

# Four Points Of Philippians

## Introduction

- I. The city of Philippi is located in Greece, on a plain about 10 miles inland from the Aegean Sea.
  - A. The Via Egnatia, the main overland route between Asia and the West, ran through this ancient city.
  - B. In 356 B.C. it was seized by Philip of Macedonia, the father of Alexander.
  - C. In 42 B.C. Mark Antony and Octavian (later Augustus Caesar) combined forces to defeat the armies of Brutus and Cassius, the assassins of Julius Caesar, at Philippi.
  - D. In celebration of the victory, Philippi was made into a Roman colony; this entitled its inhabitants to the rights and privileges usually granted to those who lived in the cities of Italy.
  - E. Eleven years later, Octavian defeated the forces of Antony and Cleopatra in a naval battle at Actium, on the west coast of Greece.
  - F. Octavian punished supporters of Antony by evicting them from Italy and resettling them in Philippi.
- II. The Lord's church at Philippi was established by Paul on his second evangelistic journey in about 52 A.D.
  - A. He had set out from Antioch of Syria and had traveled by land to revisit the churches which he had planted on his first journey.
  - B. Luke records that Timothy had joined him at Lystra (Acts 16:1–10).
  - C. They sailed from Troas, and evidently with a favorable wind, crossed the Aegean Sea in two days to Neapolis (usually took five days), and from there traveled inland to Philippi (Acts 16:11–12).
- III. Philippi did not have enough Jewish citizens to have a synagogue.
  - A. There was a meeting place for prayer just outside the city, where Paul found Lydia and a group of women on the Sabbath engaged in worship.
  - B. To them he preached the first gospel sermon in Europe (Acts 16:13–15).
  - C. Lydia and her household became the first converts; they were later joined by the jailer and household (cf. Acts 16:16–34).
  - D. Paul revisited the city on at least two occasions (2 Cor. 2:13; Acts 20:6).
- IV. Philippians was one of the prison epistles of Paul (around 62 A.D.).
  - A. The church at Philippi had sent Epaphroditus as their messenger to bring aid to Paul while he was in Rome—he fell ill while in Rome and was “sick almost unto death” (Phil. 2:27).
  - B. Upon his recovery, Epaphroditus longed to return home.
  - C. Paul knew of the concern of the Philippians—thus the letter was prompted.
  - D. One of the major characteristics of the Philippian letter is its vibrant undertone of spiritual joy and thanksgiving.
- V. This lesson is concerned with my life and how it relates to Christ.

## I. Christ Is The Purpose Of My Life (Phil. 1:21–24)

- A. Paul's indifference towards death raises the question of what life and death is—the Stoics had preached indifference and apathy towards death.
- B. Paul announces his principle of life.
  - 1. Regardless of how others felt, this is what life meant to Paul.
  - 2. With many life is: money, power, sensual indulgence, flattery.
  - 3. Paul did not say, "Christ is life," but, "living is Christ and dying is gain."
- C. Christ occupies the whole of Paul's life—no doors locked to Him.
- D. Paul led a surrendered life and found peace and victory (1 Cor. 15:57).
- E. What about death? Simply more of Christ, i.e., "to die is gain."
  - 1. "Gain" is used for interest, gains and profits.
  - 2. Paul spoke about "gaining Christ" (cf. Phil. 3:8).
  - 3. Paul felt like an eagle in a cage—death would be liberation.
  - 4. Death held no terrors for Paul (Heb. 2:9–18).
  - 5. He looked upon death as a friend in disguise, but he was not dissatisfied with life here below.
- F. Is Christ really the *purpose* of your life?

## II. Christ Is The Pattern Of My Life (Phil. 2:5–8)

- A. Paul uses the incarnation of Christ to teach a lesson on humility.
  - 1. John says the Word became flesh (John 1:14).
  - 2. Jesus did not consider His state of "equality with God" a thing to be held on to at any cost, when, by giving up the glory, He could redeem us.
  - 3. As Christ possessed the real attributes of Deity, so He took upon Himself the real attributes of servanthip (Heb. 4:14–16).
  - 4. Jesus followed the Father's will obediently to death (Heb. 5:8–9).
  - 5. He cried aloud when His Father's presence left Him (Matt. 27:46).
  - 6. The body on the tree was accursed (Deut. 21:23).
  - 7. The Jews stumbled at the cross and Greek thought it foolish, but to us it is the power unto salvation (1 Cor. 1:20–25).
- B. Christ is the perfect pattern for my life, and I must surrender all that I have that the Father might be glorified (Rom. 12:1–2).

## III. Christ Is The Prize Of My Life (Phil. 3:13–14)

- A. Many people do not understand "perfection" in this life.
  - 1. The word translated as "perfect" in the New Testament (Gr. *katartizo*) means "to complete thoroughly, i.e. repair (lit. or fig.) or adjust."
  - 2. "And going on from thence, he saw other two brethren, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in a ship with Zebedee their father, mending their nets; and he called them." (Matt. 4:21).
  - 3. "Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness..." (Gal. 6:1).
  - 4. "night and day praying exceedingly that we may see your face and perfect what is lacking in your faith?" (1 Thes. 3:10).
  - 5. "Finally, brethren, farewell. Become *complete*. Be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace..." (2 Cor. 13:11).

- B. Paul pointedly says that he presses on.
  1. The verb literally means, “I pursue” or “I follow after.”
  2. Paul was in the pursuit of Christ.
  3. Christ changed Paul from a persecutor to an apostle (Acts 22:3–5).
- C. Paul’s goal is still ahead—he vividly pictures the tension of the chase.
  1. Paul was not forgetting his former career, but does not allow his immediate past to lull him into a false sense of security.
  2. He had no time to look back.
  3. The prize belongs to those who run (1 Cor. 9:24).
  4. Paul is thinking of the crown of righteousness (2 Tim. 4:8).

#### **IV. Christ Is The Power Of My Life (Phil. 4:12–13)**

- A. Paul’s strength resides in Christ—He empowers Paul.
- B. Paul uses this great word elsewhere of Christ’s relationship to him.
  1. “And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who has *enabled* me, because He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry...” (1 Tim. 1:12).
  2. “But the Lord stood with me and *strengthened* me, so that the message might be preached fully through me, and that all the Gentiles might hear. And I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion” (2 Tim. 4:17).
  3. “be strong in the Lord and in the *power* of His might” (Eph. 6:10).
  4. This power is accessible to all who yield themselves to Christ.
- C. Paul learned to do without his way and find joy in God’s way.
  1. Men can kill him, but they cannot deprive him of the love and power of Christ in his life (Rom. 8:35–39).
  2. Paul leads the victorious life because he lets the word of Christ dwell within him and rule in his life.

#### *Conclusion*

- I. The time has come for Paul to say farewell to the Philippians (Phil. 4:18–23).
- II. The epistle was very brief, but rich in thought.
- III. He closes with the familiar, “The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.”
- IV. Paul’s emphasis is on grace from the Lord Jesus Christ—grace that enhances and enriches the life.