

Free Bible Version

Philippians

1 ¹This letter comes from Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, to all God's people in Christ Jesus living in Philippi, and to the church leaders and assistants. ²Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. ³When I think of you I'm so thankful to my God, ⁴and I'm always glad to remember all of you in my prayers, ⁵because you've been partners with me in spreading the good news right from the beginning up till now. ⁶I'm absolutely sure that God who began this good work in you will continue working and bring it to a successful conclusion when Jesus Christ returns.

⁷It's appropriate for me to be thinking this way about all of you because you mean so much to me. Whether I'm in prison or out there making the good news clear, all of you share God's grace together with me. ⁸God is my witness as to my great affection for every one of you in the caring love of Christ Jesus.

⁹My prayer is that your love may grow more and more in knowledge and understanding, ¹⁰so that you can work out what's really important. That way you can be genuine and blameless when Christ returns, ¹¹filled with the fruits of living right that come through Jesus Christ and give glory and praise to God.

¹²I want you to know, my brothers and sisters, that all I've experienced has worked out to move the good news forward! ¹³For everyone—including the whole praetorian guard^a—now knows that I'm in chains for Christ; ¹⁴and because of my chains most of the Christians here have been encouraged to speak God's word boldly and fearlessly! ¹⁵Yes, some speak out of jealousy and rivalry. However there are those who speak from good motives. ¹⁶They act out of love, because they know that I'm meant to be here to defend the good news. ¹⁷Those others present Christ deceptively because of their selfish ambitions, trying to cause me problems in my imprisonment.

¹⁸But so what? All I care about is that Christ is presented every which way, whether just pretending or whether from true convictions. That's what makes me happy—and I will go on

^a 1:13. Bodyguards to the Roman Emperor.

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being happy! ¹⁹Why? Because I'm convinced that through your prayers for me, and through the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, this will turn out to be my salvation.^a ²⁰For it's my strongest hope and expectation not to do anything of which I would be ashamed. Instead it's my bold hope, as always, that even now Christ will be greatly honored through me, whether I live or die.

²¹As far as I'm concerned, living is for Christ, and dying brings gain. ²²But if I'm to go on living here and this would be productive work, then I really don't know what's best to choose! ²³For I'm in a dilemma—I really want to leave and be with Christ, which would be far better, ²⁴and yet to remain physically here is more important as far you're concerned. ²⁵Since I'm absolutely sure of this, I know that I'll stay here, remaining with you all to help you as your trust and delight in God grows, ²⁶so that when I see you again your praise to Christ Jesus may be even greater because of me.

²⁷Just be sure that the way you live your lives corresponds to the good news of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or not I can get to hear how you're doing—that you stand firm in full agreement with one another, spiritually united as you work together for the trusting faith of the good news. ²⁸Don't let your enemies scare you. By being brave you will demonstrate to them that they will be lost, but that God himself will save you. ²⁹For you have been given the privilege not only of trusting in Jesus, but suffering for him as well. ³⁰You're experiencing the same struggle you saw me having—a struggle I still have, as you now know.

2 ¹So then, if you're encouraged by being in Christ, if you're comforted by his love, if you share together in the Spirit, if you have compassion and sympathy—²then make my joy complete by thinking the same way and loving the same way, spiritually united and having one purpose. ³Don't do anything from a spirit of selfishness or pride, but humbly think of others better than you do of yourself. ⁴None of you should be preoccupied about

^a 1:19. Paul may be referring to salvation from his immediate situation or his ultimate salvation, or both.

your own things—instead concern yourself with the interests of others too.

⁵The attitude you should have is the same as that of Christ Jesus. ⁶Though in his nature he was always God, he wasn't concerned to cling on to his equality with God. ⁷Instead he emptied^a himself, taking the nature of a servant, becoming like a human being. ⁸Coming in human form, humbling himself, he submitted himself to death—even death on a cross.

⁹That's why God placed him in the position of greatest honor and power, and gave him the most prestigious name—¹⁰so that in the name of Jesus everyone should bow in respect, whether in heaven or on earth or under the earth, ¹¹and all will declare that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

¹²So, my good friends, continue to work towards the goal of salvation with complete reverence and respect for God, following what you were told—not just when I was with you, but even more so now I'm away from you. ¹³For it's God who is working within you, creating the will and the ability to do what he wants you to do. ¹⁴Do everything without complaining or arguing ¹⁵so that you'll be sincere, innocent of any wrong. Be God's blameless children living in the middle of a dishonest and corrupt people. Shine among them as lights to the world, ¹⁶holding out to them the word of life. That way I'll have something to be proud of when Christ returns, proving I didn't run around and work for nothing! ¹⁷So even if I pour out my life as a sacrifice and offering so you may trust in God, I'm happy for it, and I'm glad together with all of you, ¹⁸just as you have such joy and are glad with me.

¹⁹I'm hoping, if that's what the Lord Jesus wants, to send Timothy to you soon. It will cheer me up once I know how you're doing. ²⁰I don't know anyone who genuinely cares about you as he does. ²¹Other people only worry about their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ. ²²But you already know what he's like—just as a child working to help his father, so he's worked with me to spread the good news. ²³So I hope to send him as soon as I see how I'm doing, ²⁴and I trust in the Lord that shortly I'll be able to come too. ²⁵But I thought it was important

^a 2:7. Indicating that Jesus chose to “empty” himself of his divine powers.

