



Philippians 1A

(Why You're Still Here)

Chapter 1:1-5

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A family had twin boys whose only resemblance to each other was their looks. If one felt it was too hot, the other thought it was too cold. If one said the TV was too loud, the other claimed the volume needed to be turned up. Opposite in every way, one was an eternal optimist, the other a doom and gloom pessimist.

So to teach them a lesson, for Christmas their father loaded the pessimist son's room with every imaginable toy and game, while the optimist son's room he loaded with a pile of horse manure.

That night the father passed by the pessimist's room and found him sitting amid his new gifts crying bitterly.

"Why are you crying?" the father asked.

"Because my friends will be jealous, I'll have to read all these instructions before I can do anything with this stuff, I'll constantly need batteries, and my toys will eventually get broken." answered the pessimist twin.

Passing the optimist twin's room, the father found him dancing for joy in the pile of manure. "What are you so happy about?" he asked.

To which his optimist twin replied, "There's got to be a pony in here somewhere!"

- Our perspective on life can be at odds with our reality
 - At times we may be sad or depressed when everything is going well, and other times when our world is falling apart, we look for the pony
 - Christians, in particular, experience paradoxical responses to life's trials, because Jesus told us it would be so

Luke 6:22 “Blessed are you when men hate you, and ostracize you, and insult you, and scorn your name as evil, for the sake of the Son of Man.

Luke 6:23 “Be glad in that day and leap for joy, for behold, your reward is great in heaven. For in the same way their fathers used to treat the prophets.

Luke 6:26 “Woe to you when all men speak well of you, for their fathers used to treat the false prophets in the same way.

- Jesus said we should be glad when the world attacks us because of our faith in Jesus
 - Conversely, Jesus said woe to us when we are loved by the world
 - It's paradoxical, and yet it's easily explainable when you see things from Jesus'

perspective

- What is His perspective? It's neatly summed up with a simple phrase I like to use: living with eyes for eternity
 - It means adopting an eternal perspective, recognizing we're just passing through this life...it's our next one that truly counts
 - So we want to put everything in this world to work for the sake of the next, including our trials
 - Everything that happens to us and around us can be useful to God and to us for the sake of the Kingdom program
 - Therefore, our mission is to respond to life's twists and turns in ways that maximize our obedience and God's glory
 - And as we begin a verse-by-verse study of Philippians today, you're going to hear me using that phrase from time to time
 - Having eyes for eternity is at the heart of Paul's letter to Philippi
 - So that's the perspective we need to gain if we want to understand it
 - As we begin today, we need to do a little homework
 - Studying an epistle is like reading someone else's mail, so we need to gain some context and background on the letter
 - We need to understand a little about the author and his readers
 - And we find that introduction in the first verse

Phil. 1:1 Paul and Timothy, bond-servants of Christ Jesus, To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, including the overseers and deacons:

- The author of this letter is, of course, the Apostle Paul
 - We all know that name, and I assume many of us know Paul's history
 - Paul, otherwise known as Saul, began his ministry career as a zealous, law-keeping Pharisee
 - In Acts 7 Luke tells us that while the first Christian martyr, Stephen, was dying for his faith, Paul watched and approved
 - Watching Stephen dying for his faith triggered something inside self-righteous Paul and he became obsessed with wiping out Christianity
 - So for the next several years, Paul embarked on a ruthless campaign to hunt down and eliminate believers in Jesus
 - He traveled far and wide arresting professing Christians, resulting in many being stoned to death
 - His name was feared among Christians throughout the empire, but Jewish leaders heartily approved his efforts
 - Then during one such journey to arrest Christians in Damascus, Jesus Himself appeared to Paul on the road and arrested him, so to speak
 - From that day onward, Jesus insisted Paul serve a different cause

