

# General Study Of Philippians – Part 2

**Philippians 2:1-4** [New King James] *“Therefore if there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, fulfil my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.”*

**Paul now addresses the need for greater unity in the Church and a stronger fellowship.**

Paul gives reasons for his appeal.

In Jesus Christ there is every reason for unity, love, mercy, and the common indwelling Holy Spirit.

**Disunity is rejection of the will of Jesus Christ for each of us.**

All who have experienced the blessing of God’s mercy and love should manifest this in their relationship with other Christians, without any reserve or discrimination, [1 **John 4:7-11**].

Every true Christian has an active presence of the Holy Spirit and so belongs one to another, showing the mercy and compassion towards others that we have received from God through the gift of the Holy Spirit, [John 14:15-18].

**Selfishness and conceit are the enemies of a unified fellowship.**

**There are two practical ways to overcome these two hostile destroyers of unity.**

- a) Consider every other person in the fellowship as better than ourselves.
- b) Seeing the strength and gifts of the Holy Spirit in others and as a result seeing our own weaknesses, failures and limitations, [1 **Corinthians 1:26-29**].

We should make it a habit of thinking and speaking of the interests of others and not just our own, **Romans 15:2-6; 1 Corinthians 10:24, 33; Galatians 6:2**].

**Philippians 2:5-8** [New King James] *“Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.”*

**The perfect example of what Paul is seeking to teach the Church is the life of Jesus Christ our Eternal Saviour and Master.**

**Jesus Christ’s life was one of humble utter obedience to God the Father, [Romans 5:19; Hebrews 5:8; Hebrews 10:5-14].**

Added to the unimaginable pain and utter shame, in Jewish thinking such a person was placed outside God’s covenant people, [Deuteronomy 21:22-23; Galatians 3:13].

**Philippians 2:9-11** [New King James] *“Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”*

This describes the resulting exaltation by the Father, the authority over all creation, [**Ephesians 1:20-22; Ephesians 4:8-10; Revelation 5:11-14**].

To express this **Isaiah 45:23** is quoted by Paul which is the earliest and most fundamental Christian creed, "*Jesus is Lord,*" [**1 Corinthians 12:3; Romans 10:9**].

"*Let this mind be in you*" is referring to the kind of life that every true Christian should live.

**Romans 12:1** [NIV] "*Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God, this is your spiritual act of worship.*"

**The true Christian life must be total surrender to the will of God.** The sacrifice referred to was the sin offering sacrifice where the sacrificial animal was totally burnt up on the altar, and **the Greek word translated "bodies" is "soma" meaning the total life, both physical, mental and spiritual.**

**Matthew 28:18-20** [New King James] "*And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, 'All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.'* Amen."

Every true Christian should use whatever gifts they have received from the Holy Spirit, [**1 Corinthians 12:1-11**] to fulfil this final command of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, [**Matthew 5:14-16**].

**Philippians 2:12** [New King James] "*Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, **work out your own salvation** with fear and trembling;*"

"**Therefore**" – whenever we read this word in God's Word we need to go back and read again what was said, for we are now being commanded to apply that teaching to our own way of life.

"**Work out your own salvation**" – this does **not** refer to our earning our freedom from eternal death by physical works, but the approach we need to have towards our Saviour and Lord.

**John 15:1-5** [New King James] "*I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit. You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; **for without Me you can do nothing.***"

**Note that without Jesus Christ we can accomplish nothing of eternal value.**

**Philippians 2:13** [New King James] "*for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.*"

God works in us to accomplish the changes in our character to become acceptable created children of God, [**Galatians 5:22-25; Romans 8:9**] as we follow the lead of the active Holy Spirit in us.

**Philippians 2:14-16** [New King James] "*Do all things without complaining and disputing, that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, holding fast the word of life, so that I may rejoice in the day of Christ that I have not run in vain or laboured in vain.*"

**Again our approach to this work of God in us is shown, all humble submission to our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.**

**Philippians 2:17-18** [New King James] *“Yes, and if I am being poured out as a drink offering on the sacrifice and service of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all. For the same reason you also be glad and rejoice with me.”*

This new way of life will not be without sacrifice and will include serving other human beings, both of which are reasons for rejoicing. This shows a completely different attitude of mind to all who are as yet **not** being called to have their opportunity to repent and accept Jesus Christ as their Saviour and Lord, [**John 6:44**].

The vast majority of human beings will have to wait until after the Second Coming of Jesus Christ as King of kings and Lord of lords, [**Revelation 19:16; Revelation 20:11-13**].

**Philippians 2:19-24** [New King James] *“But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you shortly, that I also may be encouraged when I know your state. For I have no one like-minded, who will sincerely care for your state. For all seek their own, not the things which are of Christ Jesus. But you know his proven character, that as a son with his father he served with me in the gospel. Therefore I hope to send him at once, as soon as I see how it goes with me. But I trust in the Lord that I myself shall also come shortly.”*

We have seen that Timothy was with Paul when this letter was written, [**Philippians 1:1**] and had been with Paul when the gospel message was first preached in Philippi, [**Acts 16:12; Acts 20:4-6; 1 Thessalonians 1:1; 1 Thessalonians 2:1-2**].

