

Study Group 1 (Philippians 1:1 – 1:30)

"STRIVING TOGETHER FOR THE FAITH OF THE GOSPEL"

- 1:1 Paul is the author of this letter but as Timothy was with him in Rome, he includes Timothy's name with his own, Timothy had worked with Paul in the founding of the ecclesia (Acts 16:3), and so there was a special bond between Timothy and the Philippians. There is no need for Paul to establish his apostleship with the Philippians as he did with the other ecclesia's (e.g. Rom. 1:1; 1 Cor. 1:1; Gal. 1:1; Eph. 1:1; Col. 1:1).
- 1:2 The first need in all our lives is to appreciate the grace of God (a basic quality of His character, Ex. 34:6-8). Then having been "justified by faith, we have peace with God" (Rom. 5:1). This peace is not a freedom from trouble (John 16:33), but the result of a mind at one with the Father. Peace is a principle fruit of the spirit (Gal. 5:22), and the failure of the Philippians to have peace amongst themselves, showed that they had not yet reached full maturity in Christ. Paul concludes the letter by referring again to the grace and peace of God (4:7, 23).
- 1:3 The apostles very first thought was to tell brethren and sisters how much joy they gave him. How often have you turned to God and thanked him for the help and example of your brethren and sisters?
- 1:4 Again there is an emphasis on them "all". Even the "problem brethren" were not left out of his thoughts. Prayer was not burdensome or wearisome to Paul – it was a joy!
- 1:5 From the time that Lydia had responded to the gospel and opened her doors to the apostle, the Philippians had been consistent in their support of Paul
- 1:6 The work of the Divine hand in the establishment of the ecclesia could not be denied, it was God who called them and opened their hearts (eg Lydia, Acts 16:14). The Father had commenced the work in Philippi for a purpose – that He might have fruit in the day of His Son's return.
- 1:7 In a city whose people were such staunch supporters of Rome, it is not unlikely that the Philippians received some affliction as a result of their support for the prisoner in Rome (cp. v.28-30). They were to fellowship Paul's sufferings just as he shared Christ's (cp. 3:10).
- 1:8 The depth of love Paul felt for the Philippians was not based on human emotion, but a response to the love of Christ. "If God so loved us, we ought also to love one another" (1 John 4:11)
- 1:9 Again the need for growth and development in the truth is emphasised. To love God is the first commandment and from that comes the second, loving our brethren and neighbours as ourselves. The development of love must be tempered by two qualities – knowledge and judgement. A love coupled with knowledge and judgement may need to reprove and correct those straying from the truth. True love therefore means seeking the best for our brethren in the way in which the Father loves His children (Heb. 12:6-8).
- 1:10 We must ensure that our "development" in the things of God is not detrimental to the spiritual growth of others. Love, balanced by knowledge and discernment, will cause us to refrain from what we may consider to be a harmless action when we know it could cause someone else to stumble and sin.
- 1:11 **"Being filled with the fruits of righteousness"**; "fruit of the spirit" as described by Paul to the Galatians (Gal 5:22-25). Jesus said that if men could see our good works they would glorify the Father (Matt. 5:16).
- 1:12 He was certainly a living example of his instructions to Timothy "preach the word, be instant in season out of season" (2 Tim. 4:2). Every circumstance could be used to give glory to God.
- 1:13 The gospel of salvation spread in the most unlikely circumstance. We can never be sure what type of soil people are, and should therefore never hold back from preaching to any.
- 1:14 Most of the brethren were inspired to greater efforts by Paul's fearless witness for the truth. **Enthusiasm is contagious**. There should be no reason for us to be afraid when we preach. We hold the truth and we should never feel ashamed of that precious hope committed to our trust (2 Tim. 1:7-9, 12).
- 1:15 It appears that some brethren disassociated themselves from Paul (Acts 28:19-29). These brethren who were antagonistic to Paul still preached Christ, but motivated by a competitive spirit and a desire to increase the pressure on Paul (see next verse)
- 1:17 We should be always ready to give an answer ('apologia') for the hope within us (cp 1 Pet. 3:15)
- 1:20 To him, to waver in trial would cause discredit to the name of Christ. We can therefore understand his keen desire not to let down the truth and his beloved Lord whom he served. Whenever we fail to live up to the truth we profess, people around us are quick to see the inconsistencies, and the name of Christ is put to shame.
- 1:21 Paul was a manifestation of Christ. Even though his early life was lived in such opposition to Christ he could later say "Christ liveth in me" (Gal. 2:20) and "be ye followers of me even as I also am of Christ" (1 Cor. 11:1)
- 1:23 We can only be impressed by Paul's serene state of mind when facing death. His present life meant so little and the life to come so much that he had no fears about dying.



- 1:27** Being a Roman colony, the people of Philippi had a great pride in their Roman citizenship. Paul tells the Philippians to have a similar attitude to their citizenship of the heavenly kingdom. Just as the people of Philippi modelled their city on Rome, so must the saints model their lives on the city whose builder and maker is God. Here is Paul's first strong appeal for unity – that the divisions in the Roman ecclesia might not be seen in the Philippian ecclesia. Unity is essential because if we are going to stand firm against the pressures of the world then we must be united as brethren, with one mind. That mind is not our own, but that of Christ, as Paul shows in ch 2. There is no room for division if we are labouring together as one. Those who bite and devour end up being consumed one of another (Gal. 5:15).
- 1:28** The concern of the apostle is that in the face of sudden trial they might buckle under pressure. Salvation through trial is a continued theme of the scripture (e.g. 1 Pet. 1:7). Follow this theme through scripture.
- 1:29** Far from suffering for Christ's sake being a source of complaint and sorrow, they are told that they are in fact a gift! To suffer is a privilege even greater than belief. Jesus had told his disciples to rejoice and shout for joy when persecuted for great would be their reward (Matt. 5:12). The faithful in the "white-hot" days of the truth rejoiced in suffering. Paul had set an excellent example in their midst singing praise to God in the prison of Philippi having endured stripes (Acts 16:23-26). Christ learned by the things which he suffered (Heb. 5:8).