- Paul flipped from seeking to wipe out Christianity to working tirelessly to advance the movement of the Gospel into the world
- Paul's transition was such an abrupt change that many in the Church debated whether Paul could truly be trusted
- Years later, Paul was still defending his apostleship to believers in the face of false accusations and unfounded suspicions
- But in time, Paul proved himself to be, without question, the single most important and effective ambassador for Christ the world has ever known
 - Paul wrote most of the New Testament epistles, founded most of the key first century churches and personally discipled many of its early leaders
 - Paul traveled tirelessly during four missionary journeys crossing most of the Roman Empire to preach the Gospel to Gentiles
 - Paul set the standard for service, so that perhaps more than anyone else, he could rightly say, "imitate me as I imitate Christ"
 - But Paul didn't do these great things in his own power, of course, nor did he do them alone
 - In fact, Paul was anything but a loner in ministry
 - He thrived on companionship in ministry and fellowship among the saints, and his letters reflect that
 - Notice at the outset of this letter Paul mentions his traveling partner at the time, a young man named Timothy
 - Timothy is one of several men who accompanied Paul during his four journeys, along with Luke, Barnabas, John Mark and Silas
 - Paul valued their company and support as he ministered from town to town
 - And Paul also thrived on the fellowship of believers in each city he visited, and he often mentions longing to return to them
 - Paul was a man who made friends easily, valued friendships for life, and encouraged the church to do the same
- Next, Paul refers to himself and Timothy using a favorite term: bondservant
 - A bondservant was a particular form of slavery and the dominant form of Paul's day
 - Most slavery in the Roman Empire was self-imposed: people made themselves slaves to work off a debt owed to a master
 - In time, a slave could pay off his debt through labor, and then the slave was free to leave service and regain his liberty
 - But in the course of that service, a slave might decide that a life serving a kind master was preferable to a life of freedom toiling in hardship
 - If so, then when his debt was paid, that slave might volunteer to continue in service to the master as a slave for life
 - The slave would renounce his freedom forever in exchange for the care and protection of the master
 - No longer was the slave working to pay off a debt; instead the slave was now

serving out of devotion to the master

- In this new relationship, the slave was called a bondslave, signifying he served his master out of a bond of love rather than obligation
 - Paul frequently referred to himself as a bond servant because the term aptly described his approach to serving Christ
 - All Christians are called slaves of Christ, because we have all been bought with a price of His blood
 - We all owe Him a debt of sin which He has paid on our behalf with His life
- But as we mature in our faith, we come to appreciate that Christ is a loving Master, One worthy of our devotion and sacrificial service
 - And as we come to that understanding, we become a bond servant, a slave serving his Master not out of compulsion but devotion
 - This is the way Paul described his service to Jesus, which was appropriate because of the way Paul entered that service
- As Paul encountered Jesus on the road to Damascus, Jesus blinded Paul and led him into the city to wait
 - Then Jesus sent another disciple, Ananias, to Paul to explain that Paul had been chosen by Jesus to preach to the Gentiles
 - And Ananias also explained that Paul would suffer many things in the course of that service

Acts 9:15 But the Lord said to him, “Go, for he is a chosen instrument of Mine, to bear My name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel;

Acts 9:16 for I will show him how much he must suffer for My name’s sake.”

- Paul began his service to Jesus as a slave...Jesus made him an offer he couldn't refuse, literally
 - Paul was given no choice in the matter...he was made an apostle by the will of God and conscripted into service like any slave
 - But in time, Paul came to know his new Master as a loving, merciful Savior, and then Paul's heart to serve changed
 - What had begun as a ministry of compulsion soon became a life of devotion, and Paul wanted all believers to see Christ the same
- Our entry into the faith comes like Paul's, theologically speaking...God finds us, we don't find Him
 - And in our initial period as a Christ-follower, Jesus is akin to slavery in that we are bound to Christ even before we know Him well
 - We are compelled by the Holy Spirit into a new walk of life by God's grace through our faith
- But in time, as we learn more about the God we serve, we come to know Jesus to be good, kind, generous and merciful
 - His yoke is easy, His burden is light, so our service to Christ moves from compulsion to devotion