**Timothy is now given as an example of a true Christian.**

**Philippians 2:25-30** [New King James] *“Yet I considered it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother, fellow worker, and fellow soldier, but your messenger and the one who ministered to my need; since he was longing for you all, and was distressed because you had heard that he was sick. For indeed he was sick almost unto death; but God had mercy on him, and not only on him but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow. Therefore I sent him the more eagerly, that when you see him again you may rejoice, and I may be less sorrowful. Receive him therefore in the Lord with all gladness, and hold such men in esteem; because for the work of Christ he came close to death, not regarding his life, to supply what was lacking in your service toward me.”*

**Epaphroditus is given as an example of a faithful Christian worker,** *“brother, fellow worker, fellow soldier.”*

**Philippians 3:1-3** [New King James] *“Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. For me to write the same things to you is not tedious, but for you it is safe. Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the mutilation! For we are the circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh,”*

**It seems that Paul was about to close his letter but feels he must give warning concerning the Judaizing Christians.**

**Jews regarded Gentiles as “dogs,” but these Judaizers were more deserving of the name as they “prowl around” the Christian congregations, seeking to win Gentile converts to Judaism. They were workers, but in an evil cause, [Matthew 23:15; Galatians 1:6-10]. The rite of physical circumcision that they advocated was no longer spiritually meaningful but a mutilation of the flesh.**

There was a true circumcision, but not of the letter but of the heart and spirit, [**Romans 2:27-29**]. This involved glorying in Jesus as the Christ [anointed One – the Messiah], the Fulfiller of every institution of Judaism. There never was any real basis of confidence in the external rite alone, [**Leviticus 26:41; Deuteronomy 10:16; Deuteronomy 30:6; Jeremiah 4:4; Ezekiel 44:7**].

**Philippians 3:4-7** [New King James] *“though I also might have confidence in the flesh. If anyone else thinks he may have confidence in the flesh, I more so: circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of*

*Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; concerning the law, a Pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the church; concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ.”*

**Paul could, if he chose, argue with the Judaizers on their own ground, but were of no value now as a bond slave of Jesus Christ.**

**Philippians 3:8-11** [New King James] *“Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith; that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.”*

His own “*righteousness*” that are only result of the rituals of Judaism, true righteousness is only imputed as a result of our faith in what Jesus Christ has done for all humanity, through His life, death and resurrection, [**Romans 4:13, 16, 18-24**].

**Philippians 3:12-14** [New King James] *“Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.”*

It seems that there were in Philippi those who thought they had reached the goal of Christian perfection. Paul considered such a thing, Paul was continually straining forward to what lay ahead for him in the work that Jesus Christ had given him to do, and seek to become more like Jesus Christ in his way of life.

**“Upward call”** – Paul could be referring to the future of the “*firstfruits*” of God’s Kingdom, [**1 Thessalonians 4:13-18**] or the direction of our thoughts, [**Colossians 3:1-3**] on Jesus Christ at present on the right hand of God the Father.

**Philippians 3:15-17** [New King James] *“Therefore let us, as many as are mature, have this mind; and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal even this to you. Nevertheless, to the degree that we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us be of the same mind. Brethren, join in following my example, and note those who so walk, as you have us for a pattern.”*

**Paul was relying on God to reveal to those who considered themselves as perfectly mature Christians, as how they were mistaken in their thinking or deficient in their way of life.**

Paul can only say of himself that he has tried to provide a pattern of Christian living and desires to see that way of life accepted by those who know him.

We must **not** consider Paul’s words as presumptuous, for there was **no written New Testament at that time to be a guide for Christian conduct.**

**Paul also knew that ultimately Christian standards of behaviour must be embodied in life rather than a code, so it was as much his duty to live a pure Christian life for others to follow as it was for him to preach a pure gospel message for others to believe, [1 Corinthians 4:16; 1 Corinthians 11:1; 1 Thessalonians 1:6; 1 Thessalonians 2:10; 2 Thessalonians 3:7, 9].**

**Philippians 3:18-21** [New King James] *“For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who set their mind on earthly things. For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.”*

**“Enemies of the cross”** – not opposing its doctrinal significance but rejecting it as the central principle of a Christian’s living, [see verse 10].

Instead of finding in the cross both salvation and a new way of life, [Romans 6:1-6] they were on the path to destruction and had chosen a life of self-indulgence and took pride in things that were in fact shameful, [Romans 6:19-21] their minds set on earthly things and so they inevitably lived for earthly things.

