

PHILIPPIANS Chapter 4

Therefore, my brothers, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm thus in the Lord, my beloved.

4:1 *love and long for.* Paul deeply loved the Philippian congregation. Its membership brought special joy to his heart, because the fruits of their faith were evident in so many ways in their lives. They were his crown, festive garland. This was true when Paul wrote this epistle, but it would become even more evident at the Lord's return. Then their faith and fruits of their faith would be displayed before the whole world as evidences that the apostle's labors were not in vain. Paul warmly reminds the Philippians of all this as he concludes this section. He re-emphasizes the importance of all he has just said, as he emphatically proclaims, "That is how you should stand firm in the Lord, dear friends!" (PBC)

my joy and crown. True not only now, but especially when Christ returns (see 1Th 2:19). (CSB)

Honor for what one has accomplished. Paul did not gather jewels for a crown that perishes. He gathered souls for eternal life. (TLSB)

stand firm. Refers to the closing statements of ch. 3. In the face of libertine practices (3:18–19), the Philippians should follow Paul's example (3:17), having their minds set on heavenly things (3:20–21). (CSB)

stand firm. In the midst of present struggles for the sake of the gospel (cf. 1:27–30; 1Co 15:58). (CSB)

They are to avoid both the way of self-righteousness and the way of the flesh. (Stoeckhardt)

stakete – Paul is pleading with the Philippians to see past earthly prizes and keep their eyes on heaven.

3:12–4:1 Paul holds out before us our upward calling, his example, and the promise of our transformation in the resurrection. In contrast, we often focus on earthly comforts, worldly examples of success, and maintaining a youthful appearance for this life. But, while doing this, we starve our souls. Our citizenship is in heaven! Our life is in Christ, who reigns over all things in heaven and earth. • Dear Lord Jesus, turn us from the destructive ways of our human nature and turn us continually toward the heavenly calling and promises You have set before us. Amen. (TLSB)

Exhortation, Encouragement, and Prayer

2 I entreat Euodia and I entreat Syntyche to agree in the Lord. 3 Yes, I ask you also, true companion, help these women, who have labored side by side with me in the gospel together with Clement and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life. 4 Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. 5 Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; 6 do not be anxious about anything, 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 understanding, will guard your hearts

and your minds in Christ Jesus. 8 Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. 9 What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.

4:2–3 The disagreement between Euodia and Syntyche is serious enough to be mentioned in a letter to be read publicly, but Paul seems confident that “these women” (v. 3) will be reconciled. His handling of the situation is a model of tact—he does not take sides but encourages others closer to the situation to promote reconciliation (see 2:2). (CSB)

4:2 *Euodia ... Syntyche*. Christian women at Philippi.(TLSB)

agree in the Lord. To think the same things in harmony with the mind of Christ, which is given and expressed in the Word. Apparently, these women were in dispute, which was known by the congregation and was affecting the work there. (TLSB)

Here is a special admonition directed to two women. Each one is to consider as being personally addressed. For that reason the predicate is repeated: “I entreat.” They should be on “one mind in the Lord.” That seems to indicate they were of a different opinion in matters in relating to the work of the Church. (Stoeckhardt)

Here on earth, also in the visible Christian church, we are all sinners, living and working with sinners, and sooner or later sin is going to affect our interpersonal relationships. In the carrying out of the congregation’s activities, or in the course of activity in its organizations, sinful human beings with strong opinions and forceful personalities are inevitably going to clash. Something very minor might be the trigger. Sharp words are spoken. Feelings are hurt. Grudges are held. The result is lingering bitterness, even factions that can truly disturb a congregation and hinder its witness and its work. (PBC)

We are not given the details, but something quite similar to what is described above had taken place in Philippi. Two prominent women in the congregation, Euodia and Syntyche, had become involved in a dispute. We know nothing more about either of these women. Evidently they had served harmoniously and enthusiastically as co-workers of Paul, helping to aid the gospel ministry. Apparently they had both continued to be active in the congregation. Now, however, some disagreement had arisen between them – a result of jealousy, perhaps? – and where there had been harmony before, there was now strife. The exact effect of the dispute on the congregation and its work is not stated, but we can be sure that it was not positive. (PBC)