- As we serve Jesus daily out of love for Him, we are bondservants of Jesus
- If serving Jesus in that way isn't familiar to you, then maybe it's a sign you haven't pursued your relationship with Him deeply enough
 - Maybe you're trying to fit your service to Jesus into your otherwise typical worldly life rather than the other way around
 - After all, it's not our service to Jesus that He desires as much as it is our devotion to Him
 - Slaves don't have typical lives...our life is serving our Master, and when your Master is as good as Jesus, it's the best life possible
- So that's a little about the author. Next, Paul identifies his audience as the saints in Philippi, an important town in the Roman empire
 - Philippi was a very prosperous city in the province of Macedonia named after the father of Alexander the Great
 - The citizens of Philippi enjoyed a number of privileges in Roman society including immunity from taxes and self-government
 - And because it sat on a major Roman road, it was also a center of commerce, and as a result, quite wealthy
 - Because of its strategic location on a major road connecting east and west, Paul traveled through Philippi multiple times during his journeys
 - Paul first visited the city in AD 50, and at that time he founded the church
 - Traveling with Paul at the time were Luke, Timothy and Silas
 - In Acts 16, Luke tells the story of how at one point Paul and Silas were thrown into prison in Philippi
 - Later that night God brings a great earthquake to open the jail and unlock their shackles
 - The jailer wakes up to discover the jail open, so he prepares to kill himself knowing he would be executed for the breach
 - But Paul calls out to save the man telling him all the prisoners have remained, probably because Paul persuaded them to do so
 - Paul's willingness to forgo his freedom so that he might have opportunity to preach the Gospel to that jailer bore great fruit
 - Saved from certain death by Paul's kindness, the jailer was eager to receive the word Paul was preaching
 - As a result, that man believed as did the man's entire household
 - From that moment, Paul started the church, teaching and ministering for a period of time before moving on
- Paul later returned to the city again during his third missionary journey in AD 57, and then three years later while in Rome Paul wrote this letter to the church
 - In AD 60, Paul was under house arrest in Rome awaiting an audience before Caesar
 - His house arrest lasted two years, during which time Paul wrote a number of letters in the New Testament, including this one

- And while Paul was under house arrest in Rome, the leaders of the Church sent a man, Epaphroditus, to visit him
- Epaphroditus brought Paul a gift of money, which must have been a great encouragement and relief to Paul
- So as Paul writes this letter from house arrest in Rome, he does so from an unique perspective
 - Paul's first experience in Philippi taught him how to see his present circumstances in Rome from a better perspective
 - God made Paul and Silas to suffer for a time in the Philippian jail so they could be in a position to reach the jailer with the Gospel
 - And because Paul was able to convert the jailer and his family, Paul was able to found the Philippian church
 - And because Paul began the church, these saints were now in a position to provide support and encouragement to Paul in Rome
- God used trial and suffering in Paul's life to further the Kingdom mission, and nowhere was that better illustrated than in Philippi
 - Understanding that connection between Paul's confinement in Philippi with his arrest in Rome is key to following this letter
 - Which leads us into Paul's supplication for the church...

Phil. 1:2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

- Virtually all of Paul's letters open with a prayer for his readers, as we see here in v.2 with Paul extending grace and peace to the church
 - Coming from Paul, those words had real power, because his words were inspired, meaning they came from God
 - Anytime a church received a letter from Paul, it was cause for great celebration, because they knew his letters were Scripture
 - In fact, at about the same time Paul was writing this letter, Peter, a fellow apostle, wrote this about Paul's writing

**2Pet. 3:14 Therefore, beloved, since you look for these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless,
2Pet. 3:15 and regard the patience of our Lord as salvation; just as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given him, wrote to you,
2Pet. 3:16 as also in all his letters, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which the untaught and unstable distort, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction.**

- Peter says that some in that day were trying to distort Paul's writing, just as they do to "the rest of the Scriptures"
 - Peter referred to Paul's writing as Scripture even as both men were still alive and writing letters

- This confirms that Paul's letters were seen as Scripture by the early Church from the very moment Paul authored them
- And therefore, when Paul told a church that God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ were sending them grace and peace, it's a real thing
 - So Paul's promise of grace or peace in his letters were not merely kind words intended to ingratiate himself to his readers
 - Paul was promising his readers that at the arrival of his letter, God Himself was at work granting them grace and peace
- As that church attended to Paul's letter, reading it and heeding it, they would see more of God's favor and experience greater peace
 - That promise continues today...as we study the word of God, Paul's letters in particular, we are gaining more than knowledge
 - We are receiving more of God's grace, His favor, and it will manifest in a variety of ways, including knowing greater peace
- Then, beginning in v.3, Paul starts the letter proper, and as we move ahead with him, I want to offer you a roadmap for how his letter is organized
 - There are four chapters to this letter, as we divide it today, and each has a main point or theme
 - These four points come together in support of a central idea summing up the whole letter
 - The central idea of the letter is simply “Christ is everything”
 - Every reason we have to live, to strive, to suffer and to excel, is for the purpose of Jesus Christ and His Gospel...Christ is everything in life
 - Apart from our Kingdom mission, our lives have no meaning and no purpose
 - Without Christ at the center of our life, nothing we achieve or become will last or mean anything in the end
 - When we make our life a tool in God's hands to bring many sons and daughters to glory, then we find meaning, joy & peace
 - So the letter's main idea is that Christ is everything in life, and Paul breaks this truth down into four parts:
 - Chapter 1: our purpose is living for Christ
 - Chapter 2: our attitude is thinking like Christ
 - Chapter 3: our rewards are coming from Christ
 - Chapter 4: our satisfaction is in serving Christ
- For what remains of today's lesson, let's take a few steps toward understanding every Christian's goal: living for Christ, which Paul begins very simply

