entourage stayed in Lydia's home.

Others heard the good news as Paul was teaching every day. But there was a girl overcome with a spirit, who told fortunes. She was held by her owners and brought them considerable income. This girl continually interrupted Paul, and he got very frustrated. Paul turned to her and commanded the spirit to leave in the name of Jesus. The spirit obeyed the authority of Jesus, and left. She was now a restored girl.

But the owners were not happy. They had Paul arrested. Paul and Silas were beaten severely, and thrown in jail. This is a costly gospel! That night Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns, and Holy Spirit rocked the jail. They were suddenly freed. The jailer panicked and was going to take his own life rather than face the Roman authorities, but Paul called out, and declared "we are all here."

The Jailer brought in lights, and discovered nobody had escaped. He washed and cared for Paul and Silas, and asked how he could be saved. He believed in Jesus and his whole household was baptized. Read all about it in Acts 16!

So now in prison in Rome, Paul received a wonderful gift from the believers in Philippi. They loved on Paul, and he is writing back to them with great affection.

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Chapter 1

'This letter is from Paul and Timothy, slaves of Christ Jesus. I am writing to all of God's holy people in Philippi who belong to Christ Jesus, including the church leaders and deacons. May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you grace and peace. '

Philippians 1:1-2

Paul and Timothy together send a letter to all the believers in Philippi. These believers are holy ones, set apart by God himself, and they belong to Jesus Christ. Even the leaders and deacons belong to Jesus Christ.

And consider Paul as he describes himself. He is a slave of Christ Jesus. He could have said "Apostle" or "Disciple" or even "Teacher". Instead he recognizes that following Christ has become a compulsion because of the deep relationship with Jesus. Paul is completely sold out as a man to do anything that Jesus leads, guides or asks. He is absolutely a servant and willing slave, living only for Jesus. The salvation that rescued Paul has made him a loving slave to bring Christ's message to the nations. There is nothing else as important or life changing. So Paul and Timothy are slaves of Christ Jesus. And I am as well.

'Every time I think of you, I give thanks to my God. Whenever I pray, I make my requests for all of you with joy, for you have been my partners in spreading the Good News about Christ from the time you first heard it until now. And I am certain that God, who began the good work within you, will continue his work until it is finally finished on the day when Christ Jesus returns. '

Philippians 1:3-6

Paul constantly thanks God for his ministry partners, the believers in Philippi. He tracks their needs and prays for them as well. Together, Paul being the go-er, and Philippians being the send-ers, they are bringing the great message of salvation to the nations. Paul prays they continue growing and flourishing in Christ, seeing His fruit in their lives, and the church growing because of them.

Likewise we pray for those who send us. We lift their needs to the Father, asking for their continued blessing and growth, and fortifying them against the enemy as well. We get to heaven together, whether going, or sending, and sometimes both!

'So it is right that I should feel as I do about all of you, for you have a special place in my heart. You share with me the special favor of God, both in my imprisonment and in defending and confirming the truth of the Good News. God knows how much I love you and long for you with the tender compassion of Christ Jesus. '

Philippians 1:7-8

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These Philippi believers poured into Paul, encouraging him and ministering to him in prison, in his defense of the faith, and in sharing the Good News. What a joy and encouragement they have been, and continue to be to him. His heart is filled with love for them, and tender compassion for them as well.

God builds a family. The Good News is truly about salvation from sin, but more, it's about adoption into a new family. Ephesians 1:3-4 is direct about this, but here in his letter, we see the deep loving relationship in action. Oh join the family of God! Jesus will wash your sins away, and make all things new. What a delight for us!

'I pray that your love will overflow more and more, and that you will keep on growing in knowledge and understanding. For I want you to understand what really matters, so that you may live pure and blameless lives until the day of Christ's return. May you always be filled with the fruit of your salvation—the righteous character produced in your life by Jesus Christ—for this will bring much glory and praise to God. '

Philippians 1:9-11

How do I pray for believers? I pray that their love will overflow toward each other and others, and that they would grow in knowledge and understanding.

Friends, it all starts with love for one another. God is building His family, with you and I in it. Let's love first, serving and caring for one another. We will keep learning and adding understanding.

The fruit of our salvation is right thinking and right action - Christ's character playing out in us. The ultimate result is praise and glory to God!

