

PHILIPPIANS

Chapter 1

Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, To all the saints in Christ Jesus at Philippi, together with the overseers and deacons: ² Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

1:1–2 As in all his letters, Paul follows the conventional letter format of his day, with its three elements: (1) identification of the sender, (2) identification of the recipients, (3) greeting. (CSB)

1:1 PAUL – See Galatians (CSB)

Timothy. See Introduction to 1 Timothy: Recipient. Timothy is identified with the contents of the letter as Paul's associate, but not as co-author. (CSB)

Paul calls himself a servant and names Timothy as a fellow-servant, the word which he uses retaining, to some degree, the meaning of bond-servant. He considers himself and his young helper as the property of the heavenly Master, whose one aim must be to carry out the Lord's will and work. (Kretzmann)

The Christians of the city owed much to him, and he was about to visit them again. Timothy had his teacher's, his spiritual father's, mind and character, and his memory was a pleasant one among the Philippians, who had learned to love him. (Kretzmann)

servants. See Ro 1:1; Tit 1:1; Phm 1. In Paul's case, this designation brings out an essential aspect of the more usual identification of himself as "apostle." (CSB)

Or, "slaves." Used in the NT in a positive and negative sense. According to our fallen human nature, we are described as "slaves" of sin; i.e., we have denied God in order to join the enemy. As such traitors, we have no rights, nor do we possess the ability to free ourselves (Jn 8:34; Rm 6:20). As regenerate believers with souls inspired by the Holy Spirit, we are servants in the sense of being duty bound to carry out the will of our Master (Mt 10:24–25; 1Pt 2:16). (TLSB)

saints. A designation, not of individual moral purity, but of spiritual union with Christ, as the following "in Christ Jesus" shows (see Ro 1:7; 1Co 1:2 and notes). (CSB)

To all the saints in Christ Jesus that were in Philippi Paul addressed his letter. He used the word which denotes their separation from the world and their consecration to God. The Christians belong to God, are saints, made saints in Christ Jesus, inasmuch as they are sanctified in Christ and are in Holy

Communion with Christ. Through Christ they are united with God, in life and covenant. (Kretzmann)

This is a regular NT designation for Christians, a tribute not to their lofty level of sanctification but to Christ Jesus who gives them his righteousness. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 3, Part 4)

Philippi. See Introduction: Recipients. (CSB)

The letter was addressed to the congregation at Philippi. All the Philippian Christians were, in the eyes of Paul, saints. He disregards the fact that there are also hypocrites in the external assembly. For the sake of charity he considers them all Christians, or saints. (Kretzmann)

overseers and deacons.† The only place in Paul's writings where church officers as a group are singled out as recipients of a letter. Probably they had been instrumental in sending the financial gift to Paul. (CSB)

The overseer, bishop, is a term Paul sometimes interchanges with elder and pastor. Deacons tended to the more common chores and duties of the congregation. Paul's singling out of these church leaders is unique to this letter, quite possibly a way to recognize their part in gathering the gift they had sent to Paul. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 3, Part 4)

He also mentions expressly the bishops and deacons of the congregation, not as a hierarchy separate from the congregation, but as a part of the congregation. As early as the middle of the first century, therefore, the Christians recognized special ministers of the Word. (Kretzmann)

overseers. See note on 1Ti 3:1. (CSB)

The bishops were those members of the presbytery that were engaged in the ministry of the Word, in the capacity of preachers. (Kretzmann)

deacons. See note on 1Ti 3:8. (CSB)

The deacons were also members of the presbytery of the congregation, but were more properly engaged in the external business of the congregation, in the care of the poor, etc. The congregation at Philippi had good bishops and deacons, whom Paul mentions with loving respect. (Kretzmann)

1:2 The opening greeting is not merely a matter of polite custom but is given a distinctively Christian tone and content. (CSB)

GRACE AND PEACE – Paul Christianizes the salutation commonly used at that time to begin letter. Grace always denotes the undeserved goodness of

God. Peace denotes the condition of those who are reconciled to God. The order of the two is significant, especially in this letter and in the verse following. First there must be grace; then peace follows.

His salutation is that of most of his letters: Grace to you and peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. The Christians have received, and Paul wishes that they may always possess, grace in and through Christ, given by the Father, in the new birth and life, the chief blessing of all times. Father and Son are here coordinated as in many other passages. Christ is the Mediator that gained salvation by His vicarious sacrifice, thus establishing the right relation between God and man, with the gift of grace and peace, Rom. 5, 1. (Kretzmann)

1:1–2 Paul introduces his Letter to the Christians in Philippi with descriptions of who they are and what that will mean in their lives. As a servant of Christ Jesus, Paul takes great pains to be faithful to the ministry entrusted to him. Paul means to encourage every reader by describing us as saints and by announcing that the words of the Letter to follow, which are inspired by the Holy Spirit, will bring grace and peace to us. • Thank You, God, for making us Your saints and for providing Your Word of grace and peace to sustain us. Amen. (TLSB)

Thanksgiving and Prayer

³ I thank my God every time I remember you. ⁴ In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy ⁵ because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, ⁶ being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus. ⁷ It is right for me to feel this way about all of you, since I have you in my heart; for whether I am in chains or defending and confirming the gospel, all of you share in God’s grace with me. ⁸ God can testify how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus. ⁹ And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, ¹⁰ so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ, ¹¹ filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ—to the glory and praise of God.