Phil. 1:3 I thank my God in all my remembrance of you,

Phil. 1:4 always offering prayer with joy in my every prayer for you all,

Phil. 1:5 in view of your participation in the gospel from the first day until now.

- Paul told the church that he was always thanking the Lord for this church and praying joyfully for them at every opportunity
 - Some scholars have suggested that the church in Philippi was Paul's favorite, and certainly this letter leaves that impression
 - But Paul's praise for this church was not based in favoritism but rather was grounded in something very specific
 - Paul says in v.5 that his joy was in view of their participating in the gospel from the very first day until now
- That is high praise indeed, but it's important to understand what Paul was saying about this church
 - In basic terms, to participate in the Gospel is to join in the work of sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ and Him crucified
 - As we learned in our lesson on the Great Commission, there are many ways we can participate in that mission
 - And certainly, this church must have been active in evangelism and support of Paul and others who led the way
- But many churches did similar things, so that fact alone doesn't explain why Paul singled out this church for praise in this area
 - The difference seems to be that this church made participation in the Gospel a way of life
 - The Greek word translated "participation" is *koinonia*, which is usually translated fellowship, meaning a shared experience
- Paul was saying he joyfully thanked God that this church shared his same outlook when it came to the needs of the Gospel
 - Like Paul, they had made the Gospel a lifestyle choice
 - What's more, they made that choice on the first day, from the very beginning of their walk, and they still lived that way now
- Now when you hear that someone has made the Gospel a lifestyle, we tend to think of vocational ministry
 - For example, a pastor in full-time ministry has made the Gospel a lifestyle or a missionary on the field is living the Gospel lifestyle
 - Those examples are true, but here's the problem: they are just the tip of an iceberg
 - Full-time pastors and missionaries are just two examples of how to make the gospel a lifestyle, but there are many, many more
 - In fact, there are an infinite number of ways to make the Gospel a lifestyle, as many ways as there are believers in the Church
 - Remember, Paul said the entire Church in Philippi had fellowshipped in the Gospel with Paul from the beginning
 - Certainly not all believers in Philippi were full-time pastors or full-time missionaries
 - So what were the rest of those believers doing to make the Gospel a lifestyle?

- They were going to work in the marketplace or fields, keeping the house, raising kids, attending school, serving in the military
- They were ordinary people living normal lives, except that their lives were directed at the cause of the Gospel
 - When the blacksmith woke up each morning, he didn't think to himself, "My job is to be the best blacksmith today"
 - Instead, he said, "How can I serve the Gospel today in my blacksmithing?"
 - When the mother began her day, she didn't think "it's just another day of keeping house and raising kids..."
 - She said "today I will advance the Kingdom by keeping the house and raising the kids"
- The Philippian church understood that their very lives were about the Gospel...it's the only reason Jesus hasn't come back yet
 - Consider that for a moment...what's Jesus waiting for? In fact, ask yourself this...
 - Why don't Christians die and go to Heaven the instant we are saved? Escape pain and suffering and tears and sickness, etc.?
 - Wouldn't that make more sense? That's where we are all going eventually... why doesn't Jesus take us home immediately?
 - The obvious answer is that this life on earth serves some purpose in God's plan, and that purpose is the Gospel
 - And therefore, every believer from the moment we come to faith should make every day we live about serving the Gospel
 - Serving the Gospel is the only reason we're still alive today...and Paul was so thankful that the Church in Philippi understood that
 - That's where we are going in this study, in particular in this first chapter...learning how we adopt a lifestyle of the Gospel
 - And not all of us need to enter full-time ministry...but we all need to live with eyes for eternity
 - An in-depth study of this letter has the potential to transform your walk with Jesus
 - To give new meaning and purpose to your life, and with it, more peace and joy than you may have ever known



