

STUDIES IN PHILIPPIANS (30)

Benediction

Philippians 4:19-23

At Rose Avenue, we have been engaged in an ongoing study through the book of Philippians for the past few years. This evening I would like to bring this study to its conclusion.

I. The book of Philippians – a review

- a. The message of this book – Paul is writing this letter from prison, likely in Rome (cf. Acts 28) to encourage these brethren, who were paying a price for their faith, not only to endure, but to rejoice in the Lord always.

This letter was very personal and showed the relationship and care Paul had for these brethren.

- b. In this letter:

- i. Paul begins with a prayer of thanksgiving offered for them (1:3-11) – typical of Paul. He was thankful for their fellowship and the work they were doing in the Lord. He loved them.
- ii. Paul assures them that he is fine, even in prison (1:12-18)
- iii. He reminds them of what he is willing to do in Christ (1:19-26) – he is even willing to die.
- iv. Finally, in 1:27-30 he encourages them to live worthy of the gospel. Don't give up.
- v. 2:1-11 – Paul encourages them to strive for true unity through humility – think of others better than yourself. The ultimate example of this was our Lord Jesus Himself
- vi. 2:12-18 – He encourages them to work at serving God (work out your own salvation) and shine as lights in a dark world.
- vii. 2:19-30 – He addresses Epaphroditus their messenger to him and Timothy, his messenger to them (Likely these delivered this letter back to the Philippians).
- viii. 3:1-11 – Paul warned them to be cautious of false teachers (Judaizing teachers) seeking to devour them, and reminds them of the sacrifices he has made to follow Christ – He walked away from a promising Jewish life to gain Christ.
- ix. 3:12-21 – but he is not there yet, he is still striving to reach that goal
- x. Chapter 4 begins some final admonitions – another pleading for unity between 2 sisters, as well as an admonition to rejoice in the Lord always, Be anxious for nothing and pray to God, and he described the types of things they ought to “Meditate” upon.
- xi. That brings us to our last lesson, and where we will begin tonight.

II. My God Shall Supply (4:19-20)

- a. In our last lesson we addressed how the Philippian brethren supported Paul in the preaching of the gospel. In this we find a pattern we are to follow (send it directly to the one being supported). We also addressed Paul's humble gratitude and joy in what they did. His primary joy was not in receiving the funds (though he very likely needed it, he had learned to be content), but the fruit that abounded to their account. Paul was pleased that God was pleased by their “acceptable sacrifice”, “a sweet smelling aroma” to Him.

Vs. 19-20 are Paul's confidence that God does take note and can and will reward, which brings us to that text.

- b. Vs. 19 - And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

Paul concludes by observing His desire and faith that God would supply their needs.

- i. So much could be said about this, but I just want to say, we serve a God who IS ABLE to do all that we need of Him. Ephesians 3:20, *Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly*

above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us,...

Remember vs. 13, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me..."

- ii. *Note that Paul here addresses our needs.* This verse is sometimes abused by purveyors of the prosperity gospel saying that God is going to give you everything you want (of course you make your payments to them instead of God). This is materialistic and unscriptural, and it does great harm to the true cause of Christ. How many see the church as nothing more than a place for their handouts and an avenue to achieve their selfish pursuits? Be reminded – what do we really NEED? Not much, compared to what we THINK we need. Paul summarized in in 1 Timothy 6:8, with food and clothing, let us be content.
- iii. What can God supply? One source I referenced notes 5 areas where man has needs: Physical needs, security – knowing our needs will be met in the future; emotional security – we want to be accepted; a purpose in life – I am needed; and opportunity to develop and grow. God can supply each of these needs:
 1. **Physical needs** – note Matthew 6:33, when we seek first the kingdom of God... a context encouraging us to not worry, but to trust God. God knows how to give you what you do need.
 2. **Physical security** – Matthew 6:34 – do not worry about tomorrow. When we live trusting God, we deal with today and trust Him for tomorrow. Thin also of the spiritual treasures of Matthew 6:19-21 – where is your treasure? God has also provided principles to help us with the future – you need to work – these things are no excuse to be lazy and unproductive (2 Thess. 3:10-12); live within your means (contentment, avoid debt, save responsibly, etc.)
 3. **Emotional security** – God loves us and wants us to be saved. Hebrews 13:5-6 He has not promised to deliver us from EVERY temptation that comes our way (1 Corinthians 10:13, 2 Peter 2:9). The faithful often pay a price in this world. But He DOES care and will protect that which is most valuable. Philippians 4:6-7 – lay your requests before Him and let it go – His peace will rule your hearts.
 4. **Purpose in life** – who has more purpose than being a Christian? Philippians 1:21 – for me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. Ephesians 2:10 – we have been created for good works which God prepared that we should walk in them.
 5. **Opportunity to develop and grow** – isn't that what the Christian life is about? Philippians 3:12-14 – Paul pressed toward the goal. 2 Peter 3:18 – grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior... Ephesians 4:15 – with His word we can grow into all things into Him.
 6. And on and on we could go.
- iv. According to the riches of His glory by Christ Jesus – remember all blessings are in Christ – Ephesians 1:3 in a passage where Paul lists numerous spiritual blessings. When we consider what God has done for us by sending Jesus (Romans 5:8-10), we can know that He does care about us and will provide what we need. We just need to trust Him and approach whatever comes our way with this in mind!
- c. NOTE: In this we must ensure that what we desire is according to His will (cf. 1 John 5:14-15, *Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.* – our confidence, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.) – we have a part. See also Colossians 3:17
- d. To our God and Father be glory forever and ever, AMEN. Typical of Paul's concluding admonitions – may God be glorified as He deserves.