1:3–4 *I thank my God ... prayers for ... you ... with joy.* Prayers of joyful thanksgiving for his readers’ response to the gospel are a hallmark of the opening sentences of Paul’s letters (see Ro 1:8; 1Co 1:4; Col 1:3; 1Th 1:2; 2Th 1:3; 2Ti 1:3; Phm 4). (CSB)

The Apostle begins with thanksgiving and praise, and that is the keynote for the whole epistle. What he thanks God for is given later in verse 5. Paul here would indicate the attitude of the Philipians, not to himself, but to God. (Stoeckhardt)

The are three modifiers, “always” (pantote), “in all my remembrance of ,” and “for you all” (huper humoon). The Apostle would emphasize the “all,” which was

already mentioned in the first verse. The Apostle finds he has reason to rejoice about all the Christians at Philippi, since all are in the faith. All Christians are in need to be remembered in the supplication and thanksgiving of their pastor. These Christians at Philippi even came in for special consideration, as they were the first fruits of the Gospel ministry in Europe. Therefore the Apostle prays and gives thanks with joy. (Stoeckhardt)

1:3 I THANK MY GOD – The faith and support of the Philippians encourage Paul. (TLSB)

Paul sees the supreme Giver behind their gifts and he gives thanks accordingly. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 3, Part 4)

EVERY TIME I REMEMBER YOU – Like a good Christian leader Paul keeps the people to whom he ministers always in mind. In the case of the Philippians, these memories are very good. This was a good congregation.

Paul had been mistreated in Philippi, yet he remembered the congregation with joy. (LifeLight)

Whenever he thought about the Philippians and his eventful ministry among them, the apostle must have remembered the special way in which the Lord had called him to bring the gospel to that area of the world: the night vision and the urgent call, “Come over into Macedonia and help us.” He must have remembered the first Christian worship service on the European continent, his meeting with a little group of Jewish women who met along the riverbank on the Sabbath day. He must have remembered Lydia, one of that original group of women, who had enthusiastically accepted the gospel, then immediately opened her home as a temporary lodging place for the missionaries and a headquarter for the infant church. (PBC)

Whenever he remembered the Philippians, Paul must have remembered his imprisonment in Philippi, the miraculous midnight deliverance the Lord had granted to Silas and to him and the subsequent conversion of the jailer and his family. (PBC)

1:4 IN ALL MY PRAYERS FOR YOU – Notice thanksgiving is a natural part of all our prayers. Paul thanks God even as he makes requests before His throne. (LifeLight)

WITH JOY – The Philippians have given him joy by joining together with him in the Gospel. (TLSB)

Kara recurs five times in this epistle, and forms of the verb Kairo “rejoice,” occur 11 times. The entire letter radiates with joy and happiness, despite Paul’s adverse circumstances. Paul’s is not always an emotional joy, but one that

summons the varied situations and conditions of life on earth. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 3, Part 4)

1:5 *your partnership in the gospel.* The basis of Paul's prayerful thanksgiving is not only their reception of the gospel but also their active support of his ministry (see 4:15). (CSB)

koinonia also used as communion or fellowship. This is more than good times and fun. It relates to the communion of saints that we confess in the Creed – a specific, active union “in the Gospel,” the result of the abiding presence of God's Spirit within and among us.

koinonia – A partnership, that involves participation. They are not just spectators from a distance but are full partners.

Theologically, God's indicative always precedes His imperative: God has done this for you, therefore respond in this manner. The action called for here in this verse is predicated upon the content in verses 6-11. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 2, Part 2)

The Philippians had contributed financial support. But Paul doesn't limit their partnership to this one act. They have given him gifts when Paul was no farther away than Thessalonica (Phil 4:16). And the Philippians had been a comfort to Paul from the very beginning. (LifeLight)

from the first day. When Paul first came to Philippi (see Ac 16:12). (CSB)

From the very day (Acts 20:18) that Paul shared the Gospel with the Philippians, they joined together with him by believing the Gospel and seeking to extend that Gospel to others. (TLSB)

now. † Toward the close (see 2:24) of Paul's first Roman imprisonment (see Ac 28:16–31) or possibly of an imprisonment at Ephesus. (CSB)

1:6-8 This section completes the thought begun in verse 3. The participial clause, “being confident” (pepoithoos), is added to the main sentence, “I thank my God” (eucharistoo). In other words, Paul can thank God most heartily because he has confidence in the endurance through the grace and power of God. (Stoeckhardt)

1:6 BEING CONFIDENT – The Apostle is absolutely sure of this that God will bring the good work of faith begun in the Philippians to full completion. To him those Christians are the elect of God who cannot fail. He regards every congregation as an assembly of God's elect. (Stoeckhardt)

What this then means is made clear by the sentence introduced by “that” (hoti). The thought then runs like this: “You have remained in the faith until now, and I have this firm confidence that you will remain in the faith until the end. (Stoeckhardt)

The apostle certainly is not advocating overconfidence here. Nor is he implying that once a person has been brought to faith he cannot lose the blessings God has given. In the very next chapter he urges believers to use diligently the spiritual weapons and powers the Lord has given them to fight against sin and temptation and to grow in faith. (PBC)

work in you. Paul is confident, not only of what God has done “for” the readers in forgiving their sins, but also of what he has done “in” them (see v. 11). “Work” refers to God’s activity in saving them. (CSB)

The Apostle would make it a special point here to assert that it is God alone who works faith and preserves it. (Stoeckhardt)

TO COMPLETION UNTIL THE DAY OF CHRIST JESUS – When Jesus had completed His work of redemption, He said on the cross, “It is finished.” Here Paul uses a related word to assure Christians that God will also complete the work of redemption in our lives. (TLSB)

day of Christ Jesus. His return, when their salvation will be brought to completion (see 1:10; 2:16; 1Co 1:8; 5:5; 2Co 1:14). It is God who initiates salvation, who continues it and who will one day bring it to its consummation.

