

Four Points Of Philippians

INTRODUCTION:

1. The city of Philippi is located in Greece, on a plain about 10 miles inland from the Aegean Sea.
 - A. The road called the Via Egnatia, which was the main route between Asia and the West, ran through this ancient city opening it for trade, etc., and making it a good city to evangelize.
 - B. The city had a bit of history with the Roman Empire, its generals, and emperors and was eventually declared a Roman colony, giving its citizens very special rights and privileges.
2. The church at Philippi was established by Paul on his 2nd evangelistic journey around 52 A.D.
 - A. He had set out from Antioch of Syria and had traveled by land to revisit the churches which he had planted on his first journey.
 - B. After Timothy joined Paul at Lystra they made their way to Troas where they sailed to Neapolis, and from there traveled inland to Philippi (Acts 16:11-12).
3. Philippi did not have enough Jewish citizens to have a synagogue. So, on the Sabbath Paul went to their meeting place outside the city where he found Lydia and a group of women worshipping.
 - A. Paul preached the gospel to them resulting in Lydia's and her household's conversion, while Paul's later incarceration resulted in the Philippian jailor and his family's conversion to Christ.
 - B. Paul revisited the city on at least two occasions (2 Cor. 2:13; Acts 20:6).
4. The Philippian letter, which we will consider today, was one of Paul's prison epistles (62 A.D.).
 - A. It is a letter that speaks of spiritual joy and thanksgiving coupled with faith and sacrifice.
 - B. Today I want us to consider four of the things Paul says to them by the Spirit and how they relate to our lives in Christ.

BODY:

- I. **Christ's exaltation is the purpose of my life** (Phil. 1:18b-24 – "Yes, and I will rejoice,¹⁹ for I know that this [his imprisonment] will turn out for my deliverance through your prayers and the provision of the Spirit of Jesus Christ,²⁰ according to my earnest expectation and hope, that I will not be put to shame in anything, but that with all boldness, **Christ will even now, as always, be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death.**²¹ For to me, **to live is Christ and to die is gain.**²² But if I am to live on in the flesh, this will mean fruitful labor for me; and I do not know which to choose.²³ But I am hard-pressed from both directions, having the desire to depart and be with Christ, for that is very much better;²⁴ yet to remain on in the flesh is more necessary for your sake.".)
 - A. Though Paul current imprisonment was on his mind when he wrote, he did not lose sight of this purpose (1:20-21)
 1. So, Paul is not expressing indifference towards living or dying, but that as a Christian his ultimate purpose was to bring Christ glory no matter what.
 - a. The Christian's life is to make Jesus look great, to honor him, to glorify Him no matter whether that means living or dying.
 - b. The only way to do that is to cherish Christ above life or death, knowing that Christ is worth the loss of everything, even life itself.
 2. Thus, Paul sought **boldness**, not relief, so that his purpose of exalting Christ in his body might be seen whether it be in life or death.
 - B. For, as Paul goes on to explain, to live **is Christ** and to die **is gain** (1:21-24)!
 1. To **live is Christ** means that life for a disciple is about laboring for the cause and glory of Christ and the good of one's brethren (1:22, 24).
 2. To **die is gain** means departing from this life opens the door to being with Christ (1:23)!
 - a. Note that Paul was not seeking death to escape from life's pain, etc.
 - b. Instead, Paul saw death as the fulfillment of his labors where victory and the prize is

realized (1 Cor. 15:55-58 – “O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?”⁵⁶ The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law;⁵⁷ but **thanks be to God**, who **gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ**.⁵⁸ Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that **your toil is not in vain in the Lord.**”).

3. I think it reasonable to ask yourself if you have grown to see Christ in this light in our life—that **glorifying** Him is more precious than your own life and whatever this world has to offer. I know I have growing to do!

II. Christ is the pattern of my life (Phil. 2:5-8 – “Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus,⁶ who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped,⁷ but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men.⁸ Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.”)

A. Paul tells us that we must develop the same mind we see in Christ (2:5).

1. The Christian mind is to be different, changed by Christ, molded to turn away from self-centered and worldly interests.
2. We are to have a mind that mimics that of Christ Jesus, which is a huge undertaking!