'And I want you to know, my dear brothers and sisters, that everything that has happened to me here has helped to spread the Good News. For everyone here, including the whole palace guard, knows that I am in chains because of Christ. And because of my imprisonment, most of the believers here have gained confidence and boldly speak God's message without fear. '

Philippians 1:12-14

The Good News is spreading. And when persecution comes, the news of Jesus spreads even faster! So the authorities have locked up Paul in jail. He's in chains, and everyone has learned of it. This is the talk of the town. Paul's chains have helped spread the good news. God is not bound, and His message is not locked up. We must join him in proclaiming the good news, as often as possible, to everyone we can!

'It's true that some are preaching out of jealousy and rivalry. But others preach about Christ with pure motives. They preach because they love me, for they know I have been appointed to defend the Good News. Those others do not have pure motives as they preach about Christ. They preach with selfish ambition, not sincerely, intending to make my chains more painful to me. But that doesn't matter. Whether their motives are false or genuine, the message about

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Christ is being preached either way, so I rejoice. And I will continue to rejoice. For I know that as you pray for me and the Spirit of Jesus Christ helps me, this will lead to my deliverance. '

Philippians 1:15-19

Christ is preached! Many keep hearing because of those who preach. Most are preaching because they love Jesus and want to make him known. But some were preaching in order to cause division. These hoped to bring more affliction on Paul. And yet Paul rejoices, because the message of the gospel is going out! And Paul knows another secret. The prayers of the believers will propel the gospel, and will bring Paul's deliverance. So many causes for joy!

For us, we preach the good news of Jesus. And we pray for our brothers in chains around the world. Take time to pray for the persecuted church and leaders today!

'For I fully expect and hope that I will never be ashamed, but that I will continue to be bold for Christ, as I have been in the past. And I trust that my life will bring honor to Christ, whether I live or die. For to me, living means living for Christ, and dying is even better. But if I live, I can do more fruitful work for Christ. So I really don't know which is better. I'm torn between two desires: I long to go and be with Christ, which would be far better for me. But for your sakes, it is better that I continue to live. '

Philippians 1:20-24

Two things I pursue. I strive to be bold for Christ and not be ashamed. And I seek to bring honor to Christ whether I live or die. These two principles drive me forward and keep me on task for Jesus!

If I live, I live for Him. And if I should die, then I will be with Him, which is a great thing! For the brothers, for you, it's better that I live!

'Knowing this, I am convinced that I will remain alive so I can continue to help all of you grow and experience the joy of your faith. And when I come to you again, you will have even more reason to take pride in Christ Jesus because of what he is doing through me. '

Philippians 1:25-26

Paul understands he is the Lord's instrument, and he knows the Lord will preserve him to complete the work He has given Paul to do. Our faith comes with joy, extreme joy, and it's something we grow into. Draw near to Jesus, friends, and care for one another. I want you to have the same extreme joy, even in hardship. When we meet again, we will share with one another all the Lord is doing!

'Above all, you must live as citizens of heaven, conducting yourselves in a manner worthy of the Good News about Christ. Then, whether I come and see you again or only hear about you, I will know that you are standing together with one spirit and one purpose, fighting together for the faith, which is the Good News. '

Philippians 1:27

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To live in this great nation means obligations and responsibilities too. Respecting our leaders, participating as appropriate, paying what is due, these all are on me.

In His Kingdom, Jesus beckons us in, provides and cares, and then commands our love and care for others, our praise and acclamation of Him, and telling others of His great love and invitation for them. We are citizens, even family, and so let's live it out!

'Don't be intimidated in any way by your enemies. This will be a sign to them that they are going to be destroyed, but that you are going to be saved, even by God himself. For you have been given not only the privilege of trusting in Christ but also the privilege of suffering for him. We are in this struggle together. You have seen my struggle in the past, and you know that I am still in the midst of it.'

Philippians 1:28-30

Stand strong in the face of danger and persecution. This sign tells the enemies that you will be saved by God, and they will be destroyed. Have confidence, knowing the saints before have done the same, and the witness to His salvation will continue!

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Chapter 2

'Is there any encouragement from belonging to Christ? Any comfort from his love? Any fellowship together in the Spirit? Are your hearts tender and compassionate? Then make me truly happy by agreeing wholeheartedly with each other, loving one another, and working together with one mind and purpose. '

Philippians 2:1-2

Think about all we have in Jesus. Walking with Him brings incredible encouragement, we belong to Christ. And indeed we have found great comfort from His love, no matter the circumstance. Daily we experience fellowship with Holy Spirit. And what a change He is making, giving us Christ-like compassion and tender hearts. This is a standard of what a relationship with Jesus brings.

