

1. **Introduction:** Having pointed out that the vital thing in preaching the gospel is to present the undistorted truth, Paul moves on to comfort his Philippian readers that in spite of being in prison, he is confident his present circumstance is what God wants it to be.
2. **Philippians 1:19-20:** *Yes, and I will rejoice,<sup>19</sup> for I know that through your prayers and the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ this will turn out for my deliverance,<sup>20</sup> as it is my eager expectation and hope that I will not be at all ashamed, but that with full courage now as always Christ will be honored in my body, whether by life or by death.*
  - Paul says, I know this will turn out for my deliverance. Paul is convinced that the Lord was in control in every event, even though his imprisonment and upcoming trial before Caesar made the future appear dark.
  - He was confident that being in prison was not punishment from God but rather another step in fulfilling God’s plan for his life. Paul’s eager expectation that he would be delivered from his chains came from knowing the Philippians were praying for him together with Paul’s faith that their prayers would bring the help of the Spirit.
  - Paul trusts that Christ will be honored whether he lives or dies. Paul had admitted that, while he thought it unlikely, he might be killed rather than released from his imprisonment in Rome.
3. **Philippians 1:21-26:** *For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.<sup>22</sup> If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. Yet which I shall choose I cannot tell.<sup>23</sup> I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better.<sup>24</sup> But to remain in the flesh is more necessary on your account.<sup>25</sup> Convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with you all, for your progress and joy in the faith,<sup>26</sup> so that in me you may have ample cause to glory in Christ Jesus, because of my coming to you again.*
  - Paul considers the two alternatives that face him. When he comes before Nero, he can be exonerated and freed, or he could be declared guilty and be executed.
  - He knew that whatever happened was not in his control. One-by-one he considered the possible outcomes. (1.) To him, execution has the advantage that by death he would gain by immediately being in the presence of Christ. That seemed much better than the constant opposition, often violent, that faced him in preaching the gospel.
  - (2.) If he were not executed, then he can continue to live doing what Christ told him to do. He may be many years left to live in obedience, doing that which Christ commanded.
  - Being able to fruitfully continue ministry would be fulfilling. Perhaps there are still important things for me to do. “... **to live is Christ, and to die is gain.**” Whatever happens, I am His.
  - Paul says, I feel confident I will live and be with you again to “**enjoy your progress and joy in the faith.**” Paul now focuses on how the Philippians should act in his absence.

4. **Philippians 1:27-28**: *Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel, <sup>28</sup> and not frightened in anything by your opponents. This is a clear sign to them of their destruction, but of your salvation, and that from God.*

- Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Let your manner of life be proper for a citizen of God's kingdom. If your life is like that, then whether I come to see you in person or only hear of you from others, I will know you stand firm, all of one mind directed toward success in the gospel.
- Be bold before external adversaries, not frightened by their words or deeds. When spiritual enemies fail to frighten us, they have failed completely because fear is their principal weapon.

5. **Philippians 1:29-30**: *For it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in him but also suffer for his sake, <sup>30</sup> engaged in the same conflict that you saw I had and now hear that I still have.*

- Experiencing opposition from adversaries whose actions were directed against them simply as followers of Christ should not surprise them. Jesus said He was unjustly attacked. Anyone who follows Him should anticipate the likelihood of similar attacks.
- That is because followers of Jesus are involved in the same conflict as Jesus and Paul. It is the age-old conflict between good and evil.
- Jesus has shown that evil can be conquered in unexpected ways. If we are directly involved in fighting evil, it may mean suffering for us, as it did for Him.
- Winning the battle against evil was made possible by what Jesus accomplished. If we must suffer, let it be because of Jesus and His mission to destroy evil.
- Therefore, as I instructed you to stand strong for the Lord against external attacks (1:27-28), now listen carefully to how you should react to internal attacks from within the body.

6. **Philippians 2:1-4**: *So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, <sup>2</sup> complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. <sup>3</sup> Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. <sup>4</sup> Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.*

- Paul asks a series of rhetorical questions. If there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, etc. The answer is "of course all these things bring comfort."
- Based on what has been done for each believer, Paul says, "**complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind.**" The presence of these things will signify a deep, abiding, internal unity among them That unity is the immediate goal Paul yearns to see fulfilled.
- Because of encouragement and comfort received from Christ's love, because they have enjoyed the fellowship of the Spirit, and received affection and sympathy from fellow

believers, Paul exhorts striving for unity (be of one accord and mind) in mutual affection, sympathy, and love.

