



# **Paul's Epistle to the Philippians**

## **CHAPTER ONE**

# PHILIPPIANS CHAPTER ONE

## Outline

- Salutation (1:1-2)
- Paul's Thanksgiving for the Saints (1:3-8)
- Paul's Prayer for the Philippians (1:9-11)
- The Progress of the Gospel (1:12-18)
- Magnifying Christ in Life and in Death (1:19-30)

# PHILIPPIANS CHAPTER ONE

## Salutation (1:1-2)

### **<sup>1a</sup> Paul and Timothy, bondservants of Jesus Christ,**

- Unlike in Rom. 1:1; 1 Cor. 1:1; 2 Cor. 1:1; Gal. 1:1; Col. 1:1; 1 Tim. 1:1; 2 Tim. 1:1; Tit. 1:1, Paul did not emphasize his apostleship in this salutation.

- This is unique to this letter, the letter to Philemon and 1 & 2 Thessalonians
- This likely highlights the close relationship Paul had with these brethren.

*“Paul did not need to assert his authority as an apostle which he did in so many of his letters ... These brethren knew that he was a genuine apostle appointed by Jesus Christ. Thus, he addresses his thank you letter as merely ‘servants’ ... He held no vain airs of importance, but viewed himself as a humble servant belonging to Christ and devoted to whatever was his Master’s will” (Philippians, First and Second Thessalonians, Robert Harkrider, p.2)*

# PHILIPPIANS CHAPTER ONE

## Salutation (1:1-2)

**<sup>1a</sup> Paul and Timothy, bondservants of Jesus Christ,**

- Timothy was present with Paul at the time of writing.
  - The Philippians knew Timothy well (Acts 16:1-3).
  - We do not know exactly why he was with Paul at the time of writing, but Timothy was not under house arrest with Paul (Phil. 2:19).
    - We should not assume Timothy co-authored the epistle since Paul repeatedly used first-person pronouns throughout the letter.
  - Although we might view Timothy as a “big name” Christian and preacher, Paul identified him as sharing the equal position of “**bondservant**.”

# PHILIPPIANS CHAPTER ONE

## Salutation (1:1-2)

**1<sup>b</sup> To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, with the bishops and deacons:**

- Here, the recipients of the letter are identified:

- “all the saints ... in Philippi.”

- “**Saints**” means “**holy**” (1 Pet. 1:15, 2:9; Col. 1:22, 3:12), or set apart (1 Cor. 1:2; Eph. 5:26-27).

- Saints are set apart through obedience to the gospel (Eph. 1:1; Col. 1:2; etc.).

- “**the bishops** [‘overseers,’ NKJV Footnotes] **and deacons.**”

*“Overseers’ is another term for the same official position of leadership as the ‘elder.’ This is seen in the interchange of the two terms in Tit. 1:6-7 and in Acts 20:17, 28, as well as in the parallels between Tit. 1:6-7 and 1 Tim. 3:1-7” (NET Translator Footnotes).*

- With bishops and deacons, the Philippian church was scripturally organized (Tit. 1:5, etc.).

*“The apostle here mentions but two orders of ministers in the church at Philippi, and this account is of great importance in its bearing on the question about the way in which Christian churches were at first organized, and about the officers which existed in them” (Barnes, p.142).*

# PHILIPPIANS CHAPTER ONE

## Salutation (1:1-2)

**<sup>1b</sup> To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, with the bishops and deacons:**

- **“the bishops** [‘overseers,’ NKJV Footnotes] **and deacons.”**
  - **“Bishops”** (note the plurality).
    - These men were members of the Philippian church (consider Acts 20:28).
    - Bishops do not have authority over Christians outside their congregation.
    - Bishops do not have authority over other churches.
    - Bishops do not have authority over the works of others churches.
    - Bishops do not have authority over discipline in other churches.
    - Bishops do not have authority equal to Christ (Matt. 28:18-20; Eph. 1:22-23).
  - **“Deacons”** (note the plurality).
    - These men serve the congregation they attend, not other churches.

# PHILIPPIANS CHAPTER ONE

## Salutation (1:1-2)

**<sup>2</sup> Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.**

- Paul's greeting is purposeful (2 Thess. 3:16-18).
- The Father and Son are identified as two distinct beings.
  - Though God and Christ are one (John 10:30), they remain distinct with the Son being subservient to the Father (1 Cor. 11:3, 15:28).
- “**Grace**” and “**peace**” are derived from both God and Christ.
  - “**Grace**” – Good-will, loving-kindness, favor (Strong).
    - God delivers grace and truth to man through Jesus Christ in these last days (John 1:14, 17; Heb. 1:1).
  - “**Peace**” – Tranquil state of a soul assured of its salvation through Christ, and so fearing nothing from God and content with its earthly lot (Thayer).
    - True peace comes from being in God’s grace (John 14:27, 16:33; Phil. 4:4-7; James 1:17).

# PHILIPPIANS CHAPTER ONE

## *Paul's Thanksgiving for the Saints (1:3-8)*

**<sup>3</sup> I thank my God upon every remembrance of you,**

**I thank my God in all my remembrance of you (ESV, NASB, RSV)**

**I thank my God for every remembrance of you (NRSV)**

**I thank my God for all the memories I have of you (GW)**

**I thank my God for you every time I think of you (GNT)**

- Paul's gratitude for the Philippians is immediately evident. There was nothing in Paul's remembrance of them about which he could not express thanks.
  - **“Remembrance”** – Properly, a bringing to mind, a mention (recollection); a personal remembrance recalling a particular aspect of a person (HELPS Word-Studies).
- The idea seems to be that Paul only had positive memories of the Philippians.
  - Compare this with what Paul said in 2 Cor. 11:28.

# PHILIPPIANS CHAPTER ONE

## *Paul's Thanksgiving for the Saints (1:3-8)*

**<sup>4</sup> always in every prayer of mine making request for you all with joy,**

- Paul never prayed for the Philippians without expressing thanks for them.
- No one in Philippi was excluded from Paul prayers; he prayed for them “**all.**”
- Paul was happy to pray on behalf of the Philippians; he did so “**with joy.**”
  - We should never do something for brethren begrudgingly (1 Pet. 1:22).
- Paul could approach God joyfully on the Philippians’ behalf due to their faithfulness (Phil. 4:1; 1 Thess. 2:19-20).

# PHILIPPIANS CHAPTER ONE

## *Paul's Thanksgiving for the Saints (1:3-8)*

### **5<sup>a</sup> for your fellowship in the gospel**

- “Your fellowship in the gospel” likely carries a dual meaning.
  - Paul and the Philippians shared fellowship in the family of God (1 John 1:1-7; Acts 2:42).
  - The Philippians’ shared “**participation**” (NASB, NRSV) in the gospel by aiding Paul’s ministry (Phil. 4:10-18).
    - This seems to be Paul’s primary intent in using the expression.
      - “[thanking God] for your participation and partnership [both your comforting fellowship and gracious contributions] in [advancing] the good news [regarding salvation] from the first day [you heard it] until now” (AMP).
      - “because of the way in which you have helped me in the work of the gospel from the very first day until now” (GNT).
      - “I thank God for the help you gave me while I preached the Good News—help you gave from the first day you believed until now” (NCV).

# PHILIPPIANS CHAPTER ONE

## *Paul's Thanksgiving for the Saints (1:3-8)*

### **5<sup>a</sup> for your fellowship in the gospel**

- This type of fellowship should still exist in modern Christianity. We should:
  - Support the gospel through our generosity (Phil. 4:15-17, 2:25-30).
  - Pray for the work of the gospel (Col. 4:3-4; 2 Thess. 3:1).
  - Encourage those who preach the gospel (Heb. 10:24-25; 1 Thess. 5:11).
  - Share the gospel ourselves (1 Pet. 3:15).
  - Persevere through trials together (Phil. 1:29-30; 2 Tim. 1:8; Heb. 10:32-34).

# PHILIPPIANS CHAPTER ONE

## *Paul's Thanksgiving for the Saints (1:3-8)*

**5b from the first day until now,**

- From the day they first obeyed the gospel, the Philippians recognized their responsibility in aiding the spread of the gospel, as well as aiding needy saints (2 Cor. 8:1-5).