Discussion Questions

1. In verse 3, Paul is thankful when he remembers the Philippians. What are things that we are thankful for.
2. What do your brethren and sisters and young people contribute to your walk in Christ which causes you to thank God for them?
3. What requests can we make for our brothers and sisters in our prayers? Is praying for others effective? (Jam 5:13-18; Acts 12:5-11) What must accompany prayer for it to be answered? (Mat 21:22; Mark 11:24; 1 John 3:22; Jer 29:12-13)
4. "agape" love ('agape' or 'agapao' is used over 25 times in this passage). "Love should abound more and more" in our relationships with each other. What will develop this love? How will it be seen in our lives? How will full knowledge and judgement balance our love?
5. How do we cause our brethren to stumble (be offended)? What is the solution?
6. Verse 13 in the NIV translation says, "As a result, it has become clear... that I am in chains for Christ". What characteristics or actions of Paul do you think made this clear? In your personal circumstances at school or work, how can you show that Christ is the motivation behind your character and actions?
7. What does v14 indicate had formerly been the attitude of some brethren toward preaching? Why do some people lack confidence to speak of God's Word to others?
8. Preaching the gospel out of envy and strife is an example of doing the right thing for the wrong reason. List some examples of how we may fall into the same trap
9. List practical suggestions in which we can preach the Word at work or at school. What Bible subjects do people respond to most readily?
10. Make a list of the needs of others so that you can include your brethren and sisters in your prayers. (Rom 15:30-32; Eph 6:18-19; Col 4:3; 1 Th 5:25; 2 Th 3:1; Phm 1:22; Heb 13:18)
11. Do you genuinely desire to be with Christ above all else? How can we develop a "love for his appearing"?
12. (a) Paul recognized the need to encourage others by his presence (See also Rom 1:11-12). Sometimes we excuse ourselves from attending Bible Class or CYC because we have other things we "must" do. In what ways can we provide benefit for ourselves and others by being present at all ecclesial functions?
(b) Can we ever be of benefit by our absence?
13. Paul's joy is apparent from these verses, also v18. Remembering that Paul was imprisoned, discuss ways in which tribulation and sorrow can enhance our capacity for joy. Look for examples where suffering led to great joy. (e.g. Acts 5:41). Explain.
14. Paul was convinced that he should remain alive for the good of the Philippians even though this was against his own personal wishes. Think of examples of how we can implement that attitude in making decisions in both our personal and ecclesial environment.
15. How can we develop "one spirit" and "one mind" in our ecclesial environment? Think of examples in your own ecclesia where you feel there has been a striving for a common goal. When this spirit is not present what can be done to change it?
16. List ways in which your conflicts or trials parallel those which you have seen and heard in Paul. How are you encouraged by knowing that others have endured the same trials?



Study Group 2 (Philippians 2:1 – 2:11)

“ESTEEM OTHERS BETTER THAN YOURSELF”

- 2:1** Our God is the God of all comfort ('paraklesis') who will comfort ('parakoleao') us in all our tribulations (2 Cor 1:3-6) and eventually give us everlasting consolation (2 Thess 2:16). The Philippians shared one spirit (ch 1:27) – a spirit of the love of God and of each other, a spirit of zeal for the work of God.
- 2:2** The apostle later in the epistle (ch 4:1) call the Philippians his “joy and crown”, but that joy would be complete only if they developed and maintained unity. Paul obviously has the dispute between Euodias and Syntyche in mind although he doesn't mention that particularly until ch 4:2.
- The stress on unity can't be missed. Paul wanted them to think the same thing, and have the same love, being and mind; that is to act as if they were one person. A challenge to us to completely forget about asserting ourselves and strive for the unity of our ecclesia and ecclesias in general. As the one body of Christ (Eph. 5:30. 1 Cor. 12:27).
- 2:3** Solomon wrote that “only by pride cometh contention but with the well advised is wisdom” (Prov. 13:10). All glorying is vain unless it be in the cross for Christ (Gal. 6:14) and the knowledge of God (Jer. 9:23-24). If any man thinks himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself (Gal. 6:3). Humility is the only path for present unity and eternal glory (1 Peter 5:3-6).
- 2:4** The first characteristic Paul warned Timothy against in 2 Tim 3:2 was the men being “lovers of their own selves”. Further he adds the example of Timothy, who would “naturally care for your state”; and of Epaphroditus, who was prepared to sacrifice himself to care for others. There is therefore a great need for us, as young people, to look beyond our own needs and wants and serve our brethren.
- 2:5** Although Christ was greater than all men, he showed the greatest example of self-abasement. The Christ-mind is revealed in John 13 where “Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God ... he ... began to wash the disciples feet.” Despite his greatness he was prepared to totally humble himself and think solely about the needs of those he came to save.
- 2:6** In v.7 the word “form” is used of “the form of a servant”, which shows that the meaning is not of form in a physical sense but rather refers to Jesus' character and status as God's son. Jesus had this divine status because God was his Father. He was given a great capacity, the Spirit being poured on him without measure (John 3:34). However, when he was tempted to misuse his Divine ability (turning stones to bread, Matt.4:3-4) to demand Divine protection (throwing himself off the pinnacle of the Temple, Matt. 4:5-7) and to seek his promised throne immediately (Matt. 4:8-10), he refused in all cases. Jesus realised that the cross must come before the crown, and so he humbled himself, choosing voluntarily to take the position of a slave.
- For Jesus to have demanded the rights of Sonship in his mortality would have been to take something that didn't belong to him – “robbery” in every sense of the word. Therefore he chose a path of lowly suffering with the promise of eternal riches, rather than snatching immediate riches, honour and equality with God. He could rise to a higher status, not by imitating Eve's self-willed endeavour to be like the elohim (Gen. 3:5), but by becoming the loving submissive instrument of his Father's will (Matt. 26:39).
- 2:7** Paul's thoughts have turned to the servant prophecies of Isaiah where the prophet speaks of the submission of the Son to the will of the Father as slave to his master (e.g. Isa. 50:5-6). This culminated in suffering to justify many (Isa. 53:11), an idea which leads into the next verse.
- 2:8** Jesus in his manner of life was more humble than any of the men around him. There was no pretension in the way he lived that would give any hint that he was the future king of the world. With all other men their humanity has led to sin. Not so Jesus, for he “was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin” (Heb.4:15). Jesus was keenly aware of his responsibility. On his shoulders he bore the sins of the world from Adam to their own day.
- 2:9** Highly exalted (5251) cited from Isa. 52:12, “Behold my servant ... he shall be exalted and extolled and be very high”. Paul wrote to the Ephesians that God hath set Christ “far above ... every name that is named” (Eph. 1:21).
- 2:10** In Isaiah the name to which every knee bows is the name of Yahweh. Jesus Christ is the extension of Yahweh Himself in the work of salvation (cp. John 14:9, Heb. 1:1). Isa. 45:41 speaks of Yahweh as a just power and a saviour and Paul draws out this idea by using the term Jesus which means “Yah shall save”. Jesus was the means of Yahweh's salvation. Yahweh is ultimately our Saviour, yet Jesus Christ as the extension of that salvation is often called “our Saviour” in the New Testament (eg 2 Peter 1:1, 11).