Paul then asks the believers to strive toward one mind and heart, caring and loving each other. This is how the church thrives. This is where you will thrive too!

'Don't be selfish; don't try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves. Don't look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too. '

Philippians 2:3-4

Have your heart set to caring for others. Be humble, think of them first. We aren't building reputations; we are caring for others first. Jesus works out the rest. The body of Christ is all of us, caring for one another.

'You must have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had. Though he was God, he did not think of equality with God as something to cling to. Instead, he gave up his divine privileges; he took the humble position of a slave and was born as a human being. When he appeared in human form, he humbled himself in obedience to God and died a criminal's death on a cross. '

Philippians 2:5-8

Give it all up, for the sake of the brothers and sisters. Serving is vastly more important than self-recognition. Jesus did exactly this, and we can too. Set myself aside, and elevate others. It's my attitude first, and followed up with my activity.

Jesus had power, honor, position. He set all this aside, and stepped down to a servant role. He no longer relied on his power, honor or position. Instead He relied on Holy Spirit, and we must also, the very same way.

Set it all aside. Love one another.

'Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. '

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Philippians 2:5-7

Don't miss the crucial fact in here. When Jesus came to earth, he relinquished his powers as God. Everything you have read about Jesus is actually a man with the power of Holy Spirit. He prayed and God answered. He was not a mystic or conjurer, but simply a man, living in relationship with God. Everything you see Him doing, you can do in relationship with God as well. He wasn't a "limited God" who retained his ability for miracles. No, He was fully man, who emptied Himself of all His Creator God power and instead demonstrated what a relationship with God can be.

'Instead, he gave up his divine privileges; he took the humble position of a slave and was born as a human being. When he appeared in human form, he humbled himself in obedience to God and died a criminal's death on a cross. '

Philippians 2:7-8

Subjugation. Exchanging the glorious for the foul. The only man to ever live a perfect life died the horrible death of a criminal. How far will God go to rescue me? He went from Heaven's glory and praise to earth's retched desert of apostasy, and carried the entire weight of humanity's sin on his own perfect body. Jesus paid the price.

We thought he was stricken for his sin. But He had no sin. He the perfect man, bore my sin, my disdain, my refuse, and placed on me His perfection, His holiness, His perfection. How far He went, further than the East to the West, for you and for me. I am completely destroyed. But I say, "Yes, Lord!" I will be all His for all my life, and eternity too.

Consider all of this. Then make the trade!

'Therefore, God elevated him to the place of highest honor and gave him the name above all other names, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue declare that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. '

Philippians 2:9-11

Jesus has the Name above all names. He has the highest place of honor, and all people will bow before Him. What's the reason? He did not demand recognition as God, but instead subjected himself to come as a baby, live as a man, having relinquished all his heavenly attributes and power, and live with purity, depend only on Holy Spirit, lived the perfect life. He loved and cared for everyone He met. He restored people to God, rebuilding relationships, teaching forgiveness and dependence on God. And He gave up His life, being crucified, a horrible death. But that terrible cross held the Son of God, and carried all the sin and punishment for every man, woman, boy and girl, for all eternity. God the Father planned this all, to completely pay for sin, and restore people to Himself. And Jesus fulfilled every step of that plan.

That's why His name is higher than any other name, and why He alone is Lord! Oh what glory are due Him, and the Father! May Holy Spirit bring you the same joy and celebration as you ponder Jesus!

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'Dear friends, you always followed my instructions when I was with you. And now that I am away, it is even more important. Work hard to show the results of your salvation, obeying God with deep reverence and fear. For God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases him. Do everything without complaining and arguing, so that no one can criticize you. Live clean, innocent lives as children of God, shining like bright lights in a world full of crooked and perverse people. '

Philippians 2:12-15

Work to show that your salvation makes a difference. No complaints, no arguments, but kind service, clean innocent living, that's how we do it! God is working in us to give us the desire and power to serve Him. So we get after it! And you'll shine in a crooked and perverse world!