Paul handles this delicate situation with a marvelous combination of tact and Christian love. He does not question the motives of either of the women or their commitment to the Lord. He does not open old wounds by going into a lengthy rehashing of the problem. He does not scold or fix blame. He is not negative at all. He simply pleads with each of the women to agree with one another “in the Lord,” whom they were both eager to serve. Note the evenhandedness displayed in Paul’s words of encouragement. He repeats the phrase “I plead,” using first the name of one, then the name of the other woman as the object. He encourages each one to reflect on the blessings she had received from the Lord and to realize that this disagreement was not furthering Christ’s cause in Philippi. He expresses the hope that mature Christian reflection on this matter will lead them both to expend their talents and energies in unity and for the Lord rather than in competition and disagreement. (PBC)

Throughout this epistle Paul has emphasized the importance of unity and harmony among believers. Remembering the importance of that unity would help Euodia and Syntyche settle their dispute. And is it not true that the disputes over external things that often arise in our congregations today would also be settled more easily if we always remembered that as believers we are united in a blessed partnership in the gospel of Christ? We are working for a common task which could be hindered by our petty and sinful squabbles. Let's not forget either that we are destined to spend eternity together. (PBC)

4:3 *true companion*. A fellow laborer of Paul, well known to the Philippians. (TLSB)

In addition to making his personal pleas to each of the women, Paul asks the aid of another of the congregation's members in mediating the dispute. There is some question about whether the Greek word *syzygus*, which mean yokefellow, is a proper or common noun here. I am inclined to believe that Paul is here addressing a man named Syzygus and asking him to be true to his name by helping to bring about a reconciliation between the two women. (PBC)

side by side with me... my fellow workers. Those associated with the apostle in the cause of the gospel (women as well as men) are his equals, not subordinates (cf. 2:25; Ro 16:3, 9, 21; Phm 24). (CSB)

People who share the work of extending God's kingdom to the lives of others. (TLSB)

These two women heretofore must have always proved to be true and reliable members and church workers. The Apostle does not want his readers to overlook this. (Stoekhardt)

Clement. Not mentioned elsewhere in the NT. (CSB)

the rest of my fellow workers. Not mentioned individually because they are known to God and their names are entered in the book of life, the heavenly register of the elect. (CSB)

The Apostle mentions these all others who bore up bravely under the persecution. The Apostle choses this expression to cover them all, because he does not want to mention each one by name. (Stoekhardt)

whose names are in the book of life – That is a word of high commendation, but it applies to all true Christians. (Stoekhardt)

God has chosen us in Christ before the foundation of the world. No one whose name is written thus will be lost in the Day of Judgment (Ps. 87; Rev. 21:27; Ex. 32:32). (TLSB)

4:4 *Rejoice in the Lord*. See 3:1. (CSB)

Troubled people ought not be alone, for this is why God created the fellowship of the Church. Also, "To be gloomy before God is not pleasing to Him, although He would permit us to be depressed before the world" (AE 54:16). (TLSB)

chair – Full of cheer. To be well off which brings about a calmness. In Paul it is bound up with his work as an apostle. It results from faith in Christ and is a fruit of the Spirit. Joy comes when Christ is proclaimed. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 2, Part 1)

Paul would say “I will not tire of speaking to you about rejoicing. (Stoekhardt)

Habakkuk 3:17-18 “Though the fig tree does not bud and there are no grapes on the vines, though the olive crop fails and the fields produce no food, though there are no sheep in the pen and no cattle in the stalls, ¹⁸yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will be joyful in God my Savior.”

James 1:2 “Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds,”

1 Peter 4:13 “But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed.”

Joy is the basic temper and disposition of the Christian. Where this joy is found, there will follow what is stated in verse 5. (Stoekhardt)

always. Under all kinds of circumstances, including suffering (see Hab 3:17–18; Jas 1:2; 1Pe 4:13). (CSB)

Paul wrote this, you will remember, in prison. He knew that our outer circumstances do not need to affect our inner feelings. Paul’s joy came because he knew the Lord was with him no matter what happened. His repetition of the exhortation to rejoice suggested he knew conditions at Philippi might make his exhortation seem a little unrealistic. While believers often have situations in which we cannot be happy, we can always rejoice and delight in the Lord and His impact on our lives. Paul was not calling for smiles to be “painted on our faces,” but for a genuine joy possible only in the Lord. (LifeLight)

4:5 *reasonableness.* Christlike consideration for others (cf. 2Co 10:1). It is especially essential in church leaders (see 1Ti 3:3; Tit 3:2, “considerate”). (CSB)

epieikes – Appropriate moderation. To be mild or patient. It is not weak sentimentality. It is the earthly counterpart of the heavenly glory. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 2, Part 1)