Philippians 1B

Chapter 1:5-11

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- Tonight, we pick up where we left off in our exciting journey through the book of Philippians.
 - I say “pick up” because the founder of VBVMI, Pastor Stephen Armstrong, began this teaching nearly 3 years ago.
 - In fact, his introductory teaching on Philippians was his very last message taught before his passing.
 - And we understood that for many who had listened to Steve for years you would be grieving along with us.
 - So, to allow the body to grieve, we tabled this teaching for some time.
 - Now, after three years, we felt that the Lord was leading us back to this book to finish it.
 - So, in obedience to the Lord, we will pick up where Steve left off.
 - In the meantime, I would encourage you to listen to Steve’s intro teaching to the book of Philippians in our single teaching section of the website.
 - It is there we have preserved the sermon entitled “Why are we still here?” along with all of Stephen’s extensive library of bible teaching which remains.
 - It is in the teaching “Why are we still here” that Steve covered verses 1-5.
 - So tonight, we will pick up in verse 5, however, I want to cover some key points from the introductory teaching.
 - We were provided an outline of what we would learn from each chapter of Paul’s letter. That chapter breakdown goes as follows: (Slide 1)
 - Chapter 1: Our Purpose is to live for Christ
 - Chapter 2: Our goal is to think like Christ
 - Chapter 3: Our reward is to come from Christ
 - Chapter 4: Our satisfaction is to serve Christ
 - Furthermore, I want to begin this teaching by leading with the fundamental question Steve left us with, “*Why are you not dead yet?*”
 - And most importantly, “*What are you to be actively doing for Christ with the life you have been given?*”
 - It is my prayer that we will see the beginnings of that question being answered in part, tonight.
 - If I were to put a tag on our text tonight, it would be: “Partakers of His Grace: Gospel Impact”
 - With that being said, I invite you to meet me in verses 3-5 of Philippians 1 for a quick overview.

Philippians 1:3 I thank my God in all my remembrance of you,
Philippians 1:4 always offering prayer with joy in my every prayer for you all,
Philippians 1:5 in view of your participation in the gospel from the first day until now.

- As you re-read through the opening lines of Paul's writing, it's hard to imagine that he is writing with such love while in such difficult circumstances.
 - He is writing this letter of love and thanksgiving while suffering for the sake of Christ and the advancement of the gospel.
 - And all the while, in his present condition, Paul is thanking God for all his remembrance of this church.
 - *You'll notice that throughout the duration of this teaching Paul will use the word "all" quite a bit.*
 - This means that Paul isn't just speaking to the individuals in the body that caused no issues or his favorite people in the church.
 - Rather he is speaking to everyone, even those who were at odds with one another. (Philippians 4:2 talks of an issue with Euodia and Syntyche's unity with each other)
 - Remember, Paul's remembrance, thankfulness, and prayers of joy for this church came about because of his closeness to this church.
 - It's like a father to his child and seeing them grow over the years.
 - It would have been about 10 years prior to this letter being written that Paul witnessed the growth of the gospel in the hearts of the people there, firsthand.
 - So, we see that even in the midst of Paul's great distress, being confined to a prison, that he is still experiencing joy.
 - And the way he is experiencing this joy is not circumstantially, rather it's experientially through Christ, sharing in grace with those in Philippi.
 - This experiential joy is fully known because positionally they are all kept and preserved in Christ.
 - As we will see in the teaching of Philippians, true Christian joy is not defined by the present circumstances, rather it is found in Christ.
 - And it's in verse 5 that we see the answer to Paul's overwhelming sense of joy regarding the Philippian church.
 - He mentions it is because of their "participation in the gospel" from the first day until now.
 - The word "participation" in Greek is *koinonia* which means fellowship.
 - However, when you consider the context of the word, this goes beyond being associated with a group in name only.
 - This is participation fellowship, meaning there is a sense of active sharing in the work of the group –
 - In other words, you are actively involved in some way and not just associating because you're in the vicinity.
 - So, what does Paul mean when he speaks about their participation in the gospel?
 - Well, he works out his explanation of this compound statement in verses 6-8.
 - Notice, Paul mentions their participation in the gospel from the first day until now.