Christ will have dominion over “all things”. (Psa. 8:6, Heb. 2:6-10), and all will reverence him, both in heaven, in earth and under the earth. These are unique terms and are not to be confused with the phrases in Eph. 1:10 and Rev. 5:3, 13.

Paul does not use the noun “heaven” but the adjective “heavenly”. This is not a reference to the literal heavens (and the subjection of the Angels) but rather to the saints who will honour Christ for the salvation he has brought. “Worthy is the lamb that was slain” (Rev. 5:9, 12).

The mortals will also honour the Son. Even former rulers of the earth will do homage before Yahweh’s Son (Psa. 72:10-11)

2:11 This is the full title of Christ. He was called Jesus at birth, it being a prophecy that he should “save his people from their sins” (Matt. 1:21). But upon his resurrection and change to immortality, he became the Christ, “the anointed one” (Heb.1:9), and Lord over all (Rom. 14:9). “Lord” could again refer to Isa. 49:23-24, that is Christ is Yahweh – the fulfilment of the Yahweh name.

To glorify the Son is to glorify the Father who brought salvation. (Isa. 59:16). “God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself”. (2 Cor. 5:19). Jesus obtained the victory over flesh, but the source of his strength was the Father. Hence Christ’s accomplishment and exaltation reflects glory to the Father.



Discussion Questions

- (a)** Paul’s joy was dependent upon harmony and unity of purpose among the Philippians. What words does Paul use in this verse to stress his point on unity?

(b) How closely does your ecclesia or young people’s group match these attributes? What things have contributed to the unity in your ecclesia? What things have detracted from that unity (Hint: v3) and how can you help overcome them rather than add to the problems?

(c) What are some underlying reasons for strife, vainglory and other forms of disunity?
2. Consider the parable put forth by Jesus in Luke 14:7-11. How do we esteem others better than ourselves?
3. Who do you find it difficult to get along with? Try to make a list of the things that cause the problem. Are there things you can do to help?
4. Why should we be interested in the welfare of others? What are some practical ways in which we can show our concern?
5. How would you explain this “mind of Christ” (Hints: 1 Cor 2:14-16; 2:13)? How can we develop this “mind”?
- (a)** What does it mean to ‘empty’ oneself?

(b) How did Christ empty himself, minister to others, humble himself?

(c) Why is this process of emptying oneself so important? How can we follow this same pattern of mind and action?
- (a)** The death of the cross was a humiliating experience for Jesus. In what ways is being “crucified with Christ” humbling for us? Why is humility of mind regarded by the Apostle as a virtue of supreme importance?

(b) How can, could, or do we confess and acknowledge the Lord Jesus Christ?

(c) How will a confession by all people in the future, that Jesus Christ is Lord, give glory to God?



Study Group 3 (Philippians 2:12 – 2:30)

"HOLDING FORTH THE WORD OF LIFE"

- 2:12** Having set before them the mind and spirit of Christ, Paul urges them to implement this in their lives, thereby to grow. Paul does not mean that salvation is attained, because he continues "for it is God which worketh in you" (ch 2:13). Works are an essential part of the Christ-life because faith is seen in works, and works are the fulfilment of faith (James 2:20-23). It will be on the basis of how our love for the truth has been demonstrated in works, that we will be judged (2 Cor 5:10; Matt 16:27; Rev 22:12). The emphasis on the word "own" meant that the individual brethren and sisters could not rely on being a member of a healthy ecclesia.
- 2:13** The Judaiser thought that he could save himself by his own works. Paul says it is God that works through us. Similarly, he writes to the Corinthians to tell them that we are co-labourers with God (1 Cor 3:9). "Except Yahweh build the house, they labour in vain that build it" (Psa 127:1). Our response is seen in activity that transcends what fleshly motives could ever achieve (Phil 4:13), and gives pleasure to God in the greatest sense.
- 2:14** The first is criticism of our brethren which destroys love and the unity of the ecclesia in the progress of the truth. The second is criticism of the work of the ecclesia, which indicates that we are not motivated by the will of God. Concerning Israel, Psa 106:25 says that they "murmured in their tents and hearkened not unto the voice of Yahweh". When brethren and sisters start publicly questioning the doctrines of truth, or the way the ecclesia is run (ecclesial standards for example), the unity of the ecclesia can be destroyed by constant debate.
- 2:15** blameless (273) "that nothing can be said against because of incompleteness in character" (Bull.) harmless (185) "unmixed". "The Greeks used it of wine unmixed with water, of unalloyed metal" (Vine). It is a similar idea to "sincere" (ch 1:10), and is translated as "sincere" in the margin. The world must not be able to see any inconsistencies in our walk. Can our school friends or work companions look on us and see the characteristics of Christ or do they see a life which is very mixed, with part of this world's desires and part filled with God?
Paul quotes Deut 32:5 where, in the song of Moses, Yahweh says that Israel are no longer His sons because they have corrupted themselves (not showing forth the character of the Father). They are described as a "perverse and crooked generation" – an expression Paul applies to the environment of Macedonia in the first century.
Paul in ch 2:15-16 is drawing his ideas from Isa 49, particularly in this verse from Isa 49:6 of Christ (in Paul) as "the light to the Gentiles". 'God is light', says John (1 John 1:5) and his true sons must shine forth the light of the Word in word and action (cp Matt 5:16 "good works"). As Jesus said, it is impossible to believe the truth and not manifest it (Matt 5:14-15).
- 2:16** The example we show to those in the world is a witness to the hope we hold, but it cannot benefit them unless we tell them of that hope. It is the responsibility of every brother and sister to be ready to give an answer of the hope within them (cp 1 Pet 3:15). Paul wanted to be sure that at the judgement seat the Philippians would have fruit of God, that there might be a result from all his labour.
- 2:17** The apostle pictures himself at the judgement seat and sees his own sacrifice as a drink offering (a secondary part to the sacrifice of the faithful work of the Philippians), and rejoices in the co-operation they have shown with him.
- 2:19** Paul was equally concerned about the Philippians' well being as they were about his, and so he determined to send Timothy that he might report on their progress and faith. Paul recognised that his plans depended upon the will of God and His Son, unlike those described in James 4:13-15. This was a great sacrifice for Paul, because Timothy was such a valued companion and comfort to the Apostle. Paul's genuine concern for the Philippians was such that he would rejoice when he heard of their progress in the truth.
- 2:20** Paul and Timothy thought so much alike that it was as if they were one person. As a result, Paul could have supreme confidence that Timothy would react in the same way as he would himself. Here was an example of the spirit of unity and teamwork that Paul had exhorted the ecclesia to adopt.
Timothy showed a unique characteristic which is certainly not natural to the flesh. He had a genuine concern for the interests and needs of others. Paul had explained the Christ-mind in ch 2:5 8, but in Timothy they could see a living demonstration of that mind.
- 2:21** Generally people are selfish; even in the truth, few of us reach the stage of forgetting ourselves and putting the cause of Christ first (see Rom 15:1-4).
- 2:22** In 1 Cor 4:7 Paul calls Timothy "his beloved son" and holds this out as an example to his other "beloved sons" (v14) in Corinth. The way Timothy followed Paul's example showed the way they should follow the will of their Heavenly Father. Although Timothy was like a son to Paul, both were slaves of Jesus Christ following Christ's example in v7.
- 2:24** Despite the fact that Timothy would be sent, Paul was confident that he would be able to see the Philippians shortly. Paul was confident of release (ch 1:25) and was sure that he would be in their midst again. There seems to be a note of joyful expectancy in Paul's words here.
- 2:25** Epaphroditus was the representative of the ecclesia sent to minister to the Apostle. Paul now sends him back with great commendation for his selfless devotion. From v26, it appears that Epaphroditus longed to see them again, and so Paul decides to send him back to them. Bro. Barling suggests that he may have felt homesick in Rome and wanted to get back to Philippi.
- companion in labour – expression used of many in Philippi, in ch 4:3 "fellow labourers"
 - fellow soldier – Paul in prison is exhorted by the soldiers around him; he and Epaphroditus were fighting a different warfare Eph 6:11-18.