*“The proof of the Philippians’ love for Paul and their zeal for the gospel had been expressed in a concrete way through the gifts forwarded to him “in the beginning of the gospel” (Phil. 4:15), or when he departed from Philippi, and it had continued right on down to the very time of the writing of this letter, i.e., ‘until now.’ Through the years this fellowship had been constant as they had sent time and again to his need. Paul never lost sight of this fact, and he was ever grateful for it” (Weaver, p.33-34).*

*“Paul thanks God for their help, their co-operation towards the work of the gospel. They helped forward the work by their prayers, their labors, and their liberal bounty. This fellowship began ‘in the beginning of the gospel,’ when the Philippians sent aid to the apostle at Thessalonica and Corinth; it continued ‘until now’ ten years; they had just sent their alms to St. Paul at Rome” (Pulpit Commentary, Vol. 20, H.D.M. Spence p.2-3).*

# PHILIPPIANS CHAPTER ONE

## *Paul's Thanksgiving for the Saints (1:3-8)*

**5<sup>b</sup> from the first day until now,**

- Remember, approx. 10 years have passed since Paul first preached in Philippi.
  - Much time passed, but the Philippians remained steadfast (1 Cor. 15:58; Gal. 6:9).

*“The fellowship must have been something constant, and continually manifest - and the general meaning is, that in relation to the gospel - to its support, and privileges, and spirit, they all shared in common. They felt a common interest in every thing that pertained to it, and they showed this in every suitable way ... They had been constant. This is honorable testimony. It is much to say of a church or of an individual Christian, that they have been constant and uniform in the requirements of the gospel”*(Barnes, p.144).

# PHILIPPIANS CHAPTER ONE

## Paul's Thanksgiving for the Saints (1:3-8)

**<sup>6</sup> being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ;**

*“Being confident” – This is strong language. It means to be fully and firmly persuaded or convinced ... It means here that Paul was entirely convinced of the truth of what he said. It is the language of a man who had no doubt on the subject” (Barnes, p.144).*

- Confidence is a recurring theme of the letter.
  - Specifically, this confidence is found in the Lord (“**being confident ... that He**”) (see also Phil. 1:14, 25; 2:24).

# PHILIPPIANS CHAPTER ONE

## *Paul's Thanksgiving for the Saints (1:3-8)*

**<sup>6</sup> being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ;**

- Paul was confident the Lord would complete the “good work” that He began “in” the Philippians; it would be completed “**at the day of Jesus Christ**” (ESV, RSV).
  - Paul was specifically referring to the Lord’s work, not the Philippians’ work.
    - This appears to rule out the position that Paul was referring to the monetary gift or some other means by which the Philippians aided spreading the gospel.
    - The idea seems to be that our salvation is started / finished by God (Phil. 2:12-13; Acts 16:14; John 6:44; Eph. 2:8-9).
      - This work will not be completed until “**the day of Jesus Christ**” (i.e. the day of judgment) (Phil. 1:10, 2:16).
        - This shows how Christians are a perpetual “work-in-progress” (Eph. 2:10; 2 Cor. 7:1; 2 Pet. 1:5-11; 1 Tim. 4:15-16; 1 John 1:5-10).

# PHILIPPIANS CHAPTER ONE

## *Paul's Thanksgiving for the Saints (1:3-8)*

**⁶ being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ;**

- God will not abandon us once He begins His work! (Rom. 8:31-39; Heb. 13:5; Matt. 28:20)

**NOTE:** Salvation is neither started nor completed against one's free will (Phil. 2:12-13; Matt. 11:28; Rev. 3:20, 2:10; Jude 21). When God begins a “**good work**” in a person, such only occurs because that person allowed it (Jer. 18:1-11).

*“Paul with fear and trembling did the will of God, and God worked through him to will and to work the things that pleased God”* (A Commentary on the New Testament Epistles, Vol. 4, David Lipscomb / J.W. Shepherd, p.159).

**NOTE:** A Christian can lose his salvation (Gal. 5:1-4; 2 Pet. 2:20-21; Heb. 3:12; etc.).

# PHILIPPIANS CHAPTER ONE

## *Paul's Thanksgiving for the Saints (1:3-8)*

**7<sup>a</sup> just as it is right for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart,**

- “Just as” Paul was confident the Lord would complete His work, he was equally confident that the Philippians would continue in their work of serving the Lord.
- The Philippians were in Paul’s “heart.”

*“This shows how much the Philippians meant to Paul. In Greek thought the heart (kardia) represented the center of man’s existence, embracing the will, and the affections, and the mind ... For him to say that the Philippians were in his heart did not mean simply his ‘feelings’ ... The church in Philippi was uppermost in his mind and in his plans ... In the next verse he will express his yearning love for them with a word that clearly brings out his deeply-felt affection for them” (Weaver, p.39).*

# PHILIPPIANS CHAPTER ONE

## *Paul's Thanksgiving for the Saints (1:3-8)*

**7<sup>b</sup> inasmuch as both in my chains and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, you all are partakers with me of grace.**

**for you are all partakers with me of grace, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel (ESV)**

- The Philippians partook in the “**grace**” of Paul’s apostleship by obeying the Good News that he brought them (Phil. 1:5; Rom. 1:1-7; Eph. 3:1-8).
- More pertinent to this text, the Philippians shared in two specific acts of grace:
  - Paul’s “**chains**” (Isn’t it amazing that Paul viewed his imprisonment as an act of grace?).
    - They shared in Paul’s suffering (Phil. 1:29-30; Eph. 3:13).
  - Paul’s “**defense and confirmation of the gospel.**”
    - Through their gift (Phil. 4:15-16), the Philippians made it possible for Paul to continue his defense and confirmation of the gospel.
    - Their continued obedience also provided confirmation of the gospel (Phil. 1:27; 1 Cor. 9:2; 2 Cor. 3:3).

# PHILIPPIANS CHAPTER ONE

## *Paul's Thanksgiving for the Saints (1:3-8)*

**<sup>8</sup> For God is my witness, how greatly I long for you all with the affection of Jesus Christ.**

- The depth of Paul's love for every member of the Philippian church ("you all") is seen here.
- Paul called upon God as his "**witness**" (see also Rom. 1:9; 2 Cor. 1:23; 1 Thess. 2:5, 10).
  - Paul was not violating Matt. 5:34-37; James 5:12. Instead, this indicates that only God understood the depths of Paul's love and desire to be with the Philippians.
    - "**God can testify how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus**" (NIV).
    - "**God himself knows how much I want to see you. He knows I care for you in the same way Christ Jesus does**" (CEV).
    - "**Only God knows how deep is my love and longing for you—with the tenderness of Jesus Christ**" (TLB).
    - "**God knows how much I love you and long for you with the tender compassion of Christ Jesus**" (NLT).
      - Only God could know because Paul shared the same type of "**affection**" for the Philippians that Christ Himself felt for them.

# PHILIPPIANS CHAPTER ONE

## *Paul's Prayer for the Philippians (1:9-11)*

**<sup>9</sup> And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment,**

- Paul frequently prayed for the Philippians (Phil. 1:3-4). Here, we see an example prayer.  
*“No greater service can be rendered to our friends than to pray for them”* (Harkrider, p.6).
- Paul prayed for their love to abound (grow beyond measure) in:
  - **“Knowledge”** (Note that they already had knowledge [**“still more and more”**]).
    - Christians must love intelligently. Our love cannot be “blind” because some things are not worthy of our love (Phil. 1:10; Rom. 16:19; 1 John 2:15-17).  
*“The idea is, that he wished them to have intelligent affection. It should not be mere blind affection, but that intelligent love which is based on an enlarged view of divine things - on a just apprehension of the claims of God”* (Barnes, p.148).
    - Strong passions, like love, without Godly knowledge are dangerous (Rom. 10:1-4; John 16:1-3; Hos. 4:6).

# PHILIPPIANS CHAPTER ONE

## Paul's Prayer for the Philippians (1:9-11)

**<sup>9</sup> And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment,**

- Paul frequently prayed for the Philippians (Phil. 1:3-4). Here, we see an example prayer.  
*“No greater service can be rendered to our friends than to pray for them”* (Harkrider, p.6).
- Paul prayed for their love to abound (grow beyond measure) in:
  - **“Knowledge.”**
  - **“All discernment”** (Note that they already had discernment [**“still more and more”**]).
    - Mature faith is required for proper discernment (Heb. 5:14; Rom. 12:1-2).  
*“He wished that their love should be exercised with proper discrimination. It should be in proportion to the relative value of objects; and the meaning of the whole is, that the wished their religion to be intelligent and discriminating; to be based on knowledge, and a proper sense of the relative value of objects, as well as to be the tender affection of the heart”* (Barnes, p.148).

- This demonstrates the type of love God requires (John 14:15; 1 John 5:3).

# PHILIPPIANS CHAPTER ONE

## *Paul's Prayer for the Philippians (1:9-11)*

**10<sup>a</sup> that you may approve the things that are excellent,**

**so that you may be able to discern what is best (NIV)**

**that you will see the difference between good and bad and will choose the good (NCV)**

**so that you may learn to recognize and treasure what is excellent [identifying the best, and distinguishing moral differences] (AMP)**

- Not only did Paul pray for the Philippians to grow in knowledge and discernment, but he also prayed that this knowledge and discernment would be put into practice.
- Whenever the Philippians discerned that something was “**excellent**” and worthy of their love, they need to “**approve**” it.
  - Things which are excellent in the eyes of God demand our approval and acceptance (Phil. 4:8; 1 Thess. 5:21).