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to send Epaphroditus to you. He's a brother to me, a co-worker and fellow-soldier. He's the one you sent to look after me, ²⁶and he's been longing to see all of you, worried about you because you'd heard he was sick. ²⁷He certainly was sick—he nearly died—but God had mercy on him. Not just on him, but on me too, so that I wouldn't have tragedy upon tragedy. ²⁸That's why I'm so keen to send him, so that when you see him you'll be happy, and I won't have to be so anxious. ²⁹So welcome him with much happiness in the Lord—honor people like him, ³⁰because in working for Christ he nearly died, putting his life on the line to make up for the help you weren't in a position to give me.

3 ¹To sum up: my dear friends, delight in the Lord! It's not a burden for me to repeat these things to you—it's to keep you safe! ²Watch out for the wolves, those who do evil, those who insist on physical circumcision—³for it's we who are truly circumcised, worshiping by the Spirit of God, placing our assurance in Christ Jesus. We have no confidence in human abilities^a—⁴for if there was a way to rely on human nature then I myself could have that confidence! If anyone thinks they have confidence in such human things, then I outdo them: ⁵I was circumcised on the eighth day, I'm an Israelite of the tribe of Benjamin, a true Hebrew. Regarding legal observance I'm a Pharisee; ⁶as for religious dedication I was a persecutor of the church; while in regard to doing right according to the law I was blameless!

⁷But in whatever way such things gained me anything, I count them as a loss for Christ. ⁸Truly, I count everything as loss in exchange for the incredible benefit I've gained through knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. I've thrown away all these things for him, and consider them trash, so that I might gain Christ. ⁹I want to be found in him, not being right because of what I've done, or what the law requires, but made right through confidence in Christ, set right by God through trusting in him. ¹⁰I want to really know him, and the power of his resurrection—to

^a 3:3. Literally “flesh,” also in verse 4.

take part in his suffering and become like him in his death, ¹¹so that somehow I might be part of the resurrection from the dead!

¹²Not that I've already got it all, or that I'm already perfect—but I run so that I might win what was won for me by Christ Jesus. ¹³My friends, I don't consider that I've already won, but this is my one objective: disregarding what is behind me, I strain forward to what is in front of me. ¹⁴I run towards the finish line to win the prize of God's invitation to heaven through Christ Jesus.

¹⁵Those of us who are spiritually mature should think like this, and if you think anything different, then God will reveal this to you. ¹⁶We just need to make sure that we follow what we already have understood. ¹⁷My friends, copy my example as others do and take note of the way to behave since you have us as a model.

¹⁸The way some people live makes them enemies of the cross of Christ—as I've often told you before and repeat again though it pains me so much I want to weep. ¹⁹They will end up being completely lost, these people whose “god” is their physical desires and who are proud of what they should be ashamed of, thinking only about the things of this world. ²⁰But our homeland is heaven, and we're waiting for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, to come from there too. ²¹He will re-create our defective human bodies so that they will be made like his glorious body using the power by which he brings everything under his control.

4 ¹So stand firm in the Lord, my dear friends who mean so much to me, who make me so happy! To me you are my crowning achievement! I truly love you and long to see you! ²Euodia and Syntyche—I urge you to resolve your differences with each other and agree in the Lord. ³In fact, my faithful fellow-worker,^a let me ask you to help these women, for they worked together with me to spread the good news—as well as Clement and my other co-workers, whose names are recorded in the book of life.

⁴Always be happy in the Lord—I repeat, Be happy!
⁵Everyone should know about your kindness. The Lord will soon be here. ⁶Don't worry about anything, but take everything to God

^a 4:3. An unknown Christian worker presumably located in Philippi.

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in prayer, explaining your requests to him and thanking him for all he does.⁷ Then the peace that comes from God, which is better than we can ever imagine, will keep your hearts and minds protected in Christ Jesus.

⁸Lastly, whatever is true, honorable, right, pure, beautiful, commendable, whatever is truly good and deserves to be praised, think about these kinds of things.⁹ Put into practice what you learned and received from me, what you saw me doing and heard me say. Then the God of peace will be with you.

¹⁰I'm so happy in the Lord that you've at last thought about me again—realizing that you were concerned about me before but you couldn't do anything about it.¹¹ I'm not talking about my own needs, because I've already learned to be satisfied in whatever situation I find myself.¹² I'm used to having nothing, and I've experienced having plenty too. In every possible situation I've learned the secret of dealing with having plenty and going hungry, of being rich and of living in poverty:¹³ I can do anything through him who makes me strong!

¹⁴Even so it was good of you to share with me during my troubles.¹⁵ You Philippians remember that right at the beginning of sharing the good news, when I left Macedonia, that yours was the only church that helped me financially.¹⁶ Even when I was in Thessalonica you helped me out not once but twice.¹⁷ Not that I'm looking for a donation—I'm looking for your “account” to increase in “profit.”^a¹⁸ For I have everything, more than I need! I'm thankful to receive from Epaphroditus the things you sent. They're like a sweet-smelling sacrifice that pleases God and that he approves of.¹⁹ My God will fill you with everything you need in accordance with his glorious wealth in Christ Jesus!²⁰ Glory be to God the Father, forever and ever. Amen.²¹ Greet every fellow-believer in Christ Jesus. The Christian brothers and sisters with me send their greetings.²² All the believers send you greetings, especially those from Caesar's palace.²³ May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.

^a 4:17. Paul is using business terms, but probably referring figuratively to their spiritual “account.”