The Apostle here does not speak of the Lord’s invisible or spiritual presence, but rather of His last visible return, which is close at hand. That Christians are to bear in mind all the time. When one is aware that he is on the way to the judge, he is more apt to exercise gentleness and forbearance towards others. (Stoekhardt)

In difficult times, our joy is not always visible to others; yet acts of gentleness to others can be seen. Paul encourages the Philippians to be fair and charitable to others. Trusting the Lord to care for our life, we are able to show consideration and gentleness to others. We know the Lord is near, not just by His presence in our hearts; but also in His Second Coming. There is no need to protect our turf when we realize all the earthly things will soon pass away. (LifeLight)

The Greek word here is one that cannot really be reproduced by a single word in English. Expressions that come close to reflecting its meaning are “bigheartedness” and sweet reasonableness.” What Paul is saying here is that Christians ought to be people who would much

rather suffer wrong than inflict it. Gentleness or sweet reasonableness is another of those distinguishing characteristics that ought to mark Christians as different, special people in this world, people who with a self-sacrificing attitude that imitates the humility of Christ. Where others loudly demand their rights, believers will gladly yield theirs. They will make the interests of the weak and helpless their concern and patiently yield to others, wherever such yielding does not violate their Christian principles. (PBC)

Titus 3:2 “to slander no one, to be peaceable and considerate, and to show true humility toward all men.”

at hand. See Ro 13:11; cf. Jas 5:8–9; Rev 22:7, 12, 20. The next great event in God’s prophetic schedule is Christ’s return. The whole period from Christ’s first coming to the consummation of the kingdom is viewed in the NT as the last time (1Jn 2:18). From God’s vantage point, a thousand years are as a day. Thus there is a sense in which, for every generation, the Lord’s coming is near. (CSB)

The Lord is near to give you patience, wisdom, and help. The Lord is near in coming for you. This is life from a resurrection and eternal perspective. (TLSB)

Over 19 centuries have passed since Paul wrote, “The Lord is near.” By God’s way of reckoning, Christ is still near. For individual believers Christ’s summons from this life to eternity is near. It could come at any time. So could Christ’s return in glory. If we understand that, we shall want to live in the same eager, expectant spirit of rejoicing in which those early believers lived. How small a thing the sacrificing of some earthly rights becomes when we know that all wrongs will be righted when Christ appears. How meaningless the selfish lives of the unspiritual people around us appear. How significant lives of gentle joyfulness become. (PBC)

4:6 *anxious.* Self-centered, counterproductive worry, not legitimate cares and concerns for the spread of the gospel (see 2:28 and note; 2Co 11:28; see also Mt 6:25–31; 1Pe 5:7). (CSB)

merimnao – Full of care. Worry. This verse and 1 Peter 5:7 show that “to cast one’s care on God does not mean to think of Him as the One who guarantees one’s wishes, but to see in Him the One who knows what we need better than we do ourselves. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 2, Part 1)

Where there is joy, there is no anxious care. Joy expresses itself in confident prayer. All that a Christian desires and cares for, especially such things that cause him anxiety and uneasiness, he brings before God in prayer. So his joy cannot be crowded out and affects his whole life. Of course, a Christian is not capable of acquiring and maintaining such a happy mind and disposition of himself. How he comes to be so fortunate the next verse will show. (Stoeckhardt)

The stress of a hostile world gives rise to anxiety and fears about the future. Yet Paul challenges the Philippians and us to not be anxious “about anything!” We can take all our worries and bring them before the Lord in prayer. As St. Peter put it, “Cast all your anxiety on Him because He cares for you (1 Peter 5:7). We can remember His loving care and let it supplant our worry. (LifeLight)

Matthew 6:25-34 “Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes? ²⁶ Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? ²⁷ Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life? ²⁸ “And why do you worry about clothes? See how the lilies of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. ²⁹ Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. ³⁰ If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? ³¹ So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ ³² For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. ³³ But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. ³⁴ Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.”

in everything, by prayer. Anxiety and prayer are two great opposing forces in Christian experience. (CSB)

The broad category of speaking to God at His invitation. (TLSB)

supplication. Specific request for help. (TLSB)

These exhortations to pray are thus designed to give absolute freedom from care as anxiety. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 2, Part 1)