'Hold firmly to the word of life; then, on the day of Christ's return, I will be proud that I did not run the race in vain and that my work was not useless. But I will rejoice even if I lose my life, pouring it out like a liquid offering to God, just like your faithful service is an offering to God. And I want all of you to share that joy. Yes, you should rejoice, and I will share your joy. '

Philippians 2:16-18

Hold fast to the Word of Life. Cling to it. There's joy there. We strive and work to build up others in Christ. Hold fast! Our joy is seeing everyone with Christ in Heaven. So hold fast to Christ!

'If the Lord Jesus is willing, I hope to send Timothy to you soon for a visit. Then he can cheer me up by telling me how you are getting along. I have no one else like Timothy, who genuinely cares about your welfare. All the others care only for themselves and not for what matters to Jesus Christ. But you know how Timothy has proved himself. Like a son with his father, he has served with me in preaching the Good News. I hope to send him to you just as soon as I find out what is going to happen to me here. And I have confidence from the Lord that I myself will come to see you soon. '

Philippians 2:19-24

Waiting is so hard. Paul is waiting, not sure what will come from his imprisonment. But he is sending his very best, Timothy, to come see the Philippians. Tim cares for them, just like Paul does.

Be a Timothy! Don't be like the others, who don't really care. They are "fair weather friends" who come alongside when everything is going well.

Did you catch it? Believers have hard times, sometimes. This is normal, if you are a follower of Jesus. We pray, and we work to encourage and teach others. We do this when it's easy, and we do this when it's hard. Be a Timothy!

'Meanwhile, I thought I should send Epaphroditus back to you. He is a true brother, co-worker, and fellow soldier. And he was your messenger to help me in my need. I am sending him because he has been longing to see you, and he was very distressed that you heard he was ill.

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And he certainly was ill; in fact, he almost died. But God had mercy on him—and also on me, so that I would not have one sorrow after another. So I am all the more anxious to send him back to you, for I know you will be glad to see him, and then I will not be so worried about you. Welcome him in the Lord's love and with great joy, and give him the honor that people like him deserve. For he risked his life for the work of Christ, and he was at the point of death while doing for me what you couldn't do from far away.'

Philippians 2:25-30

We are in this together! The Philippians sent Epaphroditus to Rome for their dear friend and leader, Paul. Epaphroditus brought care and love, and companionship to him. The whole church wanted to care for Paul, so they sent him. Epaph was both a brother, but also diligent worker, fighting for the faith. And along the way, he got sick, almost to the point of death. But now restored, and longing for his people, Paul sends him home. This loving and caring for one another is how the church is meant to live. Who are you caring for? Who is caring for you? Perhaps it's time to take time, and see how we can care for one another.

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Chapter 3

'Whatever happens, my dear brothers and sisters, rejoice in the Lord. I never get tired of telling you these things, and I do it to safeguard your faith. '

Philippians 3:1

The Lord is still God. No matter what Happens, He is in charge. He is the Lord. Take time during the good, to rejoice. Take time despite the bad, also to rejoice. Paul's reminder is that we look to Jesus, not our circumstances. We seek the Lord and we rejoice in Him. As we do so, we safeguard our faith. Rejoice in Him, it's our armor!

'Watch out for those dogs, those people who do evil, those mutilators who say you must be circumcised to be saved. For we who worship by the Spirit of God are the ones who are truly circumcised. We rely on what Christ Jesus has done for us.

We put no confidence in human effort, though I could have confidence in my own effort if anyone could. Indeed, if others have reason for confidence in their own efforts, I have even more! I was circumcised when I was eight days old. I am a pure-blooded citizen of Israel and a member of the tribe of Benjamin—a real Hebrew if there ever was one! I was a member of the Pharisees, who demand the strictest obedience to the Jewish law. I was so zealous that I harshly persecuted the church. And as for righteousness, I obeyed the law without fault. '

Philippians 3:2-6

Beware the rule-makers, those who think they have a standing with God by keeping commands! Their pursuit is control, and comes from the father of lies, our adversary Satan.

Instead, we rest on what He has done. Jesus washed me anew, and I am His. My only credentials are what He has done.

I may have a huge resume - it doesn't matter. I may have been the best rule-keeper. It was a shadow of the truth. All my efforts and accomplishments did not wash me clean. My sin remained.

Jesus saves. He alone. And now I walk with Him. You, please, do the same!

'I once thought these things were valuable, but now I consider them worthless because of what Christ has done. Yes, everything else is worthless when compared with the infinite value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have discarded everything else, counting it all as garbage, so that I could gain Christ and become one with him.