# PHILIPPIANS CHAPTER ONE

## *Paul's Prayer for the Philippians (1:9-11)*

**<sup>10b</sup> that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ,**

- Paul prayed that the Philippians' love would be "**sincere**."
  - Everything we do must be done with sincerity.
    - Our speech must be sincere (Rom. 16:18; Psalm 5:9).
    - Our love must be sincere (Rom. 12:9; 1 John 3:18).
    - Our faith must be sincere (1 Tim. 1:3-7; 2 Tim 1:3-5).
    - Our good deeds must be sincere (Matt. 6).
    - Even our secular work must be done sincerely (Col. 3:22; Eph. 6:5).
  - Insincerity condemns (1 Pet. 2:1-2, RSV).

# PHILIPPIANS CHAPTER ONE

## Paul's Prayer for the Philippians (1:9-11)

**<sup>10b</sup> that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ,**

- Paul prayed that the Philippians' love would be "**sincere**."

*"The word 'sincere' means literally without wax ... that is, honey which is pure and transparent. Applied to Christian character, it means that which is not deceitful, ambiguous, hypocritical; that which is not mingled with error, worldliness, and sin; that which does not proceed from selfish and interested motives, and where there is nothing disguised. There is no more desirable appellation that can be given to a man than to say that he is sincere - a sincere friend, benefactor, Christian; and there is nothing more lovely in the character of a Christian than sincerity. It implies: (1) that he is truly converted - that he has not assumed Christianity as a mask; (2) that his motives are disinterested and pure; (3) that his conduct is free from double-dealing, trick, and cunning; (4) that his words express the real sentiments of his heart; (5) that he is true to his word, and faithful to his promises; and, (6) that he is always what he professes to be. A sincere Christian would bear to have the light let in upon him always; to have the emotions of his heart seen; to be scanned everywhere, and at all times, by people, by angels, and by God" (Barnes, p.148).*

# PHILIPPIANS CHAPTER ONE

## *Paul's Prayer for the Philippians (1:9-11)*

<sup>10b</sup> **that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ,**

- Paul also prayed that the Philippians would be found “without offense” (“blameless,” ESV, NASB, etc.) upon the day of judgment.
  - If we love God properly, we will seek to avoid offending Him (1 John 2:1-2, 12-14).
    - If we love God properly, we will also seek to avoid offending others, i.e. cause them to stumble (Matt. 18:1-7; 1 Cor. 8:9-13).
  - Such would only be possible if the Philippians continually grew in knowledge and discernment, and embraced the excellent things.

*“The knowledge of God will produce moral sensitivity and enable one to live a pure (sincere) and blameless life (without offence) on preparation for the judgment day of Christ ... Indeed, the day of Christ will be a fearful reckoning for those who have lived ungodly lives, but a day of rejoicing for those who have grown in knowledge and discernment” (Harkrider, p.6).*

- “Till the day of Christ” demonstrates how v.9-10 is a continual work.

# PHILIPPIANS CHAPTER ONE

## *Paul's Prayer for the Philippians (1:9-11)*

**1<sup>1</sup> being filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.**

- The life Paul wished for the Philippians to live is possible when love abounds in proper knowledge and discernment (Gal. 5:16-26).
- When we discern what is right, we must put it into practice. We must bear specific “**fruits**.”
  - “**Righteousness**” = doing right (Psalm 119:172; 1 John 3:7-10).
    - Purity of life, uprightness, correctness in thinking, feeling, and acting (Strong).
    - Righteous living is “**to the glory and praise of God**” (Matt. 5:14-16; 1 Pet. 2:9-12; 1 Cor. 10:31; 1 Pet. 4:11).
  - These fruits are “**by Jesus Christ**,” indicating how Christians are who we are because of our union with Christ. The fruits we produce are simply a reflection of Him (John 15:4-5).  
*“(1) Which his religion is fitted to produce; (2) which result from endeavoring to follow his example; (3) which are produced by his agency on the heart”* (Barnes, p.149).

# PHILIPPIANS CHAPTER ONE

## *Paul's Prayer for the Philippians (1:9-11)*

<sup>9</sup> And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment, <sup>10</sup> that you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ, <sup>11</sup> being filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

*“By giving the Philippians a worthy goal and a workable plan, Paul encouraged them to persevere through whatever labors or trials might come their way. This is an excellent formula for inspiring consistent good works. (1) Praise good deeds already done to show the person his own ability to serve the Lord, referring to the good influence he has had on others. (2) Point out a noble cause or worthy goal that will challenge but not exceed the limits of his strength. (3) Present a simple, sensible, scriptural plan he can use to achieve that goal. As the disciple accomplishes more and more good works in service to the Lord and others, he will be more inclined to maintain good works indefinitely” (Blake, p.13).*

# PHILIPPIANS CHAPTER ONE

## *The Progress of the Gospel (1:12-18)*

**12 But I want you to know, brethren, that the things which happened to me have actually turned out for the furtherance of the gospel,**

- “But” indicates a shift in subject. For the next several verses, Paul discusses how his imprisonment “**actually turned out for the furtherance of the gospel.**”

*“Paul was and had been for some time, when this letter was written, a prisoner in Rome. He had appealed from the trials and decisions at Caesarea and Jerusalem to the emperor at Rome. For a long time, it seems, the trial before Caesar was delayed. He was allowed to live in his own hired house, guarded by a soldier for two years. From this epistle it would seem that the trial and taken place, and he was awaiting the verdict ... so he tells the Philippians who watched his course with such an affectionate interest that these things which had occurred in connection with his trial had turned out to the advancement of the gospel”*(Lipscomb, p.161-162).

# PHILIPPIANS CHAPTER ONE

## *The Progress of the Gospel (1:12-18)*

**12 But I want you to know, brethren, that the things which happened to me have actually turned out for the furtherance of the gospel,**

- The Philippians were likely concerned about Paul, given his circumstances at the time of writing. Here, Paul sought to relieve any potential anxieties over his condition.
  - This occurs throughout the “Prison Epistles” (Eph. 6:21-22, 3:13; Col. 4:7-9; Phile. 22).

*“The Philippians must have been apprehensive about any possibility for success in spreading the gospel in the imperial city since Paul’s imprisonment. Paul seems to be correcting a misunderstanding on their part. Recent developments had added to their anxieties. They likely had made an inquiry through Epaphroditus concerning the matter. Paul’s words are meant to help the Philippians understand ... that he is not being hindered as they had feared but is experiencing good success” (Weaver, p.45).*

# PHILIPPIANS CHAPTER ONE

## *The Progress of the Gospel (1:12-18)*

**12 But I want you to know, brethren, that the things which happened to me have actually turned out for the furtherance of the gospel,**

- Consider examples of how Paul’s imprisonment produced good for the cause of Christ:  
**NOTE:** We are assuming Paul is writing in Rome approx. 62-63 AD.
  - He wrote the “Prison Epistles” (Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon, & Philippians).
    - A letter to Laodicea was also sent around the same time (Col. 4:16).
    - Paul converted Onesimus and helped him reconcile with Philemon (Phile. 8-16).
    - The gospel was still being preached (Phil. 1:14-18).
    - The gospel reached every level of Roman society (Phil. 1:13, 4:22).
    - Various Christians were proven steadfast & sincere (Phil. 1:15; Col. 4:7-14; Phile. 23).
    - The prophecy of Acts 9:15 was being fulfilled.

# PHILIPPIANS CHAPTER ONE

## The Progress of the Gospel (1:12-18)

**1<sup>3</sup> so that it has become evident to the whole palace guard, and to all the rest, that my chains are in Christ;**

- This verse provides evidence of the good that resulted from Paul’s “chains.”  
*“Until now those around Paul had known him only as a common criminal, supposing he had broken the law in some way; now they know him to be a prisoner ‘in Christ,’ i.e., for Christ’s sake”* (Weaver, p.47).
- Despite constant persecution, Paul never ceased preaching the gospel (Acts 16:25-40; 2 Tim. 2:8-10; Col. 1:24, 28-29; Eph. 6:20).
  - First century Christians followed the same pattern (Phil. 1:14; Acts 5:17-42, 8:1-4).