When Christ will return to judge the living and the dead (Mt 26:64). (TLSB)

1:7 SINCE I HAVE YOU MY HEART – Proclaiming the Gospel can bring harsh treatment as was the case with Paul. But the Gospel cannot be limited by human restrictions. It sets us free even if we are locked up. Being imprisoned doesn’t lessen Paul zeal to share God’s grace. It just takes a different path.

The heart is the place of affection and deep thought. Paul has the Philippian Christians continually in mind with deep affection. (TLSB)

DEFENDING AND CONFIRMING THE GOSPEL – This is not a call to arms but a response to those who speak against the Gospel (Acts 9:22). The Gospel does not undermine the OT but fulfills it (Mt. 5:17). Jesus is the Christ to whom all the promises and prophets of the OT looked forward. Jesus’ life, works, and words demonstrated this clearly. The NT relates that the Gospel is confirmed as it continually fulfills what the prophets predicted (e.g., Acts 2; 2 Peter 1:19). (TLSB)

The Apostle now points to his present condition, his imprisonment, and what it really means. By enduring his imprisonment manfully, say he, he defends and confirms the Gospel. As he is doing that, he is thinking of the Philippians and bears them in his heart. (Stoeckhardt)

share in God's grace. Not even imprisonment and persecution can change such sharing. Even in Paul's imprisonment they willingly identified themselves with Paul by sending Epaphroditus and their financial gifts. They had become one with Paul in his persecution. (CSB)

The ESV has "partakers." The Philippians joined Paul in gratefully receiving God's grace through His Word and promises. (TLSB)

1:8 GOD CAN TESTIFY – ESV has "witness." Greek is *martyreo*, "to testify," "bear witness." The English "martyr" is one who dies for his or her testimony. Paul appeals to God as a witness of how strong his affections are toward the Philippians. One's witness to oneself was regarded with suspicion (John 8:13). Other witnesses were required to verify the truth. Even Jesus deferred to the witness of the Father regarding the truth of who He was (John 8:18). (TLSB)

From Revelation Bible study – PP lesson 1:

- Testimony meant eyewitness to something that could stand up in court.
- Witness would be willing to back it up with his name, wealth and life.
- Later, base for our word martyr.
- It is giving a faithful witness by word and daily living including dying as a Christian.

affection of Christ Jesus. The deep yearning and intense, compassionate love exhibited by Jesus himself and now fostered in Paul by his union with Christ. This affection reaches out to all impartially and without exception. (CSB)

This literally means "desire...with the inward part"; the location within a person where the deepest feelings reside. Paul cares about the same things in the same way as Christ Jesus. (TLSB)

In Latin "viscera." It is not to be understood physically but metaphorically. Note the remarkable union among Christ, Paul and the Philippians. Paul says that he yearns for all of them. Normally we yearn for some more than for others. (Exegetical Notes – Buls)

The KJV has "...I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ. He yearns to see them all. This claim he yet strengthens by an oath, "God is my witness," (*martus gar mou ho theos*). He appeals to God that he is saying the truth. "In the heart of Jesus Christ" (*en splanchnois Christou Jesou*) he yearns for them. The heart of Jesus Christ is beating in him. Christ dwells in him. It is not mere human affection that fills him toward them. He loves them with the love of Christ,

in the mystic union with Christ. It is the affection which Christ cherishes for His own, this affection fills and animates the Apostle. (Stoeckhardt)

Christ yearns with a burning desire for His believers. This love of Christ is as it were infused into the hearts of all believers by the Holy Spirit, so that they in turn are enflamed with heavenly love towards Christ and all His brethren. That describes the intimate attitude of the Apostle towards the Philippians. (Stoeckhardt)

1:9-11 “These prayers and passages about our ignorance and inability have been written for us...We should first thank God from the heart that by His Son He has delivered us from the darkness of ignorance and the captivity of sin and death” (FC SD II 15). Paul prays for the cause of the salvation (knowledge, discernment, through Jesus Christ) and the effect of salvation (love abounding, approving what is excellent, blameless at Judgment Day). Every other Christian doctrine can be placed under one these two headings. (TLSB)

1:9 THIS IS MY PRAYER – Often the best way to influence someone is to pray for them. Paul encouraged the Philippians by describing what he begs God for on their behalf. While they have abounded in grace, Paul knows they will need to love each other more and more in the difficult times ahead. Christian love should not be a blind love, but a love abounds in the knowledge of God and what God is doing in the lives of others. (LifeLight)

abound more and more. Real love requires growth and maturation (see 1Th 3:12; 4:10; 2Th 1:3). (CSB)

The Philippians are in a good way, but they are still in need of growth. (Stoeckhardt)

Our actions that flow out of love are based on our attitude. Our attitudes are influenced by what we have learned or are learning. Therefore, Paul’s phrase is right on. We need to keep growing in God’ Word so that our actions evermore reflect God’s love for us.

in knowledge. The way love grows (cf. Col 1:9). (CSB)

depth of insight. Practical discernment and sensitivity. Christian love is not mere sentiment; it is rooted in knowledge and understanding. (CSB)

Fallen human nature continually produces counterfeit notions of love. Paul prays that our love may abound, not just more and more (quantity) but with knowledge and discernment (quality). Love does not mean indulging our appetites, nor is it empty sentiment. We depend on God’s revelation in the Word to know, in fact, what love is. (TLSB)

1:10 *discern what is best.* Christians are to approve (and practice) what is morally and ethically superior. (CSB)

ESV has “approve what is excellent.” Knowledge and discernment (v. 9) allow us to test and recognize the things that have value because they endure, such as truth and mercy. (TLSB)

Canadian police training to detect counterfeit money is not to study the various bogus bills floating around but to study their currency so thoroughly that when counterfeit bill shows up they will recognize it instantly.