- 2:26** Note the genuine and earnest desire that Epaphroditus had for his brethren at Philippi. It is obvious that he was constantly thinking of them and their well being, and had even been prepared to give his life to supply their service to the Apostle. Here, truly, is an example who fits the description of v3-5, and is worthy of emulation. Epaphroditus was longing to see his brethren, especially since they had heard of his sickness, because he didn't want to be a continuing cause of concern.
- 2:27** Epaphroditus had evidently suffered a major illness which had almost taken his life. In healing him, God had also shown mercy to Paul. Not only would Paul have been saddened at the loss of a faithful brother, but his sorrow would have been heightened in realising that the illness suffered was probably the result of his trip to Rome in order that he might minister to the Apostle.
- 2:28** Paul was keen to send Epaphroditus back to the Philippian ecclesia again, where he would be welcomed joyously. Though he would miss Epaphroditus himself, seeing the Philippians' joy would temper his own sorrow. It is difficult for us to see that sometimes our loss or deprivations may be for the benefit of others – and in that we can rejoice. Here Paul is a true example of one exercising the sympathy that should exist within the body of Christ (cp 1 Cor 12:12, 18-26).
- 2:29** Paul wanted the Philippian brethren to genuinely welcome Epaphroditus back. Some may have viewed him as a deserter who had not fulfilled his commission of ministering to Paul on their behalf. However, Paul was concerned that he be honoured by all for his service to Christ.
- 2:30** Epaphroditus was an example of the mind of Christ in that he neglected his own interests (“own things” v3) and was totally concerned about Paul. His sacrifice was so great that he did not regard his own life as more important than the opportunity to serve his master. Jesus said, “whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall find it” (Luke 9:24). Paul wanted the Philippians to realise that it was in the course of fulfilling their service to him that Epaphroditus had nearly lost his life. Epaphroditus therefore deserved their commendation, not their rebuke.



Discussion Questions

1. Consider Prov. 10:16, John 6:27-29, Heb 4:11. What does working out our own salvation involve? List some practical ways in which we can work out our salvation.
2. (a) The word “worketh” in the Greek, is ‘energeo’, meaning to energise. In what way does God energise or work within us? How do we enable God to energise or work within our lives? What is the “will” and “good pleasure” that God wants to work into us?
(b) Like the Israelites, we possess God’s Word, and thus should shine forth our lights to others in this dark world. How can we shine as lights to the surrounding world (Consider: Matt 5:14-16)?
3. (a) Many times Paul pictures our journey to the kingdom in terms of a race (1 Cor 9:24-26; Gal. 2:2; Heb. 12:1). Why would Paul choose to describe it this way?
(b) With whom is it that we are not to run (1 Pet. 4:4)?
4. (a) Find a passage that shows us that we are to rely upon God’s will (Hint: try James).
(b) Can you think of examples in scripture, where men or women did not consult God first? What happened to them or their plans?
(c) Paul’s plan depended upon the will of God. Make a list of times when you remember planning events in your life with the will of God in the forefront of your mind. Is there anything in our life that should be done without consulting or thinking of God first?
5. Ch 2:21 is a sad comment on the state of mankind in general, but it is true even today. What verse in this chapter instructs us to do otherwise? Would this be the mindset of a willing servant?
6. (a) Seeking the things of Jesus Christ involves, in part, serving our ecclesias. Make a list of ways in which you have served your ecclesia or its members over the past month. How could you improve? When you did serve, was it with joy, or was it with murmuring, dispute and half-heartedness as the children of Israel?
(b) How can we serve brethren and sisters in other lands?
7. Find five words that Paul applies to the man Epaphroditus. What do these characteristics tell us about the man? What kind of a servant was he?
8. Paul interpreted the recovery of Epaphroditus from ill health as an act of God’s mercy, because he was keenly aware of God’s providence. Make a list of events in your life which you consider to have been an act of God’s mercy (cp principle of Psa 145 1-7 where we are exhorted to speak of God’s mercy).
9. Find examples within scripture of others who rejoiced as the result of someone else’s joy.
10. (a) Notice how the theme of service continues. It is Paul’s antidote to vainglory and disunity (v4). What four examples of service has Paul placed before the Philippians in this chapter?
(b) What does Christ say regarding our lives and service to him (Hint: Matt 16)?
11. Epaphroditus was not even willing to compromise the work of Christ for his own life. Do we ever make compromises when choosing between work for God or serving ourselves?
12. What should our attitude be to those brethren and sisters who sacrifice for the truth and how can we help them further the work?