- This means that their fellowship with Paul began when they were saved through the message of the Gospel by faith that Paul first preached to them.
- Perhaps what's in view here goes back to the events of their initial interaction with the Apostle Paul.
- Moreover, it begs the question: "When did the church of Philippi first begin? Or at what moment did they begin?"
- Well, we find the evidence of that in Acts 16.
- In Acts 16, we find that the Lord had given Paul a vision to go to Macedonia where He called Paul and his associates to preach the gospel.
 - So, Paul, Timothy, and Luke travel to Macedonia to a region called Philippi.
 - And Philippi was a Roman colony that was a leading district with great travel that occurred throughout.
 - And it is in Acts 16:13 that, on the Sabbath day, Paul, Timothy, and Luke went outside the gate in Philippi to a riverside. ("We" verses in Acts)
 - They traveled outside of the city because the city was not populated with enough Jews for the city to have regular synagogue.
 - However, individuals were able to gather by this riverside known as a "place of prayer". (Slide 2)
 - Within our context today, a building does not define the gathering of the people of God being the church – the people are the church. (2 Corinthians 6:16; 1 Peter 2:9)
 - So, it is at this riverside, outside the gates, that Paul and his co-workers began to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ.
 - And at this "place of prayer" a woman named Lydia has her heart opened and her and her household responds to the message of the Gospel.
 - From that point, Acts tells us that Lydia and her household are baptized and invite Paul and his fellow workers into their home to stay.
 - Paul later preaches the gospel to the Roman jailer before he falls on his sword, thinking Paul and Silas escaped, and gets his attention.
 - And when the jailer sees Paul and Silas were still there, he falls to his knees and asked, "What must I do to be saved?"
 - So, within Acts 16, we find that the church of Philippi began with Lydia and her household and the Jailer and his household.
 - This was the start of the church at Philippi, and this is where Paul's ministry and the Philippians' participation first began.
 - Notice, however, the text says, 'until now'. So this means that their participation began with coming to faith in Christ.
 - And that somehow their participation in Paul's ministry continued even after Paul left Philippi. So, what were they actually doing?
 - We will see what they were doing in verse 7.
 - However, before we see what they were doing, observe the confidence that Paul exudes from seeing their lives and participation in the gospel in verse 6.

Philippians 1:6 For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until *the day of Christ Jesus*

- So, Paul's confidence is rooted in the reality that the "good work" that began in the Philippians would continue until the "day of Christ Jesus".
 - There are a few things here that we ought to address.
 - The first question is: "Who is the One that has begun this good work?"
 - The answer is clear that it is God who has started this salvific work within the lives of every believer, not just the Philippian church.
 - It is God, in Christ, who has accomplished the work that has made peace between God and man.
 - And knowing that salvation is the means by which the Philippians are able to participate, shows that the good work is salvation itself.
 - Understand that fellowship with any group of people requires that there be unity of mind in particular beliefs or shared behaviors.
 - For example, when was the last time you fellowshipped with an enemy?
 - Chances are you haven't! Why? Because fellowship requires unity and familiarity around a common interest of beliefs and behaviors.
 - Friends, the same holds true with our salvation in Christ!
 - The reason we can commune together, and worship together is because we serve the same Lord who has brought us all to Spiritual life.
- So, Paul tells the Philippians that the same God that has saved you is the same God that will 'perfect' you.
 - This word 'perfect' is worth noting. It is the Greek word *epiteleeo* which means to be brought to completion or to finish.
 - This word also happens to be in the future, active, indicative.
 - This means that this process of salvation that has begun in you is consistently at work in you by God and will be fully accomplished.
 - In other words, Salvation is an actively, ongoing work in the believer.
- Paul begins this by saying that it is God who has begun this work within the believer. (Slide 4)
 - This is what we call 'the first tense of salvation' which is Justification.
 - Simply put, because of the finished work of Christ on the cross, when you believed in the Lord, it was Christ's righteousness placed on your account.
 - This is a work that is done at a moment in time when a person places faith in Christ.
 - The only thing that justifies is the perfect sacrifice of a perfect savior – Jesus Christ.
 - And Justification simply means that you are saved from the penalty of sin.
 - After one has been justified, you now move into what Paul expresses here as the "on-going" perfecting state.

