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FIRST A/G FORT MYERS, FL
3/10/21

PHILIPPIANS
The Letter of Joy
CHAPTER 2 (VS12-30)

RECAP OF CHAPTER 1 AND 2

- Philippi was the church that blessed Paul's heart the most. They were the ones who had reciprocated his love, and had lived their faith out in a purity that other churches he established hadn't.
- The city of Philippi was a miniature version of Rome. It was a Rome away from Rome in every respect.
- (1:13) "The whole praetorian guard" came to know that Paul was IN CHAINS FOR CHRIST!

POWER VERSE: (1:21) "FOR TO ME, TO LIVE IS CHRIST AND TO DIE IS GAIN."

- (1:27-28) No matter what happens to him, Paul simply wants to hear that his church family in Philippi are in unity in the Spirit, united in their living out their faith, and boldly like him in adversity.
- (2:3-4) Paul lists the three great causes of disunity. He is giving the church a spiritual checklist again to hold themselves accountable against. Only you and the Holy Spirit can monitor your own motives.
- #1 Personal Ambition, #2 Personal Prestige, #3 Personal Focus
- (2:6-8) Some scholars consider this the greatest and most moving passage Paul wrote about Jesus!

POWER VERSES: (2:9-11) "THEREFORE GOD EXALTED HIM TO THE HIGHEST PLACE AND GAVE HIM THE NAME THAT IS ABOVE EVERY NAME, THAT AT THE NAME OF JESUS EVERY KNEE SHOULD BOW, IN HEAVEN AND ON EARTH AND UNDER THE EARTH, AND EVERY TONGUE ACKNOWLEDGE THAT JESUS CHRIST IS LORD, TO THE GLORY OF THE FATHER."

- (2:10-11) There is coming a day where every person who has ever lived will acknowledge the qualities of Jesus. They will proclaim in posture, with their own tongue, in unison with all of creation, "Jesus is Lord!"
- (2:10-11) The word "Lord" in the Greek is *kurios*. The word developed in its meaning throughout history. First, it meant master or owner. Then it became the official title of Roman Emperors. It then became title to heathen gods. It was the word by which the Hebrew word *Jehovah* was translated in the Greek version of the Hebrew scriptures. So, when Jesus was called *kurios*, Lord, it meant that he was Master and the Owner of all life; he was the King of kings; he was the Lord in a way that could only be held for the divine.
- "Jesus Christ is Lord" was the first creed the New Testament church ever had. It sums up everything we hold true, believe, and strive to be faithful to.

CHAPTER 2

WORKING OUT YOUR SALVATION (2:12-18)

POWER VERSES: (1:12-13) 12 THEREFORE, MY DEAR FRIENDS, AS YOU HAVE ALWAYS OBEYED—NOT ONLY IN MY PRESENCE, BUT NOW MUCH MORE IN MY ABSENCE—CONTINUE TO WORK OUT YOUR SALVATION WITH FEAR AND TREMBLING, 13 FOR IT IS GOD WHO WORKS IN YOU TO WILL AND TO ACT IN ORDER TO FULFILL HIS GOOD PURPOSE.

- (vs12) This verse is critical for the Christian believer to understand their part of fully living in the freedom of salvation.
- (vs12) The Greek word for "work out" is *katargazesthai*. It means to bring to completion, showing that although we are gifted salvation by grace from God, we have personal responsibility to continue in that work of the Spirit through our obedience in walking out and working out our faith.
- In chapter 1 Paul references that "he that began a good work in you will carry it on unto completion until the day of Christ Jesus." He uses language that is showing the beginning and final stages of an

offering being prepared for worship to gods. Verse 12 is further support of God's progressive work of salvation.

- Salvation is dependent on God. He is the one who draws us to Himself. He is the one who paid the price for our sins. He is the one who ultimately loves us and changes us to become like Him.
- But, man plays a part in his own salvation. He must co-operate with God. He must reciprocate or receive God's invitation and interaction, and be fully dependent. He must daily choose to live it out.
- We are called to live and grow in the freedom, righteousness, and character Christ has called us to.
- Salvation is more than just being saved from our sins, it's being transformed and set free from our sinful nature. There's a big difference between those two truths.
- Salvation is free and by grace, yet must be fully developed in our faithfulness as we do our part in exercising our faith and allowing Christ to continue His work of sanctification in our lives.
- Jesus many times said, "Go and sin no more." So, if a person receives forgiveness but then chooses again later to live in purposed patterns of unrepentant sin, there is the possibility to lose their salvation.
- Two of the scariest scriptures in the Bible for those who profess to be Christians but live a lifestyle that is in direct contradiction to God's Word are found in Matthew 7:21-23 and Hebrews 6:4-8.