B. To have the mind of Christ requires considering:

1. The **heights** from which Jesus came to save us (2:6).
 - a. Jesus existed in the form of God, the substance of God, the very nature God, possessing the authority of God and deserving the honor, praise, and service due God!
 - b. Yet, Jesus did not allow who He is to cause Him to act selfishly, but gave us the example of extreme humility and sacrifice for the good of others—for the good of sinners!
 - c. This is what we must strive for (2:3-4 – “Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves;⁴ do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.”).
 - d. If God in Christ was willing to leave heaven that He might seek our good, the good of others should be first on our minds as well.
2. The **depths** to which Jesus was willing to go to save us (2:7-8).
 - a. Jesus chose to empty Himself, to deprive Himself, of the rights, liberties etc., connected to being God and join the human race!
 - i. He gave up heaven and its wonders and joy not only to become a *man*, but to live as a *slave* and face the mocking, persecuting, and hatred of sinners He came to save (2:7).
 - ii. As a slave Jesus, the very Son of God, further humbled himself in obedience to die on the cross (2:8). I am not sure we really grasp what this is telling us we should be!
 - b. The Hebrew writer kind of puts God’s amazing plan through Jesus in a nutshell (Heb. 2:10, 14-15 – “For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things, and through whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to perfect the author of their salvation through **sufferings**...¹⁴ Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also **partook of the same**, that through **death** He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil,¹⁵ and might free those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives.”).
3. Surely, brethren, we should think of these things when our pride and self-importance gets in the way of fulfilling our sacrificial service to Christ and others (Rom. 12:1 – “Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.”).

III. Christ is the prize of my life (Phil. 3:12–14 – “Not that I have already obtained it or have already become **perfect**, but I press on so that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus. ¹³ Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, ¹⁴ I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.”).

A. The goal, the end, of Paul’s spiritual journey had not yet been achieved (3:12).

1. Yet, obtaining these goals was Paul’s everything (3:7-11 – “But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. ⁸ More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ, ⁹ and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith, ¹⁰ that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; ¹¹ in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.”).

2. That is the attitude we must have—to press on, to keep working—refusing to give up on the prize offered us by the Lord.

B. Paul remained motivated to lay hold of the prize because receiving the prize was why Christ had laid hold of him!

1. Do not miss the beauty of what is being said here.

2. God through Christ lays hold of imperfect sinners that he might perfect them and give them the prize of eternal life. God wants you to win!

C. So, Paul pressed on (3:13-14).

1. This required forgetting what is past, whether it be success or failure (3:13).

a. The past is the past! We are not to stand on what we have done, even if it is good.

b. Instead, we stretch forward, like a runner in a tight race, straining to gain what lies ahead.

2. This required keeping his eyes on the heavenly goal, the prize of Christ’s calling (3:14).

a. Heaven is not presented here as a place of no sorrow, or having streets of gold, etc., but the place where **perfection** found in knowing Christ fully.

b. Heaven is not the place to ultimately fulfill selfish desires as so many picture it, but a realization of the wonders of being perfected, completed, through Christ **so that we can be where God is and have unhindered access to Him.**

c. It is the regaining through Christ of the paradise lost in the garden due to sin!

3. So, again, it is wise to consider how you feel about coming near to God, worshipping Him, and about the opportunities given you to grow in knowledge of him? For, this will determine if you truly want to go to heaven or need to make adjustments!

IV. Christ is the power of my life (Phil. 4:12-13 – “I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need. ¹³ I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.”).

A. Paul had learned the secret of a contented life no matter the situation (4:12).

1. That is an amazing thing, something we should appreciate and applaud.

2. Yet, from what I have seen in my life, I wonder if that is a secret I want to learn.

a. I say that because I am so quick to complain when things are not the way I want them, whether it be about the heat, the government, the “supply chain,” inflation, etc.

b. Does this not indicate that I do not want to learn about the other side, the lacking side, the

- hungry side, the uncomfortable side?
- c. It is almost as though I see my wealth as a virtue, something to be displayed to the world as a badge of honor showing how much better our country is than theirs!
 - d. And again, I know I am one of the chief culprits and need to change my mind, to **learn**!
 - e. We must learn that contentment is not found in what the world can provide!
- B. Contentment is found in Christ (4:13).
1. It is a **learned** state of life that requires proper focus and action (4:4-7 – “Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice! ⁵ Let your gentle spirit be known to all men. The Lord is near. ⁶ Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”).
 2. The secret was total dependence on Jesus—that He alone makes one complete and sufficient for life!
 3. It is found in seeing Christ to be of such great value that one is content to face life in Him and His strength no matter what life’s circumstances might be!

CONCLUSION:

1. We have seen this book present the truth that Jesus is our life’s purpose, pattern, prize, and power.
2. In other words, Jesus is everything you need to live the greatest life you can live here on this earth.
3. How sad it would be if anyone here, and anyone hearing this invitation, were to miss out on the great blessings Jesus the Christ offers to his people.
4. Will you come to Jesus today in F-R-C-BP?