Literally: “That you may test the things that differ,” i.e., to distinguish between good and evil, lawful and unlawful, cf Rom 2:18. In this a Christian shows his true character that he tests and proves everything with the question: Will my God approve of this before going into it. To this end he uses his Christian knowledge and moral sense. Only in the degree that Christians increase in their Christian knowledge and moral sense does love increase and do it duty. For that reason the Apostle prays that their love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and all judgment. Christians can become so expert in this judgment, that they can, as by instinct, discern what is evil and displeases God. As they then shun and avoid these things, they come to lead a sincere life that is without offense, and so they beware of the pitfalls of sin. (Stoeckhardt)

Discernment will help them avoid the traps Satan lays to trick and destroy the people of God. (LifeLight)

pure and blameless. The goal of Christians in this life is to be without any mixture of evil and not open to censure because of moral or spiritual failure. (CSB)

The Gospel is the most excellent of all things because it declares God’s grace in Christ and produces faith in that grace. You will be found pure and blameless because it is God’s own work (1 John 3:9). (TLSB)

until the day of Christ. Then the goal will be perfectly realized (see note on v. 6), and then Christians must give an account (see 2Co 5:10). (CSB)

1:11 *filled with the fruit of righteousness.* What is expected of all Christians (cf. Mt 5:20–48; Heb 12:11; Jas 3:18; see also Am 6:12; Gal 5:22). (CSB)

Thoughts, words, and deed (in fact, the whole life) that are produced in a person who is righteous. The righteousness that God declares to people produces a regenerate soul that actually things, speaks, and does what is right. (TLSB)

through Jesus Christ. Produced by Christ (in union with him) through the work of the Holy Spirit (cf. Jn 15:5; Eph 2:10). (CSB)

Jesus Christ is the measure of righteousness. By becoming a man, He actually lived out that righteousness – He lived “rightly” or perfectly. His life is proved as a covering for us by grace and the forgiveness of sins. His life is actually lived out through us as His Spirit regenerates and moves us to follow His example. (TLSB)

The Apostle makes no mention of the current faults of Christians which occur through the weakness of their flesh and which are forgiven them daily and richly through Christ. So then God also looks upon a Christian as perfectly clean, since He Himself continually forgives his sins, which are due to his frailty. These daily falterings do not prevent his progress in Christian knowledge, sanctification, and good works. But all this he owes to Christ. That the Apostle asks all this for the Philippians shows how dear these Christians are to him. (Stoeckhardt)

to the glory and praise of God. The ultimate goal of all that God does in believers (see Eph 1:6, 12, 14). (CSB)

1:3–11 Paul continues the introduction of his Letter to the Philippians by expressing his prayer, appreciation, and yearning for these fellow believers. We who claim the Christian faith may see, by contrast, how far our thoughts, passions, and labors miss the focus of the Christian life. Yet, God still welcomes our prayer. Confidence that God will complete the good work He has begun in us is still justified. Christ’s righteousness is abundantly available to us in His Word. • Dear Lord Jesus, fill our lives with the fruit of Your righteousness that we might abound in love, approve what is excellent, and be pure and blameless on the day of Your return. Amen. (TLSB)

Paul’s Chains Advance the Gospel

¹² Now I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel. ¹³ As a result, it has become clear throughout the whole palace guard and to everyone else that I am in chains for Christ. ¹⁴ Because of my chains, most of the brothers in the Lord have been encouraged to speak the word of God more courageously and fearlessly. ¹⁵ It is true that some preach Christ out of envy and rivalry, but others out of goodwill. ¹⁶ The latter do so in love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel. ¹⁷ The former preach Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing that they can stir up trouble for me while I am in chains. ¹⁸ But what does it matter? The important thing is that in every way, whether from false motives or true, Christ is preached. And because of this I rejoice. Yes, and I will continue to rejoice, ¹⁹ for I know that through your prayers and the help given by the Spirit of Jesus Christ, what has happened to me will turn out for my deliverance. ²⁰ I eagerly expect and hope that I will in no way be ashamed, but will have sufficient courage so that now as always Christ will 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 If I am to go on

living in the body, this will mean fruitful labor for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know! ²³ I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far; ²⁴ but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body. ²⁵ Convinced of this, I know that I will remain, and I will continue with all of you for your progress and joy in the faith, ²⁶ so that through my being with you again your joy in Christ Jesus will overflow on account of me. ²⁷ Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, I will know that you stand firm in one spirit, contending as one man for the faith of the gospel ²⁸ without being frightened in any way by those who oppose you. This is a sign to them that they will be destroyed, but that you will be saved—and that by God. ²⁹ For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for him, ³⁰ since you are going through the same struggle you saw I had, and now hear that I still have.

1:12 NOW I WANT YOU TO KNOW – One of the primary reasons that Paul wrote his epistle to the Philippians was to tell them how things were going for him in Rome. The Philippians were concerned about the apostle. They wondered what would happen to him, and they were concerned about the effect his imprisonment would have on the overall cause of the gospel. Would people continue to respond positively to a message whose best known and more eloquent advocate was now a prisoner of the state? (PBC)

Paul's first words about his situation are intended to lay the Philippians' fears and worries to rest. With enthusiastic joy he reports that the Lord has taken all the negative things that happened to him in connection with his imprisonment and trial and used them to advance the cause of the gospel. Paul's imprisonment and trial have become a tool in God's hands to remove prejudices and obstacles and to provide a positive atmosphere for a clear and effective proclamation of the gospel in the capital city of the world. In his own life the apostle is now experiencing the truth of the divine promise that has earlier given the Roman believers through him: "We know that in all things God's works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose." That promise remains true for believers of every age, from the greatest apostle to the humblest Christian. (PBC)