# PHILIPPIANS CHAPTER ONE

## *The Progress of the Gospel (1:12-18)*

**1<sup>3</sup> so that it has become evident to the whole palace guard, and to all the rest, that my chains are in Christ;**

**so that it has become known throughout the whole imperial guard and to everyone else that my imprisonment is for Christ (NRSV)**

- Paul's association with Christ became "**evident to the whole palace guard, and to all the rest.**"

*"The fact that Paul's influence and teaching had gone throughout the whole praetorian guard shows how successful he had been in his efforts. Added to this is the fact that this same knowledge of Paul's relation to Christ had also gone out 'to all the rest,' or to both pagans and Christians alike throughout the whole city, not just to the soldiers making up the imperial guard" (Weaver, p.48).*

# PHILIPPIANS CHAPTER ONE

## *The Progress of the Gospel (1:12-18)*

**<sup>13</sup> so that it has become evident to the whole palace guard, and to all the rest, that my chains are in Christ;**

*“The word ‘praetorium,’ here used, signifies sometimes the judgment hall, or court of judicature belonging to the Roman governors, as Herod and Pilate; see Acts 23:35; and if it designs any such court at Rome, then the sense is, that through the apostle's being sent a prisoner to Rome, and his cause heard in the praetorium, or judgment hall, he and the cause of his bonds came to be known by the judges in that court; and which might be the means of the conversion of some of them: sometimes it signifies the general's pavilion in the camp, and sometimes the emperor's palace at Rome, he being the chief ‘praetor,’ or magistrate; and so here it seems to design Nero's house or court, where the Gospel, through the apostle's bonds, had made its way to the conversion of many there; see Philippians 4:22 ... and that Christ and his Gospel came to be known through the apostle's sufferings, not only in the court of judicature where his cause was tried, or in Caesar's palace, and to many of his courtiers, but in other places in Rome ... and to many persons ... both Jews and Gentiles” (Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible).*

# PHILIPPIANS CHAPTER ONE

## *The Progress of the Gospel (1:12-18)*

**14 and most of the brethren in the Lord, having become confident by my chains, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.**

- Paul's success emboldened “**most of**” the other disciples (“**brethren in the Lord**”) to “**speak the word**” (i.e. preach the gospel).
  - Contextually, the Greek word for “**speak**” means “to announce or preach the word of God or the doctrine of salvation” (Thayer).
  - This shows that the gospel was flourishing in Rome despite Paul’s persecution.
- Paul had direct communication with people during his imprisonment (Acts 28:30). He likely interacted with countless disciples during this time, boosting their confidence.
  - Paul was surely a source of encouragement (2 Tim. 3:10-14; 2 Cor. 1:3-4).
  - Brethren may have seen his zeal and been motivated to follow his example (Phil. 4:11-13).
    - This provides a valuable lesson on the power of influence (Prov. 27:17; 1 Cor. 15:33; 1 Tim. 4:12). Courage is contagious!

# PHILIPPIANS CHAPTER ONE

## *The Progress of the Gospel (1:12-18)*

**14 and most of the brethren in the Lord, having become much more bold to speak the word without fear.**

- Paul's success emboldened "most of" the other disciples "the word" (i.e. preach the gospel).
  - Contextually, the Greek word for "speak" means "to proclaim God or the doctrine of salvation" (Thayer).
  - This shows that the gospel was flourishing in Rome during this time.
- Paul had direct communication with people during his imprisonment. He interacted with countless disciples during this time, boosting their morale.
  - Paul was surely a source of encouragement (2 Tim. 3:10-14; 2 Cor. 1:3-4).
  - Brethren may have seen his zeal and been motivated to follow his example (Phil. 4:11-13).
    - This provides a valuable lesson on the power of influence (Prov. 27:17; 1 Cor. 15:33; 1 Tim. 4:12). Courage is contagious!

"Courage is contagious. When a brave man takes a stand, the spines of others are often stiffened."

*Billy Graham*

# PHILIPPIANS CHAPTER ONE

## *The Progress of the Gospel (1:12-18)*

<sup>15</sup> Some indeed preach Christ even from envy and strife, and some also from goodwill: <sup>16</sup> The former preach Christ from selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my chains; <sup>17</sup> but the latter out of love, knowing that I am appointed for the defense of the gospel.

- Compare the “**some**” mentioned here with the “**most**” mentioned in the previous verse.
- The gospel was being advanced even though “**some**” people worked against Paul (“**supposing to add affliction to my chains**”).
  - This may be the same group condemned in Phil. 3:1-2, but it seems more likely that Paul has in mind a subsect of the people mentioned in the previous verse.

*“Most commentators think that Paul has changed subjects now and is no longer speaking of the majority of verse 14. The main objection ... has been that these preachers could not have been inspired by Paul’s bonds to preach more courageously as Paul says of the majority. But why not? ... The recent change in his circumstances which had given a greater impetus to the spread of the gospel may have motivated them to work harder in their opposition to Paul. It was not that they did not want Christ preached, but that they were jealous of Paul and his success in Rome” (Weaver, p.50).*

# PHILIPPIANS CHAPTER ONE

## *The Progress of the Gospel (1:12-18)*

<sup>15</sup> Some indeed preach Christ even from envy and strife, and some also from goodwill: <sup>16</sup> The former preach Christ from selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my chains; <sup>17</sup> but the latter out of love, knowing that I am appointed for the defense of the gospel.

“Most” were emboldened to  
“speak the word” (v.14)

Paul  
(v.17)

“Some” preached  
“Christ” from  
envy/strife, etc.  
(v.15a, 16)

“Some” preached  
“Christ” from  
goodwill and love  
(v.15b, 17)

People who spoke something  
other than “the word”

Judaizing  
teachers  
(Phil. 3:1-2)

# PHILIPPIANS CHAPTER ONE

## *The Progress of the Gospel (1:12-18)*

<sup>15</sup> Some indeed preach Christ even from envy and strife, and some also from goodwill: <sup>16</sup> The former preach Christ from selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my chains;

- “Preach Christ” is a synecdoche (Acts 8:4-5, 12, 25, 35-36).
- The issue raised here is that there were some who preached with impure motives, not that they failed to preach Christ (compare with 1 Tim. 6:3-5).
  - Even when people preach “Christ,” if their motives are unpure, they condemn themselves (James 3:1; 1 Tim. 1:3-7).
    - Correct doctrine without the correct heart is worthless!
- Specifically, some preached from:
  - “envy and strife,”
  - “selfish ambition,”
  - and “not sincerely.”

# PHILIPPIANS CHAPTER ONE

## *The Progress of the Gospel (1:12-18)*

**<sup>15</sup> Some indeed preach Christ even from envy and strife, and some also from goodwill: <sup>16</sup> The former preach Christ from selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my chains;**

- **“Envy and strife”**

- Paul had in mind specific people who were envious of him, his gifts / abilities, his reputation, etc. These people strived against him, hoping to add to his afflictions.

*“The real design of these preachers was to bring pressure upon Paul, to aggravate him; perhaps to move him to jealousy as they sought advantage over him while he was imprisoned. They wanted to undermine his influence. This is what they were supposing ... or thinking (even expecting), they could do by their preaching” (Weaver, p.52).*

- Envious teachers were responsible for the death of Christ (Mark 15:10; Matt. 27:18).
  - Preaching from a place of envy is still an issue today (2 Cor. 10:13-18; Gal. 6:3-4).
    - Envy destroys unity and peace (James 3:13-18; 1 Cor. 3:1-3).
    - Rather than envying, we should thank God for the person’s work! (Rom. 10:14-15)

# PHILIPPIANS CHAPTER ONE

## The Progress of the Gospel (1:12-18)

**<sup>15</sup> Some indeed preach Christ even from envy and strife, and some also from goodwill: <sup>16</sup> The former preach Christ from selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my chains;**

- **“Selfish ambition”**

*“The word originally was applied to an ordinary laborer, one hired to perform a task. It then came to mean working solely for pay. In this way it came to represent self-seeking and selfish ambition” (Weaver, p.51).*

- These are different from the selfish teachers of 1 Pet. 2:1-3; 1 Tim. 6:3-5; Rom. 2:8; etc.
- One who teaches selfishly completely misses the point of the gospel! (Phil. 2:1-8)
- Selfish teaching can be manifested in numerous ways.
  - Teaching for the praise of men (1 Thess. 2:4; 2 Tim. 4:1-4).
  - Teaching primarily for money (2 Cor. 2:17).
  - “Hobby riding” (Acts 20:26-27, 31).

# PHILIPPIANS CHAPTER ONE

## *The Progress of the Gospel (1:12-18)*

**<sup>15</sup> Some indeed preach Christ even from envy and strife, and some also from goodwill: <sup>16</sup> The former preach Christ from selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my chains;**

- **“Not sincerely”**

- When a person teaches the word of God from a place of selfish ambition, he is going to be insincere in his teaching.
- Most often, it is impossible for us to know if someone is an insincere teacher since we cannot judge men’s hearts (1 Sam. 16:7).
- However, certain fruits can be borne which prove someone to be an insincere teacher (Matt. 6, 23; 1 Tim. 4:12-15).
- Insincerity can never be hidden from God (1 Cor. 4:5; Jer. 17:10, Prov. 21:2, Psalm 44:21).