**The true Christian**, in contrast, [verse 20] knows that their future life and citizenship are reserved in heaven with Jesus Christ, [Ephesians 1:3; Ephesians 2:6; Colossians 3:1-4] and await longingly for His Second Coming to the earth to rule as King of kings and Lord of lords, [Revelation 17:14] when they will join Jesus Christ in His rulership, [Revelation 20:4-6].

**At this long-awaited time when they will have transformed bodies that will be more fitting to work alongside the resurrected Jesus Christ**, [1 Corinthians 15:35-50; 2 Corinthians 5:1-4; 1 John 3:2] and that by the power of the Holy Spirit working actively in us with a body with no physical limitations and hindrances.

**Philippians 4:1-3** [New King James] *“Therefore, my beloved and longed-for brethren, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, beloved. I implore Euodia and I implore Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord. And I urge you also, true companion, help these women who laboured with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the Book of Life.”*

Paul’s final words include exhortations, personal messages and acknowledgement of the Philippians’ gifts. His grateful remembrance of the gifts from Philippi leads him to speak of spiritual blessings that come from the Eternal Creator God.

**Philippians 4:4-7** [New King James] *“Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice! Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord is at hand. Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”*

**These spiritual blessings should make us full of thankfulness to the Eternal God that will bring us peace of mind and guard our hearts and minds from temptations to sin.**

**Prayer and praise will always eradicate fear and anxiety.**

**Philippians 4:8-9** [New King James] *“Finally, brethren, whatever things are **true**, whatever things are **noble**, whatever things are **just**, whatever things are **pure**, whatever things are **lovely**, whatever things are **of good report**, if there is any **virtue** and if there is anything **praiseworthy**, meditate on these things. The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you.”*

Paul uses eight words to characterise the things that should fill the Christian’s thoughts, true and what is worthy and noble, what is just and right, pure and Holy, lovely and beautiful, things of good report, pleasant to hear about, things that possess moral excellence and praiseworthy, these are what a true Christian should meditate on, alongside all that we learn from God’s Word, the Christian Bible, that the peace of God may be ours, [John 14:27].

**Philippians 4:10-14** [New King James] *“But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now at last your care for me has flourished again; though you surely did care, but you lacked opportunity. Not that I speak in regard to need, for **I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content: I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound.** Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. Nevertheless you have done well that you shared in my distress.”*

**Paul once again thanks the Philippians for the care and love, then introduces to them what he had learnt in his life of a bond slave of Jesus Christ; contentment, something he had to learn by personal experience knowing he can do all that is demanded of him by God through the active indwelling of the Holy Spirit in his life, the Spirit of Jesus Christ, [Romans 8:9].**

The support that the Philippians had given Paul could be the way the Holy Spirit provided what was needed, [verse 14] their being in partnership with the Holy Spirit working in all concerned.

**Philippians 4:15-20** [New King James] *“Now you Philippians know also that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church shared with me concerning giving and receiving but you only. For even in Thessalonica you sent aid once and again for my necessities. Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that abounds to your account. Indeed I have all and abound. I am full, having received from Epaphroditus the things sent from you, a sweet-smelling aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well pleasing to God. And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus. Now to our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen.”*

**The loving care the Philippians had shown will be reflected back to them. This is expanded in many scriptures.**

**Luke 6:38** [New King James] *“Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you.”*

This is a law set in motion by God who is the greatest giver of all, [**Proverbs 19:17; 2 Corinthians 9:7; Acts 20:35; John 3:16-17**].

Grace, the undeserved favour from God through Jesus Christ, is the greatest gift that any human being can receive, [**Romans 5:15-17, 21**] and we are to reflect this grace in our lives, [**2 Peter 3:18**].

**Philippians 4:21-23** [New King James] *“Greet every saint in Christ Jesus. The brethren who are with me greet you. All the saints greet you, but especially those who are of Caesar’s household. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.”*

The letter closes with mutual good wishes in Jesus Christ. It is significant that there were Christians in Caesar’s household, especially if this was the Imperial Palace in Rome. The expression “household” does **not** mean members of Caesar’s family but persons employed in the domestic and administrative establishment of the emperor.

**In many ways the Philippian church was a model congregation. It was made up of many different kinds of people who were learning to work together.**

Paul recognised that problems could arise so in his “thank you” letter prepared all Christians for similar difficulties in their fellowships.

Though a prisoner in Rome, Paul had the true secret joy and peace of mind, imitating Christ and serving other human beings.

**By focusing our minds on Jesus Christ we learn unity, humility, joy and peace. We will also be motivated to live for Him, as a result of the love and grace we have received from Jesus Christ.**

“Amen” is a word direct from the Hebrew meaning “Jehovah is faithful.”

In **Isaiah 65:16** it is literally rendered “God of the Amen.”

If God is faithful [amen] then all His testimony and precepts are sure, [**Psalms 19:7; Psalms 111:7**] as are all His warnings, [**Hosea 5:9**].

In **Revelation 3:14** amen is the title given to Jesus Christ.