BROTHERS – Spiritual responsibility began with the adult men in the churches (Ac 2:5; Eph 6:4). As God's children, they were "brothers." (TLSB)

what has happened to me. Paul's detainment in prison. (CSB)

advance the gospel. Instead of hindering the gospel, Paul's imprisonment had served to make it known. (CSB)

Without a single word of complaint about himself, he tells them that his bonds have turned out rather for the advance of the Gospel. This is usually understood to mean that Paul wishes to impress upon his readers that his imprisonment has always furthered the cause of the Gospel. But that is not stated here. Paul would say one might have well expected that his imprisonment should have blocked or impeded the course of the Gospel, but under the God it turned out much rather for the advancement. (Stoeckhardt)

Paul's situation brought him into contact with many people who otherwise might not have known anything about him. Paul had opportunities to proclaim the Gospel before civil and religious leaders in the hearing of soldiers and countless others. As a result, people talked about him and the Gospel of Jesus Christ. (TLSB)

1:13 *clear ... chains for Christ.* It has become apparent to all who know of Paul's situation that he is imprisoned, not because he is guilty of some crime, but on account of his stand for the gospel. (CSB)

whole palace guard. A contingent of soldiers, numbering several thousand, many of whom would have had personal contact with Paul or would have been assigned individually to guard him during the course of his imprisonment (see Ac 28:16, 30). (CSB)

A special class of soldier, assigned to specific tasks for the emperor, senators, or other officials of the government. (TLSB)

The mention of the palace guard (its official title was the Praetorian guard) would be of particular interest to the Philippian veterans. This well-known military company was a detachment of elite imperial troops, as the emperor's bodyguard. (PBC)

Paul doesn't fill in all the details for us here, but apparently members of the guard were also assigned on a rotation basis to guard prisoners like the apostle, who had come to Rome to appeal their cases to Caesar. As Paul awaited his trial, then received his first hearing, he became acquainted with many of the soldiers of the palace guard. These soldiers gradually began to realize that Paul was no ordinary prisoner, and certainly no criminal. As they observed the apostle and heard him speak to his friends, his secretary, his judges and to them, even these hardened soldiers could not help but become interested in Paul's case and the cause for which he stood. It became clear to them that Paul was a prisoner solely for his connection with Jesus Christ, not because he had committed any crime. (PBC)

The guard members spoke about Paul and his case to one another, to their families and to others in Rome. As a result, the gospel of Christ and the remarkable ambassador who was willing to suffer imprisonment for the sake of

the gospel became “front page,” the talk of all Rome. The mistrust and hostility that many in Rome had harbored toward this “new” religion called Christianity were broken down, as the real issue in Paul’s case became clear, and the gospel message itself became more generally known. Paul’s eloquent defense and confirmation of the gospel at his public hearing likewise served to generate favorable publicity for the gospel throughout the imperial city. (PBC)

all the rest. Anyone else who served the authorities (e.g., slaves). (TLSB)

chains. Either actual chains or a broader reference to his sufferings and imprisonment (see v. 14). (CSB)

Authorities arrested Paul because he bore witness to the truth about Jesus Christ, which liberated people. Roman civil rulers and Jewish religious rulers were afraid they would lose control and advantage over their subjects. (TLSB)

We must assume that Paul came to trial in the year 64, a trial which was attended by many citizens of Rome and many soldiers of the palace guard. On this occasion he naturally stood up for the defense and confirmation of the Gospel. At that time it became known that the Apostle was held prisoner only on account of the Gospel of Christ which he preached, and that he was truly an innocent man. (Stoekhardt)

1:14 *brothers.* Public ministers, not just any member of the Roman churches. (TLSB)

encouraged to speak. The unexpected result of Paul’s imprisonment is that others, encouraged by his example, are forcefully proclaiming the gospel. (CSB)

Likely refers to a person of authority and responsibility addressing others in public (preaching). (TLSB)

The believers who were already in Rome before Paul arrived in the city, found new courage to proclaim and confess the gospel. Years earlier a congregation had been founded at Rome. It consisted mostly of Gentile converts. After Paul arrived in the city, large numbers of Jews, including several entire synagogues, were also converted to Christianity. The reaction to Paul’s case had produced a positive attitude toward Christianity in Rome, and the Lord was blessing the apostle’s testimony of Christ in a marvelous manner. This gave all the believers in Rome fresh courage to identify themselves publicly as Christians and to share the good news of the gospel with others. (PBC)

Through this trial of Paul it came about that many brethren in the Lord, Christians at Rome, who heretofore had hesitated to show their color, gained confidence and courage to stand up for the Gospel. At first the imprisonment of Paul had frightened them, since there could have been a possibility that this preacher of the Gospel had been taken into custody for a crime he had committed. But now

through the trial it became evident that there was no moral charge whatsoever against the Apostle and that only for his preaching of Christ he had been accused and made a prisoner, the Christian brothers at Rome became bold to follow the Apostle's noble example in spreading the Gospel of Christ. (Stoeckhardt)

Those who were close to Paul during his imprisonment had several advantages: They could see that Paul's faith was not discouraged, but was bold and lively (e.g, John and Peter in Acts 4:23-32). They could see how God makes things work for good, as Paul goes on to describe. They would have heard more of the Word directly from Paul. (TLSB)

1:15 *out of envy and rivalry ... out of goodwill.* The gospel preaching stimulated by Paul's imprisonment stems from either one of two sharply opposed motives. (CSB)