# PHILIPPIANS CHAPTER ONE

## *The Progress of the Gospel (1:12-18)*

**<sup>15</sup> Some indeed preach Christ even from envy and strife, and some also from goodwill: <sup>16</sup> The former preach Christ from selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my chains;**

- We learn numerous lessons from Paul not being distracted by those with impure motives:
  - The word of God cannot be chained by impure motives (2 Tim. 2:8-9).
  - The motives of others should not distract us from our mission (John 21:19-22).
  - True joy is found in Christ's glory and not our own glory (John 3:30-31).
  - God can use evil for good (Gen. 50:19-20; Isa. 55:11; etc.).

# PHILIPPIANS CHAPTER ONE

## *The Progress of the Gospel (1:12-18)*

<sup>15</sup> Some indeed preach Christ even from envy and strife, and some also from goodwill: <sup>16</sup> The former preach Christ from selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my chains;

- In contrast to the people preaching Christ with impure motives, there were others who preached from a place of:
  - “Goodwill”
    - “From pure motives, having no party aims to accomplish, and not intending in any way to give [Paul] trouble” (Barnes, p.152).
  - “Love”
    - “Both the good will and the love out of which they spoke were directed toward Paul and the progress of the gospel” (Weaver, p.53).
- Truth must be preached from a place of goodwill and love, and spoken with goodwill and love (Eph. 4:15; Col. 4:6).

# PHILIPPIANS CHAPTER ONE

## *The Progress of the Gospel (1:12-18)*

**17 but the latter out of love, knowing that I am appointed for the defense of the gospel.**

**The latter do it out of love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel (RSV)**

**Those who tell the message about Christ out of love know that God has put me here to defend the Good News (GW)**

**The latter do so from love because they know that I am placed here for the defense of the gospel (NET)**

- The commended preachers taught in view of the fact that Paul was “**appointed for the defense of the gospel**” (also consider 1 Thess. 3:3). This likely indicates:
  - They recognized Paul’s purpose in being on earth (Acts 9:15-16; Phil. 1:20),
  - Or they viewed Paul’s persecution, imprisonment, trial, etc. as an opportunity for the gospel to abound (Phil. 1:7; 2 Tim. 2:8-9; 1 Pet. 3:13-17).
  - Both views have merit.

# PHILIPPIANS CHAPTER ONE

## *The Progress of the Gospel (1:12-18)*

**18 What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is preached; and in this I rejoice, yes, and will rejoice.**

- Christ was preached by both insincere and sincere brethren. Rather than allowing the insincere, selfish, and envious brethren who taught with “**pretense**” (“a cloak for other designs,” [Lightfoot]) cause Paul to grow disheartened, he chose to “**rejoice**.”
  - “**Pretense**” = the previously mentioned preachers with impure motives.
  - “**Truth**” = the previously mentioned preachers with pure motives.
    - These terms show a difference in the motivation for their preaching, not in the content of what they preached (compare to Phil. 3:1-2).

*“Paul was not saying ... he was glad that different doctrines were being taught ... The message they preached was correct, but their attitudes were wrong”* (Harkrider, p.8).

# PHILIPPIANS CHAPTER ONE

## *The Progress of the Gospel (1:12-18)*

**18 What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is preached; and in this I rejoice, yes, and will rejoice.**

*“Notice that he does not ask, ‘Do envy, factiousness, selfishness and pretense matter?’ Paul would never approve of such sinful dispositions; attitudes which he specifically condemns at other places ... He is taking the larger view of what is being done for the gospel rather than the smaller and less important view of what his opponents are doing to him ... Statements like, ‘An imperfect Gospel preached from wrong motives is better than no Gospel at all’ (Du Buisson, 552), ‘Though there may be much error in what is said, yet there will be also some truth’ (Barnes, 153), or ‘Some Christ is better than no Christ’ (Robertson, 6:439), miss the point altogether. Paul is not making some allowance for error in what was being preached by these men ... Paul finds no fault with what they preach. This is one of the main faults with the view that Paul is talking about Judaizing teachers in these verses. The Judaizers preached ‘another gospel,’ and Paul strongly condemned such preaching (Gal. 1:6-9). In these verses Paul is speaking of men who preached from impure motives, not those who preached a mutilated gospel” (Weaver, p.54-55).*

# PHILIPPIANS CHAPTER ONE

## *The Progress of the Gospel (1:12-18)*

**18 What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is preached; and in this I rejoice, yes, and will rejoice.**

- When we know Christ is being preached, we should have joy in knowing that God's will is being accomplished (Isa. 55:11).
  - If we know someone is preaching from impure motives, we have a responsibility to correct them (Gal. 6:1; 2 Tim. 2:24-26). Yet, even if one does preach with impure motives, we can still rejoice knowing that the seed is being planted.

*“Paul rejoiced because the people heard the gospel, and could thereby be saved from their sins, notwithstanding it was claimed to them by envious partisans”* (Lipscomb, p.165).

*“What difference does it make whether motives be false or pure? The content and substance of their message was correct. God will judge their heart and deal appropriately. The tolerant attitude of Paul was born out of a burning zeal for Christ, and for His cause, Paul rejoiced”* (Harkrider, p.8).

# PHILIPPIANS CHAPTER ONE

## *Magnifying Christ in Life and in Death (1:19-30)*

**19 For I know that this will turn out for my deliverance through your prayer and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ,**

- Debate exists as to what exactly Paul was referencing with the word “**this**.”
  - Some think he was referring to his imprisonment (Phil. 1:12-14).
    - This is the most common interpretation.
  - Some think he was referring to Christ being preached (Phil. 1:15-18a).
  - Some think he was referring to his defense of the gospel (Phil. 1:17b).
  - Some think he was referring to his state of joy (Phil. 1:18b).
    - Each position has strengths and weaknesses.
- When Paul said, “**I know that this will turn out for my deliverance**,” he was not referring to prophetic knowledge. Instead, he expressed confidence based upon two actions:
  - The “**prayer**” of the Philippians.
  - “**The supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ**.”

# PHILIPPIANS CHAPTER ONE

## *Magnifying Christ in Life and in Death (1:19-30)*

**19 For I know that this will turn out for my deliverance through your prayer and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ,**

- The “prayer” of the Philippians.
  - This indicates that the Philippians had been aware of Paul’s circumstances.
    - It seems likely they had known for some time, especially if we are correct in dating this letter as the last of the “Prison Epistles.”
    - Paul frequently requested prayers, especially during times of persecution (Rom. 15:30-32; Eph. 6:18-20; Col. 4:3; 2 Thess. 3:1-2; Phile. 22).
      - This demonstrates the futility of relying on oneself to overcome trials (Phil 4:6-7; 2 Pet. 1:6-11; Isa. 41:10; Psalm 46:1).
      - This also demonstrates how God’s providence can be achieved by working through His people (Phil. 2:13; 2 Cor. 1:10-11).

# PHILIPPIANS CHAPTER ONE

## *Magnifying Christ in Life and in Death (1:19-30)*

**19 For I know that this will turn out for my deliverance through your prayer and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ,**

- **“The supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ.”**

“What is ‘the supply of the Spirit?’ Grammatically, the phrase may mean either, ‘the supply which is the Spirit,’ or, ‘the supply which the Spirit gives’” (Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges, Handley Moule).

- The word translated “**supply**” can imply something non-miraculous (Eph. 4:16; Col. 2:19); when referring to the Holy Spirit, it can also imply something miraculous (Gal. 3:5).
  - The Greek word is a form of the same word translated as “complete” in Phil. 1:6, which does not refer to anything miraculous.
  - The Greek word simply means “contribute” (Strong).
- The general consensus among scholars is that Paul was referring to miraculous work(s) of the Spirit that would bring about his deliverance.
  - Personally, I am not confident in this interpretation (consider Rom. 8:26-28).

# PHILIPPIANS CHAPTER ONE

## *Magnifying Christ in Life and in Death (1:19-30)*

**20<sup>a</sup> according to my earnest expectation and hope that in nothing I shall be ashamed,**

- Building upon the confidence described in the previous verse, Paul explained that it was his **“earnest expectation and hope”** that he would be delivered.
  - The phrase **“earnest expectation”** implies an intense longing (Rom. 8:19).
  - Paul was confident that his trust in God (the Philippians prayers and the Spirit’s supply) would result in what he earnestly expected and hoped for (also consider Rom. 15:13).
- Because of his earnest expectation and hope, Paul could confidently say, **“In nothing I shall be ashamed”** (also consider Rom. 5:5, 9:33; 1 Pet. 2:6).
  - **“In nothing”** indicates Paul felt that **“I will in no way be ashamed”** (NIV).