In childlike trust, leave everything in the Lord’s loving hands. The Lord does not forbid us to make plans or to think ahead. He does not want us to regard prayer as a substitute for planning and working. He wants us to use forethought and common sense to meet the various challenges and problems He sets before us in life, but in all our working and planning and thinking ahead, we Christians dare never forget that the outcome depends completely on the Lord’s will and on His blessing. With childlike trust, therefore, we should commend ourselves and our concerns to the Lord in prayer. The Lord knows our needs without our praying about them, but He lovingly invites and encourages us to bring them all to Him in prayer. (PBC)

thanksgiving. The antidote to worry (along with prayer and petition). (CSB)

Expressing before God all the things He has already done for you. (TLSB)

He’s given us that we’re thankful for. As we remember and recite all these blessings, this too, will vaporize our anxiety. (LifeLight)

requests. Made in the perspective of thanksgiving. (TLSB)

4:7 peace of God. Not merely a psychological state of mind, but an inner tranquility based on peace with God—the peaceful state of those whose sins are forgiven (cf. Jn 14:27; Ro 5:1). The opposite of anxiety, it is the tranquility that comes when the believer commits all his cares to God in prayer and worries about them no more. (CSB)

irahnay – A quietness that comes from being restored to oneness with others, especially God. (QV)

The Christian very well knows how unbecoming it is for him to fret and grieve over the current sorrows of life and that under all conditions he must cultivate a cheerful disposition, yet he cannot take hold of his bootstraps and lift himself over these obstacles. But the peace of God accomplishes what we are unable to do. The “peace of God” is the peace which He puts into our heart. This peace of God towers far above the reach of man’s understanding. When in the midst of the cares and casualties of life our rational thinking leads us to believe we are undone and so would pull down our soul the gloom of sorrow and despair, come this peace of God and lends us an inner peace, contentment, hope, and joy. While tears may yet be streaming down our cheeks, we can smile with inner assurance that all things must work together for our good. This peace keeps our hearts steadfast, so that it clings to Christ and resigns itself to whatever God ordains. It is this about which the Christian always should be confident. God has promised it: “The peace of God ... will keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.” The future tense, “will keep,” expresses a divine assurance to Christians. (Stoeckhardt)

As the Philippians take Paul’s words to heart about worry, they will turn from worry to prayer and experience God’s peace. This is not a peace that comes from positive thinking, but from knowing that our sins are forgiven; that God is not our enemy, but our loving Father; that we have a Savior who loved us enough to died for us; that the Holy Spirit lives in our heart. With this peace guarding our hearts and minds we place our lives in God’s hands and accept God’s direction as being the best. Like a soldier on watch around our faith, God’s peace repels the attacks of the enemy and keeps us close to God and trusting in Him. As Christians, we can pray in the middle of a traffic jam, pray in the middle of personal crisis, and pray when the fear of the unknown hits us. In the midst of all circumstances, we can have God’s peace. (LifeLight)

When life makes no sense, God’s peace sustains and directs us. Peace, not readiness or zeal, acts like a guardian angel for our mental health. This peace resides in Jesus, our refuge. (TL SB)

John 14:27 “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.”

Romans 5:1 “Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we^a have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

surpasses all understanding. The full dimensions of God’s love and care are beyond human comprehension (see Eph 3:18–20). (CSB)

guard ... hearts ... minds. A military concept depicting a sentry standing guard. God’s “protective custody” of those who are in Christ Jesus extends to the core of their beings and to their deepest intentions (cf. 1Pe 1:5). (CSB)

The Philippians were used to the sight of Roman sentries standing guard. In that way, the apostle tells them, God’s peace stands guard at the door of the believers heart. God’s peace standing guard keeps believers steadfastly clinging to Christ. It prevents care from wearing on their hearts and keeps unworthy thoughts from disturbing them. By trust and prayer believers enter the impregnable fortress of God’s peace in the Lord Jesus Christ, a fortress from which nothing can dislodge them. (PBC)

4:8 *true ... honorable.* Paul understood the influence of one’s thoughts on one’s life. What a person allows to occupy his mind will sooner or later determine his speech and his action. Paul’s

exhortation to “think about such things” is followed by a second exhortation, “put it into practice” (v. 9). The combination of virtues listed in vv. 8–9 is sure to produce a wholesome thought pattern, which in turn will result in a life of moral and spiritual excellence. (CSB)

whatever is true - dikaios – That which is equitable and innocent. This deals with social conduct. (QV)