Study Group 4 (Philippians 3:1-16)

"COUNT ALL THINGS LOSS FOR CHRIST"

Paul now turns his attention from the positive exhortation of the mind of Christ to a danger that the Philippians must face – Judaism. He feels a responsibility to remind them to secure their spiritual safety.

- 3:1** Translated in 1 Thess 4v1 “furthermore”. Frequently used in the concluding portion of Paul’s epistles, introducing practical exhortations; not necessarily implying that the letter is drawing to a close, but marking a transition in the subject matter as in Phil 3:1 Here is the answer to the problem of Judaism. If we appreciate the joyous position we have as those redeemed by the blood of Christ there will be no room for boasting in our own works. Paul is so concerned with their well-being, as any true friend ought to be, that he takes the opportunity to reinforce warnings which he had previously made to the Philippians. Modern day counterparts are warnings of growing materialism and of Christ’s coming – warnings which we should never grow tired of either giving or hearing. Paul’s phrase “but for you it is safe” suggests that no problem of Judaism existed at the time but the potential was always there. Judaism was not just a problem of the first century. The constant danger exists for us to think that we can do something to earn salvation, and seek the present praise of men for our “good works”.
- 3:2** The Philippians had to see the Judaisers for what they really were – dogs, evil workers and the concision – and take steps not to be deceived by them. This was a term justly applied to the Judaisers who, acting like wild beasts, turned the truth of God into a lie. Works done to glorify flesh are evil works however good they may appear in the eyes of others.
- 3:3** Paul in Romans 2:26 says that the uncircumcised Gentile walking in the truth was truly circumcised and the Jew boasting in the works of the Law was not. Jesus had told the woman at the well of Samaria that Gentiles could worship God on the condition that it was “in spirit and truth” (John 4:24). Jesus was quoting from Joshua 24:14 where Joshua used the words “sincerity and truth”. Paul’s idea is that we should worship God with our whole being, not the hypocrisy and half-heartedness of the Judaiser. Rejoice (Gk 2744) means “to boast” or “glory” not rejoice. The Judaisers boasted that their own works would earn them salvation. Jeremiah in referring to human boasting in general, had said, “Let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am Yahweh” (Jer 9:23-24, also 1 Cor 1:29-31).
- 3:4** If any man wanted to put confidence in the flesh and not heed Paul’s exhortation of verse 3, then Paul could easily do better. Paul lists seven credentials which could have made him the perfect Judaiser.
- 3:5** The tribe of Benjamin was of importance from its inception, Benjamin being the second son of Jacob’s beloved wife Rachel. Benjamin’s territory in the land took in Jerusalem (Josh 18:16) and Benjamin became associated with the other more faithful tribe Judah from whom “Jews” had derived their name. Paul had good reason to be proud of his tribe, which he had also mentioned when writing to the Romans (Rom 11:1). Paul told Agrippa that he lived “after the most straitest (strictest) sect of our religion ... a Pharisee” (Acts 26:5). He was educated by Gamaliel, one of the most prominent Pharisees (Acts 22:3).
- 3:6** Although many Jews could have laid claim to the qualities of verse 5, nobody could match Paul in the two characteristics of verse 6. In these attributes he stood head and shoulders above everyone else. Nothing in Paul’s life was done half-heartedly. Paul became the greatest persecutor of our brethren and sisters of his day. He was the foremost in the slaying of Stephen (Acts 22:20); he was one who through the fierceness of his persecutions scattered the brethren and sisters from Jerusalem (Acts 8:1-4); he was the man who had received authority from the High Priest and defied the heat of the midday sun to travel to Damascus in haste to seize the believers (Acts 9:1-3). Who could say that he had shown greater zeal for Judaism than Paul? The apostle was one of those who strove to attain the righteousness (or self-righteousness) which is by the Law (Rom 9:31). In that regard he was beyond criticism, and like all Jews would have been confident of his own righteousness and therefore his personal salvation. How dumbfounded he must have been on the road to Damascus to find that what he had put his absolute trust in was a complete sham. Now Paul sees himself, not as righteous by works of law, but, by nature a wretched sinner (Rom 7:18-25).
- 3:7** Paul was prepared to esteem all his works of flesh as worthless, and humble himself to receive salvation in Christ. There can be no room for boasting in the flesh or confidence in our own ability, for our salvation depends on our humility and faith in the son of God (Rom 3:20-28; Eph 2:8-10).
- 3:8** Not only was Paul prepared to leave the benefits of Judaism behind him, but to count all things which personally benefited him in life as loss that he might win Christ. Few of us have given up anything like what Paul gave up for Christ. Knowing Christ involves both the intellectual understanding and knowledge gained by experience in life, a knowledge which surpasses anything in this life. Paul experienced the same opposition as Christ, fellowshiping his Lord’s sufferings, and so came to know the one he served.
- 3:9** Paul often uses the expression “in Christ” to explain the state of those who have been constituted saints, covered by the sacrifice of Christ. The Judaiser had forgotten the reality of his own flesh and blood nature and his real need to be covered by God’s righteousness. In Romans, Paul summarises the problem of Israel in trying to establish their own righteousness when he says “For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth” (Rom 10:3-4). The principle of justification (being made righteous) by faith is explained in Romans 4. Abraham was a sinner, yet because he was prepared to believe in the impossible, that he would have a seed, Yahweh was prepared to say that he saw him as righteous (Rom 4:1-5, 19-22). Paul tells us in Rom 4:24 that we will be imputed (counted or seen as) righteous if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead. It is not our righteousness but God’s righteousness that covers us. Abraham’s faith was confirmed by actions which sprang from his faith (James 2:21-22). Abraham as a sinner was justified by faith, but as a saint by the works of faith