- He says, don't do anything from selfish ambition or conceit. Notice, he says "selfish ambition." Not all ambition is selfish. Living to glorify God is an unselfish, good ambition.
- Notice, Paul doesn't say it is wrong to look out for our own interests. He says, we should not look out only for our own interests.
- Strive for humility in which you count others more significant than yourself. That will require that you look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Live in the light of Jesus' perfect example.
- The way Paul mentions the blessings bestowed on believers, suggests that each blessing should be an obvious part of every Christian's experience.

7. **Philippians 2:5-11**: *In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: <sup>6</sup> Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; <sup>7</sup> rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. <sup>8</sup> And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death - even death on a cross! <sup>9</sup> Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, <sup>10</sup> that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, <sup>11</sup> and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

- Consider Isaiah's description of the thoughts of Lucifer at the instant when he first rebelled against God. Here is what Isaiah writes.

8. **Isaiah 14:13-14**: *You (Lucifer) said in your heart, 'I will ascend to heaven; above the stars of God I will set my throne on high; I will sit on the mount of assembly in the far reaches of the north; <sup>14</sup> I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.'*

- Satan (*Lucifer*) boasted that he would rise above all else, but the words that follow show what his actual destiny will be.

9. **Isaiah 14:15-16**: *But you are brought down to Sheol, to the far reaches of the pit. <sup>16</sup> Those who see you will stare at you and ponder over you: 'Is this the man who made the earth tremble, who shook kingdoms?*

- (2:5-11) concerns the NT counterpart to Satan's words in Isaiah. This passage in Philippians is often called the great parabola of Scripture. They depict the descent of the Lord Jesus from loftiest position in the universe down, down to His death on the cross.
- But it doesn't end there. The resurrected Jesus again goes up to be seated once more beside the Father on the throne of glory.
- Satan said, I will go up to the highest position. God said, "You will be cast down to hell."

- Jesus said, I willingly go down to die on a cross. God the Father said, “You will be given the name that is above every name.”

10. **Paul’s Comments about Jesus:** Paul in 2:5-11 is speaking of a man, Jesus of Nazareth, who but a generation earlier lived and walked the roads of Judah and Galilee. Paul says that this man, being in very nature God, did tremendous things impacting everyone.

- This chain of assertions about the Lord Jesus made within some 30 years of His death on the cross in Jerusalem are in the form of settled, common knowledge.
- The information conveyed teaches of the divinity of Christ, of His preexistence, of His equality with God, His incarnation as truly human, His voluntary death on the cross, the certainty of His ultimate triumph over evil, and His permanent reign.
- Jesus is first presented in His preincarnate state. Before the incarnation, Jesus was in the form of God and was God’s equal, He is God. That means Jesus possesses all of God’s attributes. God is the creator, omniscient, omnipresent, the redeemer, etc. So is Jesus.
- God is of one essence, but three persons. God’s attributes belong to His essence and are the same for each of the three Persons. The activities of God belong to the Persons and are somewhat different for each Person.

11. **How Should Who Jesus is and What He has Done Impact our Relationships:** Paul says,

- ***“In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:”***
- What was the mindset of Jesus? Although He was in His very nature God, He chose to be like an ordinary man, not having the mindset of one who rules, but rather the mindset of one who serves. His incarnation was for the purpose of doing a great service for sinners.
- The overwhelming need of sinners is the need (1.) for forgiveness of their rebellious attitude and the sins it produced and (2.) pardon of the death penalty due their sins.
- Jesus, as the legal substitute acceptable to the Father, willingly (1.) lived a life of perfect obedience to God’s moral law, thereby earning righteousness that could be given to those for whom He was the legal substitute. (2.) He enabled the pardon of those who believe by willingly dying on the cross to pay the death penalty due their sins.
- For His willing sacrifice of Himself on behalf of those who believe, the Father, ***“exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”***
- Look to Jesus who is Lord of all, who has provided for our deepest needs to be met, who loves us and demonstrated His love by dying that we might live in eternity with Him.
- ***“In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus.”***