*“Not of his hope, neither the grace of hope, ... nor the object of hope, Christ Jesus; nor the thing hoped for, eternal life and happiness, or any of the above things about which this grace was conversant; nor of his reproaches and sufferings for the sake of Christ and his Gospel ... nor of the Gospel which he preached, so as to retract and deny it, drop the whole, or conceal any part of it, lay down his profession of it, or cease to preach it”* (Gill).

# PHILIPPIANS CHAPTER ONE

## *Magnifying Christ in Life and in Death (1:19-30)*

<sup>20<sup>b</sup></sup> **but with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ will be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death.**

- “**All boldness**” is contrasted with what was mentioned previously (“**in nothing I shall be ashamed**”).
- Paul was “**always**” bold in acting upon his faith.
  - He preached boldly (Acts 14:3, 19:8, 28:30-31; 1 Thess. 2:2).
  - He boldly testified before powerful men of his journey in Christ (Acts 26:12-32, ESV).
  - He was bold in some of the decisions that he made (Acts 13:46).
  - He boldly defended himself and the truth (2 Cor. 10:1-11).
  - He possessed a bold spirit (2 Tim. 1:7-8).
  - He was boldly confident in God (Rom. 8:28-39).
- Bold faith is key to living the type of life God demands (1 Cor. 16:13; Prov. 28:1; James 1:5-7).
- Given what God has done for us, we have no reason not to be bold in our faith! (Eph. 3:7-12)

# PHILIPPIANS CHAPTER ONE

## *Magnifying Christ in Life and in Death (1:19-30)*

<sup>20b</sup> **but with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ will be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death.**

- Due to Paul’s boldness, Christ would be “**magnified**” (“**honored**,” ESV) in his “**body**.”
  - While we remain in our human bodies, our primary responsibility is to magnify the Lord (Psalm 150:6; 1 Cor. 6:19-20; 2 Cor. 5:9-10).
- Due to Paul’s boldness, Christ would be magnified in his body, “**whether by life or by death**.”
  - This shows that Paul was not 100% sure he would be freed (Phil. 2:23).
    - “**By life**” indicates that if Paul was delivered from his chains, he would honor Christ by continuing to live for Him and continuing to boldly proclaim His word, just as he had been doing (2 Cor. 4:10; Gal. 2:20).
    - “**By death**” indicates that if Paul was not delivered from his chains, his death would serve as a means for magnifying the Lord’s cause and honoring Him (Gal. 6:17; Rom. 14:8, 8:35-39).

# PHILIPPIANS CHAPTER ONE

## *Magnifying Christ in Life and in Death (1:19-30)*

**20<sup>b</sup> but with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ will be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death.**

*“He did not know what the future held for him. His single ambition was to honor Christ whether he lived or died. ‘In my body’ is significant because it was the instrument by which Christ would be glorified before others (2 Cor. 4:10). His spirit would return to God (Eccl. 12:7), and in a spiritual sense he would continue to ‘live’ (2 Cor. 5:1-9). But the deportment of his body was the instrument in this world which stood as a testimony to others of his faith in Christ. If, however, he was spared of death at this time, he would continue to honor God in his body ‘by life’ in that he would serve Him in righteous living (1 Cor 6:19-20). But if ‘death’ awaited him, the testimony of his courage and joy in Christ even in death would renown to the glory of the Lord (2 Cor. 4:11)” (Harkrider, p.11).*

# PHILIPPIANS CHAPTER ONE

## *Magnifying Christ in Life and in Death (1:19-30)*

**<sup>21</sup> For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain.**

- Both living and dying were attractive to Paul.
  - Being freed from imprisonment and living meant “**Christ**.”
    - Christ was Paul’s life (Col. 3:3-4).
    - Despite everything he endured, nothing would stop Paul from living for Christ (Phil. 3:8-11; Acts 20:24).
  - Dying would result in “**gain**.”
    - Paul found comfort in the thought of dying (2 Tim. 4:6-8). If he did die, the Philippians should also have found comfort (1 Thess. 4:13-18).
      - This attitude was caused by an understanding of death not being the end (1 Cor. 15:12-19, 50-58; Heb. 11:32-40).
      - This attitude was caused by understanding what would be gained in death (Rev. 2:10, 14:13; 2 Cor. 5:8; etc.).

# PHILIPPIANS CHAPTER ONE

## *Magnifying Christ in Life and in Death (1:19-30)*

**22<sup>a</sup> But if I live on in the flesh, this will mean fruit from my labor;**

- The possibility existed that Paul would not die (“**if I live on in the flesh**”).
  - Paul just stated that if he lived, Christ would be magnified, so living “**in**” the flesh is not the same as living according to the flesh (Rom. 8:5; 2 Cor. 5:16).
- If released, Paul’s “**labor**” in the Lord would continue; he would bear “**fruit**” in his work.
  - This should be the goal of all disciples (John 15:5, 8, 16; Col. 1:10).

# PHILIPPIANS CHAPTER ONE

## *Magnifying Christ in Life and in Death (1:19-30)*

**22<sup>b</sup> yet what I shall choose I cannot tell.**

**I don't know which I would prefer (GW, ISV, Mounce)**

**I don't know which I prefer (NET)**

**I really don't know which is better (TLB, NLT)**

- The idea does not seem to be that Paul would be given a choice in living or dying.
  - Such a view would have Paul contemplating voluntary euthanasia (i.e. suicide).
- Instead, Paul was not sure which was most preferable – living or dying.
  - Living meant fruitful labor for Christ; dying meant gaining the reward.
    - Both options were appealing to Paul for different reasons.

# PHILIPPIANS CHAPTER ONE

## *Magnifying Christ in Life and in Death (1:19-30)*

**22<sup>b</sup> yet what I shall choose I cannot tell.**

- Do we sincerely share Paul's sentiment that both options are appealing?

*“He had come to the point where he could confidently state that, if he lived, he would continue to preach Christ, and if he died he would go to be with Christ. It is here that he needed to wrestle with the very human temptation to lay aside the servant’s heart and give in to selfishness, because leaving this world would mean an end to his weariness and suffering. It would mean that he could be with the Lord he loved and served; it would mark the beginning of the reward for faithful service that would be his after the judgment” (Blake, p.18).*

*“I do not know which I should prefer, if it were left to me. On each side there were important considerations, and he knew not which overbalanced the other. Are not Christians often in this state, that if it were left to themselves they would not know which to choose, whether to live or to die?” (Barnes, p.157).*

# PHILIPPIANS CHAPTER ONE

## *Magnifying Christ in Life and in Death (1:19-30)*

**23 For I am hard-pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better.**

- Paul viewed death as a departure (also consider 2 Pet. 1:15, NASB).
  - A form of the Greek word translated as “**depart**” is also used in 2 Tim. 4:6.

*“Paul uses the word here as a metaphor for death, and Greek scholars tell us that it refers to the act of releasing a boat from its moorings (Thayer). Picture a boat tied to a dock. It moves up and down and back and forth; the rope becomes tight and then loose. The boat strains to set itself free from the pier. Finally, its owner unties the vessel, and it departs from the dock. Paul describes living here upon this earth as, in a sense, tied to a dock. The time would soon come for ‘untying the rope,’ and he would set sail upon the seas of eternity. His death would be a release ... Indeed, death is not the end; it merely is a ‘departure’ from this life. When a person dies, his spirit leaves his body (Jas. 2:26) and departs to another place” (Setting Sail on the Seas of Eternity, Mike Johnson, [www.seekingthingsabove.org](http://www.seekingthingsabove.org)).*

# PHILIPPIANS CHAPTER ONE

## *Magnifying Christ in Life and in Death (1:19-30)*

**23 For I am hard-pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better.**

- Though living and dying were both appealing to Paul, he viewed dying (being “**with Christ**”) as the “**far better**” option.
  - Being with Christ was his “**desire**” (also consider 2 Cor. 5:1-4).
  - Paul was already in fellowship with Christ, but his greater desire was to be “**with**” Him (i.e. in His presence).
    - Does this indicate that faithful saints immediately go to heaven when they die instead of going to Hades / Paradise? (see Luke 16:19-31, 23:43)