- 3:10** Knowing Christ is the only way to eternal life (John 17:3). This “knowing” is not just an intellectual comprehension of the atonement but a knowledge of Christ’s character and the motivating principles of his life. This knowledge is such that it will be openly manifested in action (1 John 2:3 5; Eph 4:21-24). Christ was raised because as a sinless person it was not possible that the grave should hold him (Acts 2:24). In Romans 1:4, Paul says he was raised because of his spirit of holiness or holy way of life. We need to die with Christ and rise to newness of life (Rom 6:1-6; Col 3:1-4; Eph 2:5-6). Jesus lived all his life as a resurrected man, dead to sin and alive unto God. Our sharing of Christ’s sufferings will be seen in the ultimate by us sharing his death, not literally but by being “conformed to” or “fashioned like” his death in becoming dead to sins (Rom 6:11; 1 Pet 2:24). In Rom 12:2, Paul warns us not to be “conformed” to this world but “transformed by the renewing of your mind”.
- 3:11** Here was the goal before Paul. If his old man was crucified and he was resurrected with Christ in mind, he knew he would share his resurrection in body.
- 3:12** Paul had not yet obtained a place in the kingdom neither was his character perfected. In contrast the Judaisers believed that they had achieved both. Christ had laid hold of Paul on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:3-5, 15-16). A life totally devoted to destroying the cause of Christ was now turned to a complete life devoted to the work of his Lord.
- 3:13** A runner must never be distracted by those behind him and how well he is going compared to others. If he thinks he is doing well and reduces his effort he will lose the race. Thinking about the past is dangerous – we can either become over-confident because of past successes or be discouraged by past failures. The picture is of the runner, using all the strength of his being to reach the finishing line. We will only reach the kingdom by positive action and determined effort.
- 3:14** We should give a lot of thought to this word “press”. How often we just wander along in life – we get up, drift off to work/school etc. What a great contrast to the determination of Paul (and Christ his example) who spent every minute of his life to the glory of God.
In 1 Cor 9:23-25, Paul uses the figure of the race to highlight the following points:
1. v24, many run in the race – only one receives the prize – “many are called but few are chosen”. If we want to win we can’t be half-hearted.
 2. v25, the athlete must be “temperate” or show self-constraint. In Heb 12:1 when Paul instructs us “to lay aside every weight”
 3. v25, the athletes devoted their lives to attain such a puny reward as a crown of leaves – we are promised a crown of eternal life.
- perfect (5046) – “mature” (RSV) “Perfection” is not possible as Paul has already said in v12. Paul’s words are addressed to those who are mature, that they might share the same resolve as he did.
- 3:16** Paul again stresses the need for unity. He wants them to walk in an unbroken line according to the same standard or measure. It is important in ecclesial life to set a good standard of spiritual thought and behaviour for all the ecclesia to practise. It is also important that that standard be not too high for some to give up or too low to give glory to the Father.



Discussion Questions

1. (a) What is Judaism?
(b) Judaisers placed emphasis on works of the flesh as if by their works they had God in their debt. Explain what was wrong with this perspective (Hint: Rom 3:27-28; 4:2 4).
2. What does it mean to have confidence in the flesh as opposed to having confidence in God (v3)?
3. In this section rejoicing in the truth is the answer to the problem of Judaism. How do we develop a joy in the truth?
4. (a) Boasting in our own righteousness before others is fairly natural. How do we overcome it?
(b) What should be our only source of rejoicing or boasting? Look up 1 Cor 1:29 31; Eph 2:8 10.
5. (a) As a Pharisee, Paul strove to attain righteousness which was by Law and considered himself blameless in that regard. Contrast this attitude with the attitude he reveals in Rom. 7:18 25.
(b) What is the difference between the righteousness of the law and the righteousness of faith?
(c) Paul counted all things but loss for Christ. What are some of the things in your life that need to be given up for Christ?
6. (a) How do we come to “know Christ”?
(b) What are some practical examples in the life of a follower of Christ that demonstrate that we “know” him and desire to manifest his actions in our life?
7. (a) How did Paul fellowship or share in the sufferings of Christ? (see 2 Cor 1:3 11; Col 1:24 25).
(b) In what ways do we share Christ’s sufferings and become conformable to his death?
8. (a) What can we learn from the example of the athlete that Paul is alluding to here, “reaching” or “straining forward” to his goal?
(b) Discuss the analogy of the athlete in respect to the Lord Jesus Christ (see Heb 12:1 2).
(c) Why is it not beneficial or constructive for us to dwell on the past, whether it is our own or someone else’s?
9. (a) The race we are engaged in is a communal race where many runners can obtain the prize – what can we do to help each other to run with greater vigour and eagerness?



Study Group 5 (Philippians 3:17-4:3)

"STAND FAST IN THE LORD"

3:17 'followers together' (4831) Diag. "joint imitators". Paul was a follower or joint imitator of Christ and was asking the Philippians to be followers together with him.

We might think that Paul is being egotistical, but the Philippians knew Paul's strong conviction and his great commitment to the truth. The example he was setting before them was really Christ's, not his own. "Be ye followers together of me even as I also am of Christ" (1 Cor. 11:1).

Not only did the apostle hold out his own example for them to follow but also that of brethren like Timothy and Epaphroditus (ch 2). He asks them to look at and follow these brethren for they with Paul are a pattern to all believers.

3:18 The reason why Paul wants them to pursue his example is that many are walking as enemies of Christ.

3:19 Paul emphasises the wickedness of their ways by showing how Yahweh views it. He sees it as worthy of destruction.

Used of the womb and the belly – symbol of all the lusts of the flesh. Used of Judaisers in Rom. 16:18, who serve their own belly.

Those whose consciences are dull to the Word of God through sin end up glorifying in shameful things.

3:20 conversation (4175) Gk: 'politeuma' = citizenship (Roth).

Philippi, as a colony of Rome, was bound to follow the laws and customs of Rome. We also are bound to follow the laws of Heaven to which we are related as citizens of Zion. Our thinking now should be on heavenly things (Col. 3:1-2; Eph. 2:5-6).

Rather than being caught up by this life we should be of those "who love his appearing" (2 Tim. 4:8), for "unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation" (Heb. 9:28). Like the ambassadors of Rome, he will come to test us, to inspect whether we are living in the heavenlies or have changed citizenship to be of this world.

3:21 Whether our humbled body will be changed depends on our attitude in submitting to the will of the Father now.

- fashioned like (4832) from same Greek word as "made conformable" (v.10)

They too will, at his return, be made "like him" in glorious immortality, for they "shall see him as he is" (1 John 3:2; Rom. 8:29-30).