The Christian progresses in sanctification as he practices what he knows to be good and right. (Stoeckhardt)

whatever is honorable – arête – Something that has virtue or valor. (QV)

is commendable – epainos – Worthy of being lauded or to be commendable. This would refer to be true in the Christian community. (QV)

Stoeckhardt summarizes it as follows: true – morally sound; honorable – of worthy character when men esteem with respect; just – agreeing with the law which tells us what we owe to another; pure – free from every fault, immaculate; lovely – what is valuable and dear in the heart of men; of good report – what is praised and esteemed among men; if there is anything that deserves praise – sums up the preceding. (Stoeckhardt)

Paul commands that we continually keep these virtues, which are the fundamental ideals of life according to God’s design, in the forefront of our minds, in our very consciousness, so that they inspire and guide all we do. (TLSB)

think about these things - logizomai – Not just give some thought to, but to ponder on, take an inventory and then draw conclusions. (QV)

Christians should also be concerned about what is good and praiseworthy in the sight of the world and think about these things. (Stoeckhardt)

“[The Word] always awakens new understanding, pleasure, devoutness and produces a pure heart and pure thoughts” (LC I 101). (TLSB)

4:9 *seen in me*. See note on 3:17. (CSB)

Paul’s entire life bears witness and demonstrates how to live for Christ. He is not only a teacher in Word but also a mentor in life. Church workers today have the same calling. (TLSB)

God of peace. When Christians under all conditions strive to do what which is right, then the God of peace will abide with them and preserve them from all harm. (Stoeckhardt)

God is the One who grants genuine liberty to know fullness of life by regenerating us, setting wisdom before us, and inspiring us with His Word. God grants peace through the Gospel. (TLSB)

4:2–9 As Paul concludes this Letter, he uses imperative language to urge the reader to adopt practices of living that are in harmony with the Creator’s will. The strength and clarity of this exhortation reminds us that we often set our minds on those things that are contrary to God’s will. Paul’s exhortations are always followed by promises of God’s blessing on our behalf. • Blessed be the Lord God, who has not left us to suffer in our own folly, but has called and enlightened us to live according to His mercy in Christ. Amen. (TLSB)

God's Provision

10 I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now at length you have revived your concern for me. You were indeed concerned for me, but you had no opportunity. 11 Not that I am speaking of being in need, for I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content. 12 I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. 13 I can do all things through him who strengthens me. 14 Yet it was kind of you to share my trouble. 15 And you Philippians yourselves know that in the beginning of the gospel, when I left Macedonia, no church entered into partnership with me in giving and receiving, except you only. 16 Even in Thessalonica you sent me help for my needs once and again. 17 Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that increases to your credit. 18 I have received full payment, and more. I am well supplied, having received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent, a fragrant offering, a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God. 19 And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus. 20 To our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen.

4:10 *revived your concern.* Shown by the arrival of Epaphroditus bearing their gift (cf v 18). (TLSB)

at length ... no opportunity. The delay in sending gifts to Paul was not the fault of the Philippians, nor was it because they were lacking in concern for him (cf. 2Co 11:9). Perhaps Paul’s uncertain itinerary prior to his arrival at Rome or the lack of an available messenger had prevented the Philippians from showing their concern. (CSB)

The Apostle here expresses his gratitude for the gift of love received from the Philippians. Their token of love has caused him great joy. Whatever proceeds from the Christian faith has great worth and value, even if it is no more than a material gift. Earlier already the Philippians had thought of sending Paul a present, but probably lacked a way of getting it to him. But when finally their present came though, the Apostle rejoiced over it very much. (Stoeckhardt)

For a time the Philippians were unable to carry out their resolve. Something had hindered them. Perhaps the grinding poverty that had affected the entire region some years earlier (see 2 Cor. 8:12) was still making life economically difficult for the Philippians, or perhaps no messenger was immediately available to make the long journey to Rome. At any rate, the obstacles that had previously prevented the Philippians from expressing their generosity had now been removed, and Epaphroditus has brought a generous gift to the apostle on the Philippians behalf. He was now returning to Philippi with this letter and with the apostle’s warm thanks. (PBC)

4:11 *whatever situation I am content.* Paul genuinely appreciates the gifts from Philippi (see vv. 14, 18) but he is not ultimately dependent on them (cf. 1Ti 6:6–8). (CSB)