*“To die ... meant he would ‘depart and be with Christ’ ... This poses two problems for the waiting room doctrine. First, Jesus isn’t in Hades today. We know that He has ascended to be at the right hand of the Father in heaven (Acts 2:33; Col. 3:1) ... Second, Paul’s entire argument appears nonsensical if he was only going to go to a waiting room. What attracted him to death wasn’t rest from his work but going to be with Jesus. If Paul only went to a waiting room, he wouldn’t be in Jesus’ presence any faster regardless of whether he lived or died ... There is no denying that Jesus’ teaching on Hades is clear, and I believe that it was absolutely true when He said it. But perhaps something changed in the realm of the afterlife between Jesus’ teaching and Paul’s dilemma ... Could it be that the waiting room only existed for righteous people because the payment for our sins had not yet been paid by Jesus’ death on the cross and death had not been conquered because Jesus had not yet been resurrected? Once those two events occurred, perhaps our immediate destination after death changed too ... Since Jesus told us that Lazarus was carried away by angels (Lk. 16:22) then we don’t need to worry about knowing where to go when we die. Just follow the angels! Whether Christians go to a place of comfortable waiting or go to be immediately with Jesus in heaven, I am convinced that they will not be disappointed by what awaits them after death” (Where We Go When We Die, Jared Hagan, [www.brookhillchurchofchrist.com](http://www.brookhillchurchofchrist.com)).*

*“To depart, and to be with Christ’ does not militate against the fact that Hades receives the souls at death (Luke 16:23) and yields them up at the resurrection (Rev. 20:13) ... ‘To be with Christ’ [does] not require that one goes directly to heaven at death. The New Testament writers sometimes pass over the time period between death and the resurrection when they speak of the resurrection and the judgment, but in doing so they do not mean that no such time period exists. When the writer of Hebrews says, ‘It is appointed unto man once to die, and after this the judgment’ (Heb. 9:27), does he mean that judgment immediately follows death? ... Even if ‘to be with Christ’ means to be with him in heaven, that does not mean there is no intermediate state for man between death and the resurrection. In fact, for all we know, Paul may be speaking of the intermediate state (cf. Luke 16:19-31) rather than heaven (Weaver, p.64-65).*

*“Paul is here speaking only of the destiny of a faithful Christian after death ... Paul does not here deal with the reality of an approaching judgment ... For all we know, Paul may be speaking of the intermediate state for one’s soul between death and the resurrection” (Harkrider, p.12).*

# PHILIPPIANS CHAPTER ONE

## *Magnifying Christ in Life and in Death (1:19-30)*

**23 For I am hard-pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better.**

- Does this indicate that faithful saints immediately go to heaven when they die instead of Hades / Paradise? Personally, I see two possibilities:
  - Paul was referring to being with Christ literally in Heaven AFTER Hades is delivered up to God on the day of judgment (Rev. 20:13).
    - Remember, Paul does not actually specify in this text that he would be with Christ **immediately** upon death.

*“Paul’s entire argument appears nonsensical if he was only going to go to a waiting room ... If Paul only went to a waiting room, he wouldn’t be in Jesus’ presence **any faster** regardless of whether he lived or died” (Hagan).*

- Paul was referring to being with Christ figuratively in Hades / Paradise.

# PHILIPPIANS CHAPTER ONE

## *Magnifying Christ in Life and in Death (1:19-30)*

**<sup>24</sup> Nevertheless to remain in the flesh is more needful for you.**

- Although Paul desired to be with Christ since it would be far better for him, he recognized it was “**more needful**” to “**remain in the flesh**” for the Philippians.

*“Those who have most reason to desire to depart, should be willing to remain in the world as long as God has any work for them to do ... to deny himself for a while the satisfaction of his reward”* (Matthew Henry’s Commentary, Vol. VI, p.729).

- Paul accepted this because he saw the needs of the Philippians as more important than his own desires (Phil. 2:3, ESV; 1 Cor. 10:24).

*“He viewed others’ spiritual condition as more important than his own (Rom. 9:1-4).*

*“His counsel and guidance as an apostle is best for them. He did not wish to die before his work was done; the needs of others came first”* (Harkrider, p.12).

*“Paul ... would maintain the servant’s heart until death claimed his mortal life”* (Blake, p.18).

# PHILIPPIANS CHAPTER ONE

## *Magnifying Christ in Life and in Death (1:19-30)*

**25 And being confident of this, I know that I shall remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy of faith,**

- Being “**confident**” that living and serving the Philippians was more important than receiving his eternal reward, Paul said, “**I shall remain and continue with you all.**”
  - Contrary to what many scholars claim, it seems very unlikely that Paul’s confidence was due to having prophetic knowledge (see Phil. 1:17, 2:17, 23).
  - Instead, this confidence was brought about by a belief that God still had more work for Paul to do before granting him the reward.

*“And having this confidence’ ... being persuaded of what went immediately before, how useful the continuance of his life, for a further time in this world, would be to the church of Christ, and particularly to them” (Matthew Poole’s Commentary).*

# PHILIPPIANS CHAPTER ONE

## *Magnifying Christ in Life and in Death (1:19-30)*

**25 And being confident of this, I know that I shall remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy of faith,**

- If our timeline and scholars are correct, Paul was eventually released from his imprisonment.
- If we are correct that Paul was imprisoned in Rome (Acts 28) while writing the letter, then Paul would be imprisoned by the Romans a second time, eventually resulting in his death.

*“Paul’s confidence in his release from prison ... implies that this Roman imprisonment did not end in his death. Hence, there is the likelihood that he experienced a second Roman imprisonment later on (since the belief of the early church was that Paul died under Nero in Rome). If so, then the pastoral letters (1-2 Tim, Titus) could well fit into a life of Paul that goes beyond any descriptions in the book of Acts (which ends with Paul’s first Roman imprisonment). Some have argued that the pastorals cannot be genuine because they cannot fit into the history of Acts. But this view presupposes that Paul’s first Roman imprisonment was also his last” (NET Footnotes).*

# PHILIPPIANS CHAPTER ONE

## *Magnifying Christ in Life and in Death (1:19-30)*

**25 And being confident of this, I know that I shall remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy of faith,**

**... your progress and joy in the faith** (ASV, CSB, ESV, NASB, NET, NIV, RSV)

- Just as Paul’s imprisonment resulted in the progression of the gospel (Phil. 1:12), so too would his freedom. Specifically, his freedom would help the Philippians “**progress**” and have “**joy**” in their faith.
  - The Philippians had been a church for roughly a decade, yet they still needed to keep progressing in their faith (Heb. 5:12-6:1; 2 Thess. 1:3; Eph. 4:11-16).
    - We must never stop growing in our faith! (2 Pet. 3:17-18)
    - Growing in faith should produce joy (1 Pet. 1:3-8; James 1:2-4; Psalm 19:7-11).

# PHILIPPIANS CHAPTER ONE

## *Magnifying Christ in Life and in Death (1:19-30)*

**26 that your rejoicing for me may be more abundant in Jesus Christ by my coming to you again.**

**So by coming to you again, I want to give you even more reason to have pride in Christ Jesus with me (GW)**

**so that your pride in Christ Jesus may be abundant because of me by my coming to you again (NASB)**

**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 (NLT)**

- The Greek word translated as “rejoicing” can mean:
  - To glory or boast (Rom. 4:2; 1 Cor. 9:16; Gal. 6:4).
  - To be proud or take pride in something (Phil. 2:16 ; 1 Cor. 5:6; 2 Cor. 1:1; Heb. 3:6).
    - This is what the word means here.
    - “What you can be proud of” (Arndt and Gingrich, p.427).

# PHILIPPIANS CHAPTER ONE

## *Magnifying Christ in Life and in Death (1:19-30)*

**26 that your rejoicing for me may be more abundant in Jesus Christ by my coming to you again.**

- Paul’s “**coming to [them] again**” would result in the Philippians “**rejoicing**,” but the grounds for this pride / glory was “**in Jesus Christ**.”

- Paul’s hope was not that they would glory in him, but that they would glory in Christ for the way the Lord used him (Phil. 1:17; Acts 9:15, 16:34).

*“If he was spared, his deliverance would be traced to Christ, and they would rejoice together in the one who had so mercifully delivered him”* (Barnes, p.159).

- This joy would be amplified by Paul’s continued ministry among them (Phil. 1:25).

*“The ground of glorying was first and comprehensively in Christ; then in Paul as representing Christ; then in Paul’s personal presence with them, with his teaching and example and prayers ... The rejoicing would be of what the Lord had done, and the help thereto would be Paul’s continuance in the flesh”* (Lipscomb, p.171).

# PHILIPPIANS CHAPTER ONE

## *Magnifying Christ in Life and in Death (1:19-30)*

**27<sup>a</sup> Only let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of your affairs,**

- The Greek word translated as “**conduct**” has an interesting etymology.