III. Final Greetings (21-23)

- a. About this section. We know much of Paul writings was very personal. Any letter we have of His shows how much he cared. That is seen in these final sections. They show us that these are REAL historical letters (not fiction).

Many of his letters, we know that Paul would conclude with an autographed line or so (Colossians 4:18, 1 Corinthians 16:21, 2 Thessalonians 3:17). It is possible we have that here, though he does not mention himself as writing this. Such would clearly show approval of the message.

- b. Greet all the saints in Christ Jesus – mutual greetings. This shows this letter was not fabricated, but genuine as Paul addresses real people and sends greetings.

In many of Paul's letter's, he concludes with a list of names related to both the sender and receiver with various greetings (Romans 16:21-24, 1 Corinthians 16:19-20, Colossians 4:7-15, etc.). Here he is more general, but still he mentions "every saint in Christ Jesus" – could this be because of Paul's close relationship with them? He knew them all, and even those he did not know – THEY WERE HIS BRETHREN - his spiritual family.

I would do us well to think about that as we interact with one another – even from a distance. How do we treat our brethren via social media? Just a thought.

- c. All the saints greet you – first, note that these greetings are reciprocal. Good brethren surrounding Paul somehow knew of the brethren in Philippi and sent their greetings with Paul.

- d. Especially those of Caesar's household –

- i. Exactly who this is we don't know. It could be immediately family, or simply those in his close administration.

- ii. WE know that Paul, while imprisoned at Rome would have interacted with Roman soldiers in various capacities. Recall that earlier in this letter (Philippians 1:13), the whole palace guard knew that his chains were in Christ. We noted at that time, Paul likely on occasion had a captive audience. Do you suppose he took the time to try and teach them about his Lord? I can also see in that, they knew his "crimes" we unjust and imprisonment unwarranted.

- iii. The impact of this is to understand that even in the palace of Caesar there were Christians. The Roman Emperor at that time was Nero. He was hostile to Christ and His followers. It is strongly believed that the great fire of Rome in 64 AD was set by him, possibly to justify building a more grand city. He blamed Christians for setting the fire which fueled Rome's hostility toward Christians. According to Roman historian Tacitus (AD 60-120), Nero would put Christians to death for sport, including sowing some hides of beasts to be mauled by wild dogs, crucifying others and some he would dip in oil and set them on fire to illuminate the night. Another historian, Eusebius (~AD 260-340) records that Nero had Paul beheaded and Peter crucified.

- iv. But even at this time, Paul had had success. Never judge someone unworthy to try and reach! **Romans 1:16-17** – the power of the gospel to reach and change people. **Hebrews 4:12** – it is described as a two-edged sword that is able to pierce the heart. Trust the gospel to do its job.

- v. Be careful before judging who is worthy to hear the gospel. You never know WHO will respond until you try. Just consider the background of the apostles Jesus chose – fishermen, tax collectors, a zealot (an activist against Rome), etc.

Most will likely reject it, but know that some are searching – even in ungodly environments. In fact, it is often in the most troubling times that men and women begin to take a more serious look at themselves. Our goal is simply to be available when they are looking, and find some way to let others know you ARE a Christian and want to share God's word with them.

- vi. You can be a Christian, even in an ungodly environment. In fact, it is in such areas that Christians are needed. Remember Paul's admonition in Philippians 2:14-15.
Living the life of faith when it is being tested will make you stronger (Romans 5:3-5).
- e. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. A typical benediction for Paul. Paul always appeals to the grace of God – that is where our salvation, our hope and everything spiritual begins. AMEN.

And thus we conclude our study of Paul's letter to the Philippian brethren. It is a very fitting letter for troubling times such as these. Within its pages we learn how to be joyful at all times and to live with a view toward eternity. When you are discouraged at the way this life is going, let me encourage you to read this book and take courage in its message. And if there is some way we can help you, we stand ready. Think about it!