Gk *autarkes*, “self-sufficient” and thereby content. (TLSB)

4:12 *I have learned the secret of facing plenty...hunger...need.* Prosperity, too, can be a source of discontent. (CSB)

Paul knows all things work together for good to those who love God (Rm. 8:28), our sinful human nature is our own worst enemy (Rm. 5:10), and disciplining the body makes it possible to thrive spiritually (1 Cor. 9:27). (TLSB)

4:13 *all things.* Everything pleasing to God. (CSB)

God’s wisdom in the Word and the work of His Spirit lets us welcome the experiences of life in ways that benefit us and others. Paul’s time in the Philippian jail and his current imprisonment are perfect examples. (TLSB)

who strengthens me. Christ. Union with the living, exalted Christ is the secret of being content (v. 12) and the source of Paul’s abiding strength (see especially 2Co 12:9–10; see also Jn 15:5; Eph 3:16–17; Col 1:11). (CSB)

The Apostle has not only a wonderful knowledge and understanding of what is proper in God’s kingdom, but he has also the ability to conduct himself accordingly. However, in himself resides no such knowledge or ability. In all humility he confesses these have been bestowed upon him through Christ. (Stoekhardt)

4:14 *share.* The Philippians’ gifts are a means of involving them in Paul’s troubles (cf. Heb 10:33). (CSB)

The Philippians have joined themselves together with Paul by sympathizing, praying for him, and sending what physical aid they could. (TLSB)

4:15 *in the beginning.* During Paul’s second missionary journey, when he first preached in Philippi (see Ac 16:12–40). (CSB)

As Paul began his first missionary journey. (TLSB)

I left. For the south (Achaia), where Athens and Corinth were located (see Ac 17:14–16; 18:1–4). (CSB)

Macedonia. The northern part of modern-day Greece, where Berea and Thessalonica, as well as Philippi, were located. (CSB)

giving and receiving. Or “participated with me in an account of.” Paul uses commercial language to describe “giving and receiving” (credit and debit) between the Philippians and himself (see “credited to your account,” v. 17). Yet this commercial imagery is plainly transcended by the mutual concern and self-sacrifice of their relationship. (CSB)

except you only. The generosity of the Philippian church is unique and unmatched (cf. 2Co 8:1–5). (CSB)

4:16 *even in Thessalonica.* While he was still in Macedonia (see Ac 17:1–9). (CSB)

help for my needs once again. The gifts sent to Rome through Epaphroditus are the latest in a long and consistent pattern of generosity (cf. 2Co 8:1–5). (CSB)

4:17 *to your credit.* The “investment value” of the Philippians’ gift is not primarily what Paul received, but the “spiritual dividends” they received. (CSB)

As generous as their gifts to were, however, Paul reminds the Philippians that the truly important thing about any gift is not the gift itself, but the heart of the giver. It was above all because they had given their gift in the right spirit that Paul was overjoyed. The Philippians enjoyed a blessed giving and receiving relationship with the Apostle Paul. He had given them the gospel, and they had gladly received it. They, on their part, had shown their gratitude for the gospel by providing the apostle with material gifts that the Lord used to support and sustain him in his ministry. On their side of the giving and receiving ledger stood a clear and beautiful testimony to their generosity. Paul knew that the Lord would graciously reward that generosity, as he always does, even though believers don’t give for the sake of a reward (see Proverbs 11:17, Malachi 3:10-12, 2 Corinthians 9:7, Luke 6:38). (PBC)

4:18 *full payment.* Paul received all the things he needed. (TLSB)

a fragrant offering, a sacrifice acceptable. The OT background is the sacrifice, not of atonement for sin, but of thanksgiving and praise (cf. Lev 7:12–15; Ro 12:1; Eph 5:2; Heb 13:15–16). (CSB)

At the temple, sacrifices were made with sweet-smelling spices to remind the people that God was well pleased, not with the sacrifice itself, but with the people’s appeal to His mercy made available. (TLSB)

acceptable ... pleasing to God. Because of Christ’s work for us (see 1Pe 2:5) and God’s work in us (see Php 2:13). (CSB)

He calls their gift a fragrant odor that is well-pleasing and an acceptable offering to God. What amazing dignity resides in the common gifts of sincere Christians! (Stoeckhardt)

4:19 *my.* A personal touch (cf. “my God” in 1:3). (CSB)

will supply. A promise given to a church that had sacrificially given to meet Paul’s need. (CSB)