I no longer count on my own righteousness through obeying the law; rather, I become righteous through faith in Christ. For God's way of making us right with himself depends on faith.

I want to know Christ and experience the mighty power that raised him from the dead. I want to suffer with him, sharing in his death, so that one way or another I will experience the resurrection from the dead! '

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Philippians 3:7-11

I've tossed out my rule performance as any measure of standing. Ultimately I couldn't do it. On my own merits and strength, I couldn't stand without offending God. I couldn't measure up to His standard of living with purity, humility or holiness.

Only trusting in Jesus, and His death and resurrection will make me clean. Only His work can save me. And He showed us, we can count on Him. With great love and affection, our Father sent His son in our place, to pay the price for our sin. And then He rose from the dead, and invites us to live in trusting walk with Him.

So like Paul, I want to know Him, and experience every day walking with Him. He knows the battles, present ones, future ones. He provides strength and meets all the demands we face. And He provides more than we need. And one day we will be raised to heaven with Him too. This is our solid trust and hope.

'I don't mean to say that I have already achieved these things or that I have already reached perfection. But I press on to possess that perfection for which Christ Jesus first possessed me. No, dear brothers and sisters, I have not achieved it, but I focus on this one thing: Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead, I press on to reach the end of the race and receive the heavenly prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us.'

Philippians 3:12-14

Christ's work alone saves me, and that is complete. Done.

Yet He has drawn me into a loving relationship, and given me His Spirit. And He is changing me, making me more and more like Him. So I press forward to spend time with Him, to follow as He leads, to offer Him glory and praise, and to share this amazing relationship with others. He knows my whole life, and all that's coming. But we get to walk it together, and for that, I press forward. I want all of this!

'Let all who are spiritually mature agree on these things. If you disagree on some point, I believe God will make it plain to you. But we must hold on to the progress we have already made.'

Dear brothers and sisters, pattern your lives after mine, and learn from those who follow our example. For I have told you often before, and I say it again with tears in my eyes, that there are many whose conduct shows they are really enemies of the cross of Christ. They are headed for destruction. Their god is their appetite, they brag about shameful things, and they think only about this life here on earth.

But we are citizens of heaven, where the Lord Jesus Christ lives. And we are eagerly waiting for him to return as our Savior. He will take our weak mortal bodies and change them into glorious bodies like his own, using the same power with which he will bring everything under his control.'

Philippians 3:15-21

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Let all believers agree, it's not about rules or our credentials. We lay these all aside, and stand forgiven in Christ alone, filled and led by Holy Spirit. And we conduct ourselves accordingly. We build up others, caring and serving, in hopes they too will find new life in Jesus.

Some are not this way, but pursue their own success, build their own reputations, and do not know God at all. But we are citizens of heaven, adopted into Christ's family, and made fellow heirs with Him. We long for His name to be made great, and we strive to live in accordance with His character and teaching. One day we shall be whisked into heaven and be made all new. What a day that will be.

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Chapter 4

'Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stay true to the Lord. I love you and long to see you, dear friends, for you are my joy and the crown I receive for my work. '

Philippians 4:1

Staying true to the Lord never happened by rule following. Paul was stunned on the road when Jesus confronted him, and his life was forever changed. Everything going forward was about loving and serving the brothers and sisters in God's family. Staying true means continuing the caring and nurturing of believers. And so Paul longs to see them again. They are his joy, and part of his heavenly crown.

Who are you serving and caring for? How are you putting on Christ and building up others? Who is in your crown? Stay true my friends!

'Now I appeal to Euodia and Syntyche. Please, because you belong to the Lord, settle your disagreement. And I ask you, my true partner, to help these two women, for they worked hard with me in telling others the Good News. They worked along with Clement and the rest of my co-workers, whose names are written in the Book of Life. '

Philippians 4:2-3

Please, fellow workers, settle the disagreement. Both have worked diligently for the Lord, telling others about Jesus. And to my true working partner, help these women. They have helped many, including the rest of the coworkers. The message is simple. Please settle differences between you and others. Our names are in the Lamb's Book of Life. Let's get it done. The family needs to be loving on each other!

'Always be full of joy in the Lord. I say it again—rejoice! '

Philippians 4:4

Paul says it twice. Be joyful in Jesus. Rejoice. Circumstances may be up. Or they may be down. Adversity may be all around.