*“It was used by Hellenistic writers to describe one’s relationship to government ... From Thucydides ever afterward in Hellenistic writings the word meant to conduct one’s self as pledged to some law of life ... The word when used as a noun in Philippians 3:20 gives a picture of a city-state or commonwealth. In view of this fact, the word rendered conversation in this verse is often translated ‘behave as citizens,’ ‘act your part as citizens,’ ‘exercise your citizenship.’ As a Roman citizen himself (Acts 22:28) Paul would see the term as having special significance to him. It would also readily be understood by his brethren at Philippi because that city was a Roman colony (Acts 16:12). Some of them would be Roman citizens and would be familiar with how the word was used among the Romans to describe living as members of a community. They were proud to be Romans and knew what it meant to be a part of a city-state. They were accustomed to abiding by the rules and laws of such a commonwealth. What better word could Paul have used than a word that calls on them to submit to and obey the rules of the heavenly community of which they were citizens?” (Weaver, p.68).*

# PHILIPPIANS CHAPTER ONE

## *Magnifying Christ in Life and in Death (1:19-30)*

**27<sup>a</sup> Only let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of your affairs,**

- A saint's conduct must be “**worthy of the gospel of Christ.**”

*“The gospel is not merely a message to be believed; it is a message that also provided guidelines by which to live ... To live a life ‘worthy of the gospel of Christ’ means ... to live righteously (Rom. 12:1-2; Eph. 4:22-32ff). It means to regulate one’s conscience and conduct by the vital principles set forth in the gospel”* (Harkrider, p.15).

- None are worthy of the gospel, but all must walk worthy of it (Eph. 4:1; 1 Thess. 2:12).
- Everything we do must match the gospel message (Col. 3:17, 1:10)

*“The gospel must govern a Christian’s speech, behavior, worship, attire, family relationships, occupation, citizenship, and even his leisure”* (Blake, p.21).

- Even when we walk worthy of the gospel, we are still unworthy servants (Luke 17:7-10).

# PHILIPPIANS CHAPTER ONE

## *Magnifying Christ in Life and in Death (1:19-30)*

**27<sup>a</sup> Only let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of your affairs,**

- The Philippians' behavior could not be dependent upon Paul's presence ("only let your conduct be worthy of the gospel ... whether I come and see you or am absent").
- Their conduct needed to match the gospel even when Paul was not there (consider Col. 3:22; Eph. 6:5-6).

*"Some people are prone to regulate their behavior according to the presence or absence of another Christian. A hypocrite always puts on a show of righteousness when he is in the company of other Christians. Paul urges them to live consistently at all times and not just to please him when he was with him" (Harkrider, p.15).*

- Phil. 2:12 indicates their past conduct was sound even when Paul was absent.

# PHILIPPIANS CHAPTER ONE

## *Magnifying Christ in Life and in Death (1:19-30)*

**<sup>27<sup>b</sup></sup>** that you stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel,

- These are the affairs mentioned in the first half of the verse that Paul wished to hear.
- When saints individually conduct their lives according to the gospel, they will collectively be able to “**stand fast in one spirit, with one mind**” (also consider 1 Cor. 16:13-14).
  - **“Stand fast.”**
    - This admonition is prevalent throughout Paul’s writings (Phil. 4:1; 2 Cor. 1:24; Gal. 5:1; 1 Thess. 3:8; 2 Thess. 2:15; Rom. 11:20).
      - This means holding ground against opposition (Eph. 6:10-18).
        - The Philippians’ specific opposition is identified in the next verse.
    - **“In one spirit, with one mind”** (see also Phil. 2:2, 5; 3:15; 4:2).
      - **Spirit** = inward motive | **Mind** = produces outward action based on inward motive.
      - We cannot stand against opposition unless we are unified in both spirit and mind (1 Cor. 1:10; 2 Cor. 13:11).

# PHILIPPIANS CHAPTER ONE

## *Magnifying Christ in Life and in Death (1:19-30)*

**<sup>27<sup>b</sup></sup>** that you stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel, stand firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel (RSV)  
standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel (ESV)

- The object for which the Philippians needed to stand fast was “**the faith of the gospel.**”
  - Most likely, “**faith**” is used here objectively rather than personally (1 Cor. 16:13).
  - There is only one faith (Eph. 4:5), and it must be earnestly contended for (Jude 3).

*“The exhortation to ‘strive together’ implies that the message is the same for all, unchanging, and can be understood alike ... It is impossible to ‘earnestly contend’ (Jude 3) or ‘strive side by side’ for a message that is nebulous” (Harkrider, p.15).*

- We cannot succeed in standing for the faith against our adversaries unless we are of one spirit and mind (1 Pet. 3:8-17).

# PHILIPPIANS CHAPTER ONE

## *Magnifying Christ in Life and in Death (1:19-30)*

**28 and not in any way terrified by your adversaries, which is to them a proof of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that from God.**

**and in no way alarmed by your opponents—which is a sign of destruction for them, but of salvation for you, and this too, from God (NASB)**

**and by not being intimidated in any way by your opponents. This is a sign of their destruction, but of your salvation—a sign which is from God (NET)**

- The Philippians need not be “**in any way terrified**” by their “**adversaries**.”
  - There is no reason to fear our adversaries because their power is limited (Matt. 10:28).
  - We do not know exactly who were the Philippians’ adversaries.
    - Most scholars assume they were pagan, but we cannot know this assuredly.
  - Whoever their direct adversaries were, THE adversary worked through them (1 Pet. 5:8; 2 Cor. 11:12-14; Eph. 2:2).

# PHILIPPIANS CHAPTER ONE

## *Magnifying Christ in Life and in Death (1:19-30)*

**28 and not in any way terrified by your adversaries, which is to them a proof of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that from God.**

**and in no way alarmed by your opponents—which is a sign of destruction for them, but of salvation for you, and this too, from God (NASB)**

**and by not being intimidated in any way by your opponents. This is a sign of their destruction, but of your salvation—a sign which is from God (NET)**

- All who live according to the gospel will face opposition (Phil. 1:29; 2 Tim 3:12).
  - Such opposition serves as evidence of the destruction of the wicked while also providing evidence of the faithful's salvation (2 Thess. 1:5-10; Matt. 5:10-12).

*“The antecedent of the pronoun ‘this’ is conceptual, most likely referring to the Philippian Christians standing firm for the gospel. Thus, their stand for the gospel is the dual sign of their opponents’ destruction and of their own salvation” (NET Footnotes).*

# PHILIPPIANS CHAPTER ONE

## *Magnifying Christ in Life and in Death (1:19-30)*

**29 For to you it has been granted on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake,**

**He allowed you to believe in Christ. But that is not all. He has also given you the honor of suffering for Christ. Both of these bring glory to Christ (ERV)**

**God has given you the privilege not only to believe in Christ but also to suffer for him (GW)**

- It is a privilege to “believe in” Christ.

- Contrary to Calvinist claims, this does not imply God specifically appointed (elected) the Philippians to believe in Christ.

*“Here, Paul clearly testifies that faith, as well as constancy in enduring persecutions, is a free gift of God”* (New Testament Commentaries: Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians, John Calvin, p.243)

- Belief is not what was gifted to the Philippians, Instead, God gifted them (and all mankind) a reason to believe (Eph. 2:4-9; Rom. 6:23).

# PHILIPPIANS CHAPTER ONE

## *Magnifying Christ in Life and in Death (1:19-30)*

**29 For to you it has been granted on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake,**

**He allowed you to believe in Christ. But that is not all. He has also given you the honor of suffering for Christ. Both of these bring glory to Christ (ERV)**

**God has given you the privilege not only to believe in Christ but also to suffer for him (GW)**

- Not only is it a privilege to “believe in” Christ, it also a privilege to “suffer for His sake” (Phil. 3:10; Acts 5:41).

*“These things do not come to one who merely professes belief in Christ, but to one whose belief in Christ has moved him to obey in such a way as to draw attention and glory for the Lord. One is not persecuted for what he believes in his mind but is too selfish and cowardly to confess with his words and deeds” (Blake, p.23).*

- Christ suffered for us; it is only logical that we suffer for Him (1 Pet. 2:21; Rom. 8:36-37).
- Suffering for the gospel honors Christ (1 Pet. 4:12-19).
  - Do we truly count it as a privilege and honor to suffer for the Lord’s cause?

# PHILIPPIANS CHAPTER ONE

## *Magnifying Christ in Life and in Death (1:19-30)*

**30 having the same conflict which you saw in me and now hear is in me.**

- The Philippians either were suffering or would soon suffer “**the same conflict**” they both “**saw in**” Paul previously “**and now hear**” from him at the time of writing.
  - The conflict the Philippians “**saw in**” Paul likely refers to his opposition in Acts 16 (see 1 Thess. 2:2).
    - We do not know the specific details, but the Philippians would experience the same type of conflict as Paul (i.e. persecution for the cause of Christ).
    - There should be some level of comfort in knowing that other saints share in our same conflicts / sufferings (1 Pet. 5:9).