Paul contrasts Christ's 'glorious body' with those who glory in their shame. Even as Christ glorified his Father in his life in a moral sense so he was given the physical glory of His Father (cp. John 1:14; Acts 3:13; John 7:39).

God promised dominion to the Son of Man over all things, excluding Himself (Gen. 1:23-26; 1 Cor 15:24).

4:1 Note the connection with previous verses. Paul exhorts them to stand fast because:

1. Christ is coming to bring a reward to the faithful (3:20-21).
2. There is a bad example being introduced by those who fulfil the lusts of their flesh (3:18 19)

crown (4735) – Gk: 'stephanos' = "coronal wreath"

At the time when Paul receives a glorious body (3:21), the Philippians will bring eternal joy to him. They will be part of his "prize" in his race for eternal life.

4:2 Paul now attempts to resolve a specific problem – the division between sisters Euodias and Syntyche.

The fact that these sisters are named in public shows that the problem was well known in the ecclesia, and could have caused serious division.

Paul does not attempt to arbitrate between these two sisters. He simply asks them to be like-minded in the Lord. It didn't matter who was right or wrong. The mind which Paul wanted them to have, was that same mind which was in Christ Jesus (2:5). If we try to assert our own will and personality, problems will inevitably arise. Paul uses this theme of "like-mindedness" often in the epistle as the key to overcoming all our difficulties in life. Our Lord showed the perfect example of not standing up for one's rights when he died, the just for the unjust (2 Cor 5:14:17). Christ never sought his own justification, but humbled himself to bring the salvation of many. These sisters needed also to humble themselves for the good, not only of themselves, but of the whole ecclesia. Christ showed us the need to forgive each other if we are to be forgiven (Matt. 6:12, 14-15). If we contemplate the forgiveness we have undeservedly received for all of our sins we should be able to forgive our brethren for comparatively minor offences (Matt 18:23-35).

4:3 Vine suggests that "yokefellow" is the proper name, Synzygus. Other suggestions include Luke or Epaphroditus. Whoever the yokefellow was, he was a brother (or brethren) of genuine qualities who worked as one with the apostle and was therefore capable of helping to solve the problem that existed.

There appears to have been a majority of sisters in the Philippian ecclesia. When Paul, Silas and Timothy first came to Philippi they went down to the river to speak to the women which resorted there (Acts 16:13). Lydia, of course, was the most prominent among the first believers in Philippi. Euodias and Syntyche were among the faithful sisters that had worked hard with Paul in the spreading of the gospel.





Discussion Questions

1. In 1 Tim 4:12, Paul exhorts Timothy to be an “example to the believers in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity”. How are you doing as an example to those around you – both those in the ecclesia and those with whom you associate outside?
2. Is it beneficial to follow the example of worthy brethren and sisters today and to seek their advice?
3. “I ceased not to warn every one night and day”. (Acts 2:23, 31). How do we react to the same brother giving the same message over and over again?
4. What does it mean to be a “citizen of Heaven” in contrast to living a life minding earthly things?
5. The hope of the apostle was a change in nature at the second coming of his Lord. What is the difference between “our vile body” and a “glorious” immortal body?
6. Compare “stand” with the word “rock” (4073). Look at the parable of the man who built his house on the rock in Matthew 7:24 and Luke 6:48. How should we stand fast in the truth? What should be the basis for our lives?
7. “Dearly beloved” – this phrase is mentioned twice in the first verse. Paul uses this phrase to emphasise his feelings about this ecclesia. What other terms does Paul use in his writings which show his love and his concern for his brethren and sisters? (It might be useful to look at the first chapters of all Paul’s epistles to get an idea).
8. Do we “long for” our brethren? How can we develop this thought to others?
9. **(a)** If we had a dispute with someone else in the ecclesia, how would we go about effecting reconciliation?
(b) What was Paul’s attitude toward these two sisters? If we had to assist others to be of one mind, what steps would we take to help them and to ensure reconciliation?
10. **(a)** “Same mind” – Paul exhorts Euodias and Syntyche to be of the same mind. How would you describe this mind? (1 Cor 2:16).
(b) Note the other passages in Philippians which deal with being like-minded. What benefits would come from being like-minded? Think of the benefits in terms of our work in the ecclesia and in our daily lives.
11. **(a)** Think about the phrases “True yokefellow” (4805) & “Fellow labourers” (4904). Briefly explain in your own words what type of relationship we should have with each other in the truth.
(b) What do these verses tell us about the brethren at Philippi?
(c) What is the importance of working under the same yoke? Think about the use of yokes and the problems which could arise if two different types of animals were used.
(d) Working together is vital on our walk to the kingdom. What problems could arise due to being unequally yoked within the ecclesial family? Also refer to 2 Cor 6:14.



Study Group 6 (Philippians 4:4-23)

"STRENGTHENED THROUGH CHRIST"

- 4:4** Joy in the truth is one way to overcome division. If we reflect on the privileges we have in Christ we should be always people of joy, not sadness (Ph. 1:3-12). Our joy should not depend on the circumstances of our lives either – we constantly have reason to rejoice. Note Paul's own example of rejoicing in suffering at Philippi (Acts 16:25)
- 4:5** In their dealings with all mankind they were to be seen as people who were reasonable, not contentious or trying to get their own way. To adopt this attitude we cannot insist on our own rights and prestige; but rather try to be at peace with all. It is comforting to know that He will also see if we patiently submit to the unreasonableness of others (1 Pet. 2:19-20; 4:19).
- 4:6** Jesus exhorted his disciples and ourselves not to worry about the things of this life (Matt. 6:25-34), but to put our faith in God.
- "the first word is used of prayer in general, the second stresses the sense of need" (Vine). The two words are used together in Eph. 6:18 and 1 Tim. 2:1; 5:5.

John says, "If we ask anything according to His will, He heareth us; And if we know that He hears us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of Him" (1 John 5:14-15). Our prayers should not be selfish (i.e. only containing petitions for ourselves), but should show a spirit of thankfulness, recognising present blessings and past deliverance. Yahweh knows our needs before we ask Him but He still desires us to make our requests to Him (Psa. 50:15). Not only does our prayer need to be sincere, but our action also needs to be consistent with our requests if they are to be heard (Matt. 6:9-15).

- 4:7** Paul appears to be drawing this idea from Isa.26:3 where Isaiah shows that trust in God (v.6) is the way to peace of mind. Jesus promised us peace, not as the world gives, but a peace of mind based on our knowledge that God is with us in all circumstances however difficult they might be (John 14:27; 16:33).