Not guaranteed prosperity. God will provide for every need that arises. Needs are seen in terms of eternity, not just our bodily concerns. (TLSB)

every need of yours. Paul is concerned not only about his own situation but also about that of the Philippians. (CSB)

glory in Christ Jesus. The true measure of God’s blessings to the church (cf. Eph 1:18; 3:16–20). (CSB)

All the riches of God become available to us because of what Christ did. Christ established communion with us through His Word and Spirit. In these ways, He made us partakers of all His blessings (Jn. 16:14). (TLSB)

4:20 *God and Father.* God is our Father because He made us and also because He gave us new life in Christ (Jn 1:12–13; 3:5; 1Jn 3:1). (TLSB)

Paul cannot hold back a doxology, especially as he considers the truth of v. 19. (CSB)

4:10–20 Paul cannot end this Letter without a vibrant expression of gratitude toward God and the service of the Philippians. Paul’s outpouring of appreciation contrasts sharply with feelings of neglect, resentment, and even anger that can arise when we lack the privileges and comforts we expect. Paul invites us to see the blessings and fullness of God that are present in every situation. Christ multiplies those blessings by His grace. • Dear Lord Jesus, forgive our ingratitude. Turn our minds to dwell on the fullness of life in Your Holy Word. Amen. (TLSB)

Final Greetings

21 Greet every saint in Christ Jesus. The brothers who are with me greet you. 22 All the saints greet you, especially those of Caesar's household. 23 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.

4:21–22 Final greetings are a typical feature of Paul’s letters (see, e.g., Ro 16:3–16, 21–23; 1Co 16:19–20; 2Co 13:12–13; Col 4:10–12, 14–15, 18). (CSB)

With the song of praise in verse 20 Paul closes the body of his letter. All that remains now are the greetings. It is quite possible that Paul wrote these last verses with his own hand. A secretary probably wrote the rest. All the saints, that is, all the people who by grace have been set apart as God’s children in Philippi, are given greetings, both from Paul and from the co-workers that were with him in Rome. Even though Paul has expressed disappointment with some of those co-workers (2:20), he does not exclude them from this greeting. (PBC)

4:21 *every saint.* Those fellow believers with and near Paul while he is imprisoned. (TLSB)

Every saint, every member of the Philippian congregation, is remembered in the final salutation of the apostle. Being believers, they are saints, cleansed and sanctified by the blood of Christ. The brethren in Rome also wished to be remembered. Though they were not acquainted personally with the Philippian Christians, they felt themselves united with them in the fellowship of a common faith and love. (Kretzmann)

brothers who are with me. Paul’s fellow workers at Rome, especially Timothy (see 1:1, 14, 16). (CSB)

The Apostle closes with greetings in the Lord. He wishes them every blessing. Moreover, also the companions of Paul send their greetings. (Stoeckhardt)

4:22 *Caesar’s household.* Not blood relatives of the emperor, but those employed (slaves or freedmen) in or around the palace area (cf. “palace guard,” 1:13). (CSB)

Servants of the emperor who came to faith, probably not Caesar’s family. (TLSB)

These Christians may have been government officials, perhaps even some members of the palace guard (see 1:13). The reason for their special mention here may be that, since Paul was involved in an imperial court case, these were the Christians with whom he had the closest contact at the

time he wrote this epistle. Or perhaps since Philippi was a Roman colony, some of the officials personally knew or were even related to some of the Philippian believers. What is important to note once more is that Christianity had entered even the ranks of the highest Roman officialdom. (PBC)

4:23 A typical closing benediction of Paul. (CSB)

your spirit. Not one part of man to the exclusion of other parts, but the whole person seen from his inner side, at the core of his being (cf. Gal 6:18; 2Ti 4:22; Phm 25). (CSB)

The grace of the Lord Jesus is what joins His Spirit with ours so that we live fully. (TLSB)

4:21–23 Paul's last words in the Letter are greetings and blessings. Contrast Paul's concern for greeting all and extending grace with our unwillingness to greet people in our own church communities. The grace of the Lord Jesus is so abundant that it flows over from Paul to us through this very Word and has the power to overflow from our lives into the lives of others, so that we genuinely greet and then extend God's grace. • O give thanks to the Lord for His abundant grace! May His grace come continually to us and through us to others. Amen. (TLSB)