Do you remember who loves you? God is the one. And His provision and supply will not fail you. He's given tasks to accomplish, work to do, and a world that needs to watch our joy. The world needs to see and follow our hope. Rejoice. Always. Rejoice.

'Let everyone see that you are considerate in all you do. Remember, the Lord is coming soon. '

Philippians 4:5

Let your patience, kindness, gentleness, tolerance, mercy, grace flow in everything you do. Make it known by how you serve and care for others. Oh they need the hope we carry, so pour into your people! Jesus will return suddenly - it's happening!

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'Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus. '

Philippians 4:6-7

Today. Thank God for all He has done. He is at work. Don't worry about the thing. Don't fret about any thing. Pray to God to provide, then rest in Him. Do life in patient trusting of God, and He will bring you through!.

'Yes, everything else is worthless when compared with the infinite value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have discarded everything else, counting it all as garbage, so that I could gain Christ and become one with him. I no longer count on my own righteousness through obeying the law; rather, I become righteous through faith in Christ. For God's way of making us right with himself depends on faith. '

Philippians 3:8-9

The blinding on the road forced Paul to face Jesus. Suddenly all his "work" amounted to nothing. The result of decades of study, diligent ritual, and driven zeal had brought him to a life of persecuting people different than himself. And he thought it was holy and right to do these.

His discovery was that he didn't know God. And Jesus confronted him, blinded him, stopped him cold, and everything changed. From that day forward, Paul was different. Paul discarded all of it, so that he could know Christ, and become one with Him.

Are you ready? Discard everything else, so you can know Christ. You can be one with Him. His Spirit in you, leading and guiding. Jesus is winsome, amazing, and wonderful. Make the trade, dump the garbage!

'How I praise the Lord that you are concerned about me again. I know you have always been concerned for me, but you didn't have the chance to help me. Not that I was ever in need, for I have learned how to be content with whatever I have. I know how to live on almost nothing or with everything. I have learned the secret of living in every situation, whether it is with a full stomach or empty, with plenty or little. For I can do everything through Christ, who gives me strength. Even so, you have done well to share with me in my present difficulty. '

Philippians 4:10-14

The believers in Philippi took time to pour their care out for Paul. He was in prison, and they were loving on him by sending him support. He was a caretaker for them, and they were a caretaker for him. This is how believers pour out for one another.

In the midst of his gratitude, Paul also reflects on how the Lord sees him through. God has been faithful, when life had plenty, and when life offered little. And there's a secret: Christ strengthens us. He is the one who sees us through. Learn it, and live it!

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'As you know, you Philippians were the only ones who gave me financial help when I first brought you the Good News and then traveled on from Macedonia. No other church did this. Even when I was in Thessalonica you sent help more than once. I don't say this because I want a gift from you. Rather, I want you to receive a reward for your kindness.'

Philippians 4:15-17

A giving people. These believers kept giving. Their new affection for Jesus had changed them, made them one, and they invested. They wanted the work to continue. And they loved the worker.

Where are you in your love for Jesus? Are you investing? Are you propelling the good news to the next people group? This is what we do, and this is how we do it!

'At the moment I have all I need—and more! I am generously supplied with the gifts you sent me with Epaphroditus. They are a sweet-smelling sacrifice that is acceptable and pleasing to God. And this same God who takes care of me will supply all your needs from his glorious riches, which have been given to us in Christ Jesus.'

Philippians 4:18-19

Paul has everything he needs. He is in prison, not in a hotel. But the Philippians have made sure he has food and clothes, and they continue to pray and encourage him. He also reminds them that Christ will provide all they need as well. True for us today, He supplies what we need as well. Rejoice!

'Now all glory to God our Father forever and ever! Amen.'

Philippians 4:20

As a capstone to trusting God and commending believers, Paul turns to God Himself, in praise, bringing glory to the Lord. All the glory goes to God, who alone is worthy to be praised. We adore and honor Him, arms uplifted. He is the Lord.

'Give my greetings to each of God's holy people—all who belong to Christ Jesus. The brothers who are with me send you their greetings. And all the rest of God's people send you greetings, too, especially those in Caesar's household. May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.'

Philippians 4:21-23

God's family cares for one another. Paul writes from jail, and yet sends greetings from believers in Caesar's household. The great news of Jesus is pouring all over Rome and all over Greece as well. It's marked by love and affection one for another. This is all because of God's grace, poured over every one of us. Relish it!