The peace which we have when we walk with God is beyond human comprehension.

- 4:8** A mind at peace is a mind rightly occupied. Paul counsels the brethren to think upon wholesome things in order to develop spiritual minds which could be at peace with God. Truth is the basis of all spiritual qualities

As Paul showed in Ch. 3:9 that righteousness only comes from receiving God's righteousness, yet we are called upon to elevate our thoughts to the righteousness of God.

One of the essential qualities of the Father is His moral purity. Development of His purity will only come from keeping our minds purified by the Word (Eph. 5:26 (James 5:3), (1 John 3:3).

The contemplation of spiritual things, the service of Christ and our brethren and sisters are the only lovely pursuits in this life. Only things of true value should fill our minds. If there is anything that will exalt our minds or that is praiseworthy we should give our thoughts to that. There is no room for contemplation of the vanities of life, let alone base and immoral things. All our thoughts should be upon those things that will exalt the mind to the mind of Christ.

- 4:9** The only way to find peace with God is to think upon spiritual things and act in accordance with them. Paul again holds himself out as an example to follow in this respect.

Those things which Paul had exhorted them to think about also need to be seen in a character developed for them. All the thinking on spiritual things is of no benefit if it doesn't develop spiritual behaviour (James 1:22-25)

- 4:10** now he turns to one thing which caused him to rejoice in the Lord. Paul saw their act as a response to Christ's love. Our sacrifices for our brethren and sisters should be a response to Christ's love (1 John 4:9-11; John 15:9-17).

They had not forgotten Paul but had lacked opportunity to show their concern to the apostle. Now they had shown it through a gift taken by Epaphroditus (2:25; 4:18).

- 4:11** Paul has obvious needs in prison but he didn't see himself as needing anything, and would certainly never have asked for a gift. He had the essentials in life and that was sufficient.

In a world which is continually telling us to improve our circumstances by buying new and improved products it is difficult to accept Paul's words to Timothy "Having food and raiment let us be therewith content" (1 Tim. 6:8). As young people we are susceptible to advertising. A new car might be a temptation for the brethren, fashionable clothes and hairstyles temptations for the sisters.

- 4:12** They had heard of Paul rejoicing in his humiliation in the jail at Philippi. He had been whipped and put in stocks, but he and Titus prayed and sang hymns of praise. Could we survive if all the luxuries and comforts of the twenty first century were taken from us?

Wherever he was and in every part of life, Paul had learned the secret of facing every possible circumstance.

In all other matters of life Paul had learned to accept abundance or want. Whatever God gave him he willingly accepted.

- 4:13** Paul is not so much saying that he can do all things but rather that he can endure all things. What is the secret to his success? He is motivated by the spirit of Christ – to crucify the flesh and seek the furtherance of the Gospel at whatever personal cost (Lk. 9:58-59).

- 4:14** Even though Paul could have endured without their gift, Paul commends the Philippians for their generosity.



4:15 Although they knew what they had done they were obviously not puffed up by good works. This is a real example for us (Matt. 25:37-40).

When Paul faced persecution in Berea the brethren sent him to Athens to be followed later by Silas and Timothy (Acts 17:14-15). When Silas and Timothy arrived in Corinth they brought a present from the Philippians (2 Cor. 11:9; Acts 18:5).

4:16 Even before Paul went to Corinth the Philippians had sent a gift to the very next town Paul had stopped at after leaving Philippi, which was Thessalonica (Acts 17:1). In addition they had been more than generous to the Jerusalem poor fund (2 Cor. 8:1-5).

4:17 The fruitfulness of the ecclesia in bringing forth good works (like they had manifested in him) was of more satisfaction to Paul than this particular act of kindness

4:18 Although Paul was pleased with their sacrifice he wanted them to know that they were like an acceptable sacrifice on Yahweh's altar. The figure Paul is using then is of the Philippians' gifts, as a burnt offering (speaking of dedication), ascending up as a sweet smell in the nostrils of the Father.

Have we forgotten the true meaning of sacrifice? It means suffering to give something for the truth – not just fitting the truth in for our convenience. Think about it, for sacrifice should be a daily experience.

4:19 To show Paul such kindness involved real sacrifice on the Philippians' part as they were poor (cp. 2 Cor 8:1-3 RSV).

Paul looks forward to the time when the riches of God will be poured on them, and when their every want including eternal life would be satisfied. (Matt. 6:19-21). The deprivations of this present time are not comparable to the glories of the future (Rom. 8:18; Matt. 19:29).

4:20 To honour God in thought, word and action is the highest form of praise we can offer to Him.

4:21 Paul greets every saint, showing no difference between them for they were all dear to him.

4:22 Some of Caesar's household may have been to Philippi on official business and forged a close relationship with the Philippians.

4:23 Thinking back over the letter we remember that Paul's trial is about to start, that there is the problem of disunity in the Philippian ecclesia and a need to develop the mind of Christ; we remember the danger of Judaism and Paul's antidote and the many exhortations of Ch. 4. In all this there is one thing both Paul and the Philippians needed – God's grace.



Discussion Questions

1. In 1 Tim 4:12, Paul exhorts Timothy to be an "example to the believers in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity". How are you doing as an example to those around you – both those in the ecclesia and those with whom you associate outside?
2. We have been blessed greatly compared to our brethren in other parts of the world. Note what Christ says in Matthew 25:31-46. Should we be concerned with our brethren and sisters in far away countries? What mechanisms could we use to assist them?
3. What was Paul's secret in being content and what are the pressures of this age which make us discontented? How can we conquer these pressures and learn to be content with what we have?
4. When should we be abased, and when should we abound? Compare this to Ecclesiastes 3:1 8
5. To what extent can we do "all things"? How does Christ strengthen us? Look at Mark 13:11 and apply this to v13.
6. **(a)** The Philippians were a wonderful example of selfless giving. What do the scriptures tell us about giving benefits to others and giving material things for the sake of the truth? (Hint: Rom 12:13 and 2 Cor 9:5-15).
(b) Paul was most appreciative for what the Philippians had done for him. Think of some practical ways we can show our thoughtfulness and appreciation to others for their work on our behalf.
(c) What does Christ say will happen to those who help those in need? What will happen to those who do not aid their brethren? (Remember v10 and Matt 25:31 46).
7. How can the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with us all (v23)?