Both Jews and Gentiles might talk with others about the prisoner Paul and why he was a prisoner. Some would mock Paul (Ac 17:32-34). Others would pass on the Good News that Paul confessed. That is what the Good News inspires a person to do. (TLSB)

1:16 *The latter do so in love.* Those who preach with a right motive recognize the true reason for Paul's imprisonment, already expressed earlier in v. 13, and are encouraged to take the same bold stand that he has taken. (CSB)

1:17 *The former preach Christ out of selfish ambition.* Those who preach with wrong, insincere motives do so out of a sense of competition with Paul and so think they are making his imprisonment more difficult to bear. (CSB)

not sincerely. Not from pure motives. (CSB)

thinking to afflict me. They either presented the Gospel as nonsense, or they presented the Gospel to gather a following for themselves. (TLSB)

1:18 *What then?* A rhetorical question introduces Paul's conclusion: God will make the proclamation effective. Cyprian: "Paul ... was not speaking of heretics.... He was speaking of brethren, whether as walking disorderly and against the discipline of the Church, or as keeping the truth of the Gospel with the fear of God" (ANF 5:382). (TLSB)

whether from false motives or true, Christ is preached. These preachers are not to be viewed as being heretical. Their message is true, even though their motives are not pure. The gospel has its objectivity and validity apart from those who proclaim it; the message is more than the medium. (CSB)

I rejoice ... will continue to rejoice. An example of the kind of vigorous Christian experience Paul expressed. He was under arrest, and fellow Christians

sought, by their preaching, to add to his difficulties; yet he kept on rejoicing. (CSB)

Paul was able to keep everything in perspective. He did not excuse those who were preaching from false motives and trying to win applause at his expense, but he did not pity himself, either. Paul realized that the truly important thing was that the gospel was being preached. Someday they would have to answer to God about their false motives, but the Lord was using even those selfish believers, despite their motives to proclaim Christ. Because Christ was being proclaimed and honored, Paul rejoiced. (PBC)

1:12–18 Paul demonstrates that his imprisonment does not defeat the Gospel, as some had feared. God’s wisdom and love so far surpass our abilities that He can and does still bring the truth of the Gospel to light despite all opposition, just as Jesus fulfilled all righteousness and conquered death by His resurrection. • Almighty and merciful God, forgive our contrary human nature, and give us grace in every situation to hear and pass on the truth and mercy revealed in Your Word. Amen. (TLSB)

1:19 *Spirit of Jesus Christ.* The Holy Spirit is not only the Spirit of God the Father (Ro 8:9, 14; 1Co 2:10–11, 14) but also the Spirit of Christ, the second person of the Trinity (Ac 16:7; Ro 8:9; Gal 4:6). He is sent by the Father (Jn 14:16–17, 26; Gal 4:6) and by the Son (Jn 15:26; 16:7). (CSB)

The Holy Spirit, the Third Person of the Trinity, by whom Jesus was conceived in the Virgin Mary, and who came upon Him visibly in His Baptism. Jesus promised the Spirit to His apostles (Jn 14; 16), breathed the Spirit on them to give them authority (Jn 20:21–23), and sent the Spirit to confirm their faith and mission all through the Book of Acts. (TLSB)

deliverance.† Either Paul’s release from prison (see v. 25; 2:24) or, in view of the immediately following verses, the deliverance brought to the believer by death (cf. Ro 8:28). Verse 25 and 2:24, however, seem to point to the former interpretation. (CSB)

Paul confessed that God’s will and presence means that he will be saved. He did not yet know if “salvation” (deliverance) would mean release from prison or from life through martyrdom (delivered eternally). (TLSB)

The English translations have a difficult time trying to catch the real sense of what the apostle is saying here. Dr. Beck probably comes the closest by translating, (These things...) will turn out victoriously for me.” From the moment he became a Christian to the time he wrote these words as a prisoner, the Apostle Paul had one great passion: to glorify Christ. (PBC)

1:20 **EAGERLY EXPECT** – The Apostle looks forward with earnest expectation. (Apokaradokia” is the watching with head erect or outstretched; waiting for

something in suspense. What Paul is waiting for with eager expectation and confident hope is that Christ will be glorified in this whole matter. As a prisoner for Christ Paul is not put to shame, for his imprisonment tends to glorify Christ, and again all that tends to the salvation of men. (Stoeckhardt)

The first phase of Paul's trial appears to have gone well. Every indication pointed to a favorable outcome, but he realized that the verdict could still go against him and could even result in his execution. (PBC)

ashamed ... sufficient courage. The circumstances of imprisonment, with all its attendant suffering and oppression, constitute a real temptation for Paul to abandon the gospel and his resolute service for Christ. (CSB)

my body. Where the exalted Christ dwells by his Spirit and is at work (cf. Ro 8:9–10), and so is exalted by what Paul does. (CSB)

If Paul lived, his body would honor Jesus Christ, because the Gospel was proclaimed through him. If Paul died, he bore witness about life eternal that cannot be taken away. "It is God's will and clear command that believers should do good works. The Holy Spirit works this in believers, and God is pleased with good works for Christ's sake" (FC SD IV 38). (TLSB)

whether by life or by death. Whether his service for Christ continues or ends in death. (CSB)

Come what may for Paul, life or death, in both cases Christ will be honored. If he dies, he dies as a martyr for the confirmation of the Gospel, if he lives he will continue to spread the Gospel. There is no thought here with the Apostle as to how a possible martyrdom would tend toward his own glorification, as some think, but Paul is only concerned about what it may do for the living. (Stoeckhardt)

The effect that would have upon the preaching of the Gospel on the part of the others is that it would inflame them with new zeal, courage, and boldness. It will tend to make other Christians bold to stand up for Christ. (Stoeckhardt)