- This second phase of salvation is known as Sanctification.
- Sanctification is a process that happens over time and is not a one and done thing.
- Sanctification is an act which requires one to walk by faith through and by the power of the Spirit of God.
 - So, this tense of salvation deals with overcoming the power of sin in your life.
 - We will see Paul talk about this reality further in Philippians 2:12-13 where he says this:

Philippians 2:12 **So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling;**

Philippians 2:13 **for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.**

- Lastly, notice in 6b the duration of this perfecting work. He says “*until the day of Christ Jesus*”.
 - In other words, there seems to be a finish line or a finishing event regarding the summation of this work within the believer’s life.
 - Notice what the text does not say: It doesn’t say “until the day of the Lord”
 - Rather it says “until the day of Christ Jesus”.
 - Why did I make this distinction? Because terms matter especially when the author uses them in a specific manner.
 - This event that Paul is speaking about is not to be confused with the Day of the Lord which is dealing with the tribulation period.
 - Paul calls this particular event, ‘The day of Christ’.
 - In other words, Paul’s joy is found in knowing that the work the Lord began in them will be fully perfected and realized when the believers in Christ see Jesus.
 - What is Paul saying here? Paul is using the phrase “Day of Christ Jesus” for the event known as the Rapture.
 - Although Paul did not have a set day in mind in which this event would happen, this event becomes the consuming joy that all believers joyously anticipate and work towards.
 - To see Jesus, face to face, in our new resurrected bodies at the rapture or when we die in this life is a reward of great joy in and of itself.
 - So, it’s at the Rapture, where every believer will be glorified and in knowing that day is coming, Paul says we should live well to that end.
 - This third tense of salvation is known as Glorification.
 - So, as we examine Paul’s statement in verse 6 Paul indicates that we have been saved, we are being saved, and that we will be saved.
 - And we will examine each tense of salvation as we walk through this book.
 - But let’s not rush too quickly past this point because remember, Paul said that

the Philippians were participating with him in the Gospel.

- Again, we know that this participation began by the ministry of the Apostle Paul having been sent to them by God.
 - But in verse 5b, Paul mentions that they have been participating with him in his ministry even until now.
 - This means that these believers were somehow actively engaged with Paul in gospel work. How, becomes the question?
 - We now arrive to the answer in verse 7, check out the text.

Philippians 1:7 **For it is only right for me to feel this way about you all, because I have you in my heart, since both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, you all are partakers of grace with me.**

Philippians 1:8 **For God is my witness, how I long for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus.**

- Paul continues by mentioning that his feelings toward the Philippians were of great love in the sense that they were readily on his mind.
 - This is a good place to be friends! That because of their constant dedication to the Lord and engagement in the gospel, Paul had a special bond with them.
 - It's like raising a child and seeing them grow from their infancy into maturity – it brings the parent great joy.
 - If you ever have recorded or observed your child's first steps, those beginning moments build greater anticipation of what is to come.
 - And those same affections are what pastors should experience with their congregations.
 - This outworking of joy and gladness that the sheep in which they shepherd are growing in leaps and bounds.
- Paul expresses this deep love on the background of the members of this church being participants in the gospel work.
 - What should strike us, however, is that all of these members in Philippi did not physically go with Paul on his missionary journeys.
 - They did not physically go to share the gospel alongside Paul.
 - So how can Paul say that, both within his imprisonment and defense of the gospel, they had been partakers?
- The word 'partakers' in Greek is very similar to the word *koinonia*. It is the word *synkoinonos*.
 - The prefix 'syn' deals with this idea of being synchronized or jointly linked.
 - In other words, Paul is saying that as I have suffered in my imprisonment and defended the gospel, so have you.
 - Being that we have established the Philippians were not there physically, means there had to be another means of their co-laboring.
 - We find their means of participation in Philippians 4:14-17. Check out the text:

Philippians 4:14 Nevertheless, you have done well to share with me in my affliction.

Philippians 4:15 You yourselves also know, Philippians, that at the first preaching of the gospel, after I left Macedonia, no church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving but you alone;

Philippians 4:16 for even in Thessalonica you sent a gift more than once for my needs.