MATTHEW 7:21-23 (NIV) ²¹ "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. ²² Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and in your name perform many miracles?' ²³ Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'"¹

HEBREWS 6:4-8 (NIV)⁴ It is impossible for those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, who have shared in the Holy Spirit, ⁵ who have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the coming age ⁶ and who have fallen away, to be brought back to repentance. To their loss they are crucifying the Son of God all over again and subjecting him to public disgrace. ⁷ Land that drinks in the rain often falling on it and that produces a crop useful to those for whom it is farmed receives the blessing of God. ⁸ But land that produces thorns and thistles is worthless and is in danger of being cursed. In the end it will be burned.²

- The day you give your life to Christ, the day you get saved, is the beginning not the end.
- Jesus tells us to be born again. There is that picture of a newborn baby that now must develop into full maturity. This is exactly what Paul is calling all New Testament believers to.
- The litmus test is easy. Are we becoming more like Christ as we serve Him? Or, are we still slaves to the same temptations and wrongful habits, and committing the same sins?
- (vs12) The Greek word for "fear" has a connotation of reverence and a deep understanding of what's at stake. So much so that "trembling" should follow for anyone that is not assured of their salvation. We should shudder at the mere thought we aren't ready at any moment to stand before Christ.
- (vs13) Paul shifts back to showing that it ultimately it is still the work of God through us that makes all this possible. We must reciprocate and offer ourselves to God continually as living sacrifices.
- God enables us both to DESIRE and to DO His will. He gives us His heart that is needed to initiate it, and He empowers or gifts us with His innate character or abilities to fulfill it. Our job is to be living sacrifices and allow God to change our desires, to anoint our giftings, and to change our thinking.

¹ [*The New International Version*](#). (2011). (Mt 7:21–23). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

² [*The New International Version*](#). (2011). (Heb 6:4–8). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

- (vs14) The Greek word for “grumbling” is *goggusmos*. It is the same word used in the Greek Old Testament for the rebellious grumbling and murmuring of the people against Moses. It is described as “the low, threatening, discontented muttering of a mob who distrust their leaders and are on the verge of an uprising.”
- (vs14) The Greek word for “arguing” is *dialogismos*. It describes useless, ill-natured, disputing or doubting. The follower of Christ needs to keep focused on living right, not being right.
- (vs15) A Christian’s life should be lived so beautifully that no one could find any fault with it. There is such a purity to it that it stands the test of all those who would try to come against it.
- The Greek word for “pure” is *akeraios*. It means to be unmixed, unadulterated. It was used for wine or milk that was not mixed with water, or has no alloy in it. Pure in every way.
- The illustration God chooses to use to describe how we should stand out in a sinful world is like stars in a dark void. Darkness is an absence of light, not the other way around. We were created to be in and with God, filled with Him. Jesus said, “You are the light of the world.” His light becomes our light, if we allow Him to do His full work.
- (vs16) The Greek word for “labor” is *kopian*. It means to labor to the utter point of exhaustion.
- *Kopian* also means to exhaust every effort in training for athletic competition. Paul is speaking again of his running the race, fighting the fight so as to get the prize from his Lord and Savior.
- What a perfect illustration to an audience who was Roman in every way and familiar with the games.
- Paul, knowing the salvation of mankind was at stake, spent his life completely for this task.
- (vs17) A libation was a drink that was poured out at the beginning and end of a meal as an offering to the gods. Paul used this as a metaphor of what his life was - being spent as for the sake of the church.
- It’s almost like Paul is saying, “I have given my life as an offering completely to God for your salvation and victory. Live your life worthy of the gospel and my sacrifice.”
- Paul’s words implied that if they fully lived up to the call and life of Christ, he gladly would die a martyr’s death.
- (vs18) And, if they had the same understanding and perspective, they would be glad, too. Eternity with Christ is worth whatever sacrifice must be given.

PAUL’S SON IN THE FAITH AND FELLOW WORKERS (2:19-30)

- (vs19) Paul’s closest relationship on earth was his relationship with a young man named Timothy. He met Timothy on his second missionary journey, and from that point on their lives were intertwined.
- (vs20) Timothy was the best expression of Paul’s heart and life he could send to the Philippian church.
- Timothy had been sent to Thessalonica, to Corinth, and to Philippi as a gift, messenger, and living letter.
- (vs21-22) At this point in Paul’s life, he had come to the conclusion that almost everyone he had put his trust in had failed him and had selfish and false motives. But, Timothy alone stood out.

“He is the patron saint of all those who are quite content with the second place,
as long as they can serve.” William Barclay

- Paul called Timothy a son in the faith and mentioned him in five of his New Testament letters.
- (vs23-24) Paul was waiting to find out what his final judgment would be before he sent Timothy. Once again, we see Paul’s hopeful desire “for to me to live is Christ” so he could return to Philippi one more time.
- (vs25-26) When the Philippian church heard of Paul’s imprisonment, they were so concerned they sent a gift to Paul to meet his needs. But, the greater gift was the gift of Epaphroditus himself. He was not

just a messenger; he was sent to be a caretaker and servant. During this time, he became violently ill, possibly with a Roman fever that was known to sweep through the city.

- (vs27-28) Epaphroditus almost died, and Paul was thankful that God healed him to spare him from additional sorrow. The sorrow of his separation from the church was enough. His love for them was greater than even his natural need of friendship, companionship, and help. What selfless sacrifice.
- (vs29-30) Paul encourages them to welcome Epaphroditus like the hero and brother he is. Paul didn't want anyone to be able to be critical or to be able to accuse Epaphroditus of abandoning Paul.
- Paul's phrase "he risked his life" carries a powerful connotation. The Greek word for "risk" is *paraboleuesthai*. It is a gambler's term for staking everything on the roll of a dice. It's a great wager with a small chance of success. Epaphroditus could've been killed on the dangerous journey, been killed by Roman guards for aligning his life with an enemy of Rome, or died from diseases that had no cure.
- In essence, Paul said, "Epaphroditus risked his life. He did what you couldn't do yourself. Be like Epaphroditus. He deserves a hero's welcome." Paul in two verses made sure that happened.
- Back in verse 25 the Greek word for "messenger" that Paul used was *apostolos*. He literally was saying, "Consider Epaphroditus an Apostle just like myself." What an unbelievable honor.