1:21 *to live is Christ.* Christ was the source and secret of Paul's continual joy (even in prison), for Paul's life found all its meaning in Christ. (CSB)

If you live as a Christian, you live by Christ's grace, in His image, to serve as Christ the people around you. If you die, you learn the fullness of what you had known in part and your fallen human nature no longer hinders you. (TLSB)

The meaning then is: Christ is for me to live, or Christ is my life. He, Christ, sums up all that I am. He is the true life of my soul. If Christ is my life, then for me to

die is gain; for only through death do I get into possession of the true life, and I do obtain the whole Christ. (Stoeckhardt)

gain. Verse 23 specifies that the gain brought by death is “being with Christ,” so that here Paul is saying that his ultimate concern and most precious possession, both now and forever, is Christ and his relationship to him. (CSB)

1:22 *live in the flesh.* Earthly life (cf v 24). (TLSB)

fruitful labor. The spread of the gospel and the upbuilding of the church. (CSB)

Laboring for ourselves bears poor fruit (cf Rm 6:21). But serving others with God’s Word evidences a life that endures forever. (TLSB)

Having set forth the great principles that govern a Christian’s living and dying in Christ, Paul applied those principles directly to his own situation. He knew that a favorable verdict at his trial would mean more fruitful work for him. Being set free would permit him to take up his apostolic labors again. He would be able to preach the gospel openly, among old friends and in new places. That kind of work is always fruitful labor. Jesus Himself guarantees it. Through such faithful labor, or course, Christ would be glorified. (PBC)

WHAT SHALL I CHOOSE – Paul cannot choose, and the choice is not his to make. The Lord who made you and gives you life has numbered your days (Ps. 139:16). He also prepares the good content of those days (Eph 2:10). (TLSB)

1:23–24 *depart and be with Christ ... remain in the body.* Either alternative was a good one. While mysteries remain, this passage clearly teaches that when believers die they are with Christ, apart from the body. (CSB)

1:23 *better by far.* Being with Christ after death must involve some kind of conscious presence and fellowship (cf. 2 Co 5:6, 8). (CSB)

Paul confesses what we know: to be with Christ in paradise is the absolute fulfillment of every good desire (cf Lk 23:43). (TLSB)

1:24 *necessary for you.* Paul puts the needs of those he ministers to ahead of his personal preference. (CSB)

Paul would continue to serve God as an apostle of Jesus Christ in this world (cf v 22). (TLSB)

1:25 *I will remain.*† No doubt Paul was later released from prison (see map on “Paul’s Fourth Missionary Journey”). (CSB)

Considering the vision God granted him in Ac 23:11, Paul expects that the Lord will preserve his physical life. (TLSB) Paul, as an apostle, serves God as an authoritative spokesman of His truth and grace. God's Word makes progress as it makes our regenerate soul more capable, articulate, and dominant in relation to our contrary human nature. Progressing in faith and life increases our joy as we experience God's will for us (Jn 16:24). (TLSB)

The Philippian congregation was less than ten years old. Many of its members had only recently turned from idolatry. The congregation had its weaknesses and was surrounded by dangers. It was now suddenly deprived of its beloved apostle and his strong leadership and guidance, the congregation's development could be seriously hindered. (PBC)

progress ... in the faith. The Christian life is to be one of joyful growth and advance (see note on v. 9 and the verses cited there). (CSB)

Paul, as an apostle, serves God as an authoritative spokesman of His truth and grace. God's Word makes progress as it makes our regenerate soul more capable, articulate, and dominant in relation to our contrary human nature. Progressing in faith and life increases our joy as we experience God's will for us (Jn 16:24). (TLSB)

From this statement of Paul we are compelled to assume that the Apostle regained his freedom from his imprisonment at Rome. WE assume that the Apostle visited the churches of the Orient to strengthen them in their faith, and then struck out for the Occident and came to Spain. It is possible that he, according to ancient tradition came to Britannia; for the first missionaries in Britannia reportedly found traces of the Apostle's doctrine of justification there. In the Orient the Apostle confirmed Christians in their faith, and in Europe he won new ones for the Christian faith. (Stoeckhardt)

1:26 MY BEING WITH YOU AGAIN – All the historical evidence we possess indicates that the apostle's expectations were fulfilled. Apparently he was set free from this particular imprisonment and allowed by the Lord to carry on his apostolic labors, at least for a few more years. It is also quite likely that Paul did see the Philippians again before he was arrested and imprisoned for the second and final time. That second imprisonment and its outcome are discussed in Paul's last letter, 2 Timothy. (PBC)

your joy in Christ Jesus ... on account of me. Paul's conduct of his ministry among the Philippians will be a reason for rejoicing in what Christ is doing among them. (CSB)

glory in Christ Jesus. Christ's life worked blessing for us. Knowing more about His life gives more cause to relate His life (glory) to others. (TLSB)

my coming to you again. Paul anticipated that Caesar would free him, after which he would revisit congregations, as was his custom. (TLSB)

These Christians glorified in Paul and were proud of him. This was not sinful pride. It was not of a carnal, but of a truly Christian nature. That is indicated by the phrase “in Christ Jesus. By glorying in the Apostle they manifested a noble attachment to Christ. In this attitude their gratitude for the gift of the Gospel is expressed. (Stoeckhardt)

1:27 CONDUCT YOURSELF IN MANNER WORTHY – The root meaning of the verb Paul uses here is “exercise citizenship.” The Philippians, many of them Roman army veterans and their families, were especially proud of their Roman citizenship. The apostle wanted to remind them that as Christians they possessed a citizenship even more important than the earthly citizenship of which they were so proud. The Philippian believers were citizens of Jesus’ spiritual kingdom. As their conduct in so many ways gave evidence of their cherished Roman citizenship, it should, in even more ways, reflect their spiritual citizenship. (PBC)

Consistent with what the Gospel teaches and inspires in a believer. (TLSB)

To exercise citizenship in a manner worthy of the gospel means to live in a manner which will truly give evidence of the new spiritual life the gospel has produced in one’s heart. When the gospel enters human hearts and joins sinful human beings to Christ in faith, it changes people’s lives. It moves and empowers human beings, who previously lived only for themselves, to live in love to God and to their fellow men. Paul urges the Philippians here to show what the gospel has done for them and in them by living lives that will bring honor to God and glorify the Lord who the gospel proclaims. (PBC)

Ephesians 4:1, “As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received.”

Notes from Ephesians 4:1...

The Greek word is “walk.” The idea in Hebrew and signifies one’s entire conduct. (A)

The word for live is - pereepateho which means to be totally dedicated with living in a certain manner. Today we might say “walk the talk.” The word for worthy is acheeoce which means that which is appropriate for a particular position or calling. They were not to be ashamed of their faith and thus try to hide it.

calling. See 3:10, 21 and notes. (CSB)

Christians are called by God to have part in fulfilling God's vast design for the universe. In their unity is prefigured the unity of all things that God is bringing about in Christ.

kaleho. To be bidden in this case by God. The word "received" says very plainly that this was something done by someone other than the Ephesians themselves. This was done through the Gospel and didn't include any of the Jewish rituals or other contingencies.

worthy of the gospel.† Their manner of life should reflect the influence of the gospel and not bring shame on the message of salvation. (CSB)

in one spirit. Having a common disposition and purpose. (CSB)

Since the Spirit regenerates according to Christ's image, they share the same mind, which Paul calls them to use in 2:5. (TLSB)

contending as one man. Particularly where the gospel is under attack, Christians need each other and must stand together. (CSB)

Due to Adam's fall, everyone has turned away (Rm 3:10–18). The Gospel produces faith; it is not the product of human thought, imagination, or decision. (TLSB)

faith of the gospel. Eternal and absolute because it holds the truth and does so by God's grace and power. (TLSB)

1:28 Paul and the Gospel he proclaimed met some opposition among Gentiles (Ac 17:32), but most opposition came from Jews (Ac 13:45, 15:1). (TLSB)

a sign. Persistent opposition to the church and the gospel is a sure sign of eventual destruction, since it involves rejection of the only way of salvation. By the same token, when Christians are persecuted for their faith, this is a sign of the genuineness of their salvation (see 2Th 1:5). (CSB)

The Philippians had a difficult stand. There were such who persecuted them. But they must not be perturbed and frightened, must not fear for their life, else they will forfeit their faith. Their whole life must be adjusted to their faith and the Gospel. When they as Christians strive together and are unafraid, this is to their adversaries an omen of their destruction. What is to the enemies a sign of their destruction is to the Christians themselves a sign of their salvation. (Stoekhardt)

their destruction. Perishing under the condemnation of their sin because they despise God's grace (1Pt 2:7–8). (TLSB)

1:29 *granted ... to suffer.* Given as a gift or privilege. Christian suffering, as well as faith, is a blessing (cf. Mt 5:11–12; Ac 5:41; Jas 1:2; 1Pe 4:14). The Christian life is to be a “not only ... but also” proposition: not only believing but also suffering. (CSB)

Believing in Christ is more than just knowing and liking what He did for you. Believing in Christ means devotion to His purpose, which will always include suffering at the hands of those who would oppose Him. God enables such devotion. (TLSB)

The apostle personally identifies with the Philippians by reminding them that as they struggle on behalf of the gospel, they stand on common ground with him. Many of the Philippians had personally witnessed some of the conflicts the apostle endured. They remembered when he first brought the gospel to their city and how he had been slandered, mobbed, flogged and thrown into a Roman dungeon. They also remembered how the apostle had remained steadfast and how from the depths of the prison he and his missionary partner Silas sang hymns of praise to the Lord. (PBC)

What the Apostle writes here to the Philippians is meant to find general application. Christians are to regard all their sufferings as coming from God. When Christians take it so in Christian patience, they have the assurance that God will help them through it to be a blessed end. Such Christian submission is already a gift of God's grace, which at the same time includes the assurance of final victory through their God and Savior. (Stoeckhardt)

1:30 *same struggle.* Their common involvement with Paul in conflict with those who oppose the gospel. (CSB)

The conflict is between truth/mercy and falsehood/condemnation. Ac 16:16–24 records the conflict Paul had in Philippi, being beaten and jailed because he cast a demon out of a young woman who told fortunes for her masters. (TLSB)

you saw. When Paul and Silas first visited Philippi and were imprisoned (see Ac 16:19–40). (CSB)

The Philippians had observed the Apostle engaged in conflict with the enemies of the Gospel at Philippi. For while he was there endeavoring to set up the first congregation in Europe, he had been seized as a public nuisance, mobbed, beaten, and thrown into prison, all of which he had endured for the Gospel's sake. (Stoeckhardt)

1:19–30 Paul turns his attention from the question of whether he will live or die to a more important issue: what it means to live in this world. If God grants you a day in this world,

it is because He would have you serve others by living and speaking in a way that is consistent with (worthy of) the Gospel. Our ability to live this way is a product of the salvation God lavishes on us in the very words we read here and in the Spirit that accompanies those words. • Dear Lord Jesus, grant us grace and presence of mind to live in a way that agrees with Your Gospel and to strive for advancing the faith in the hearts and minds of others. Amen. (TLSB)