Philippians 4:17 Not that I seek the gift itself, but I seek for the profit which increases to your account.

- So, how the church at Philippi became partakers of grace with Paul was through their financial giving.
 - Their gospel participation began with them sharing a common salvation to the point that it has now grown to their financial participation.
 - In other words where the Philippian's feet could not go their finances made a way.
 - Herein lies a biblical understanding of giving! That although I may not be able to go on a missions trip to remote areas, I can be praying or giving financially to those who can.
 - Because it is in my sacrificial giving that I can participate in the gospel work being done.
 - Our bank accounts and 401Ks etc. amount to nothing if there is no Kingdom contribution!
 - We will quickly figure out what is going on with the latest technology or the current moves on wall street, yet this world system has an end.
 - However, when we put our energy, treasure and efforts towards eternal things, the impact of gospel growth and evangelism to the lost has eternal impact.
 - As you'll see later on in this study, there is a sense that Philippi was Paul's primary means of financial aid to share the gospel as he traveled.
 - Herein lies how both Paul and the church at Philippi were co-laborers.
 - And even when Philippi could not give as much in their difficult circumstances, they gave what they could.
 - And as we walk through Philippians you will see that Paul will use himself as an example of how to imitate Christ even in distressing conditions.
 - So, Paul saw these men and women as his partners in ministry.
 - More importantly, Paul recognized that the reason why he was able to accomplish the gospel work that he did was because of the giving of others.
 - The reason the gospel could reach other people groups in that day was because of the Philippians' participation.
 - And might I just say this, that the reason why VBVI is able provide verse-by-verse teaching for free is because of the gospel participation of each of you.
 - There may be some who say "I don't have much to give", but can I say that whether through prayers or financially, the gospel is going forth and lives are being changed to the glory of God.

- So, we see in verses 7-8 that the deep compassion that Paul had for this church was rooted in their common salvation and gospel progression.
 - From here, Paul moves to his expanded prayer for the saints.
 - And that prayer is set in a place of deep love and affection for each individual in the church at Philippi. Check out verses 9-11.

Philippians 1:9 **And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment,**

Philippians 1:10 **so that you may approve the things that are excellent, in order to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ;**

Philippians 1:11 **having been filled with the fruit of righteousness which comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.**

- As we come to the close of Paul's opening statement, we see that the contents of his prayer encompass his previous point regarding their walk and work as partakers.
 - Remember, their walk in Christ began with them first receiving Christ as Savior for eternal salvation. (v.5)
 - And from the work that God began in their hearts, He would be faithful to continue until the rapture or their death (whichever comes first). (v.6)
 - So, in one aspect we see the Sovereignty of God at work regarding Salvation in the lives of His children.
 - But as we will see within the content of Paul's prayer, there is also a component of human responsibility in partnership with the Holy Spirit.
 - In other words, because God has done all the heavy work in saving us and keeping us, it does not exempt us from putting in the work to grow.
 - This means that we must put ourselves under the weight of the word of God if we are to see our growth in Christ realized.
 - And in all of this, it is fully accomplished within the bounds of God's Sovereignty.
 - Paul's prayer consists of several things that we find in verse 9: He prays that the Philippians will:
 - 1. Increase in love
 - 2. Increase in 'real' knowledge
 - 3. Increase in discernment
 - We will take time to break each of these down.
 - The word 'love' here is *agape* which is dealing with sacrificial love and deep affection.
 - In other words, Paul's desire for this church was for their love towards one another to overflow in an exceeding manner.
 - It's that type of love that goes beyond the comfort of one's "boundary" to care for those around them.
 - Understand, Paul is not speaking about an emotional love that is based on

conditions and circumstances.

- Rather, this love is shaped by what Paul says is “real knowledge” and “discernment”.
- Let’s examine both of these words in the original language to understand what Paul is saying here.
- The word for ‘real knowledge’ is the Greek word, *epignosis*. The root word here is *ginosko* where we get the word knowledge from.
 - *Epignosis* is knowledge that has been applied.
 - In other words, this type of understanding has come by way of living out and doing what the Word says.
 - Furthermore, the word for discernment in Greek is *aesthesia*.
 - This deals with one’s decision making and understanding based on the knowledge they gained by way of experience.
 - In other words, as you grow in your love for the Lord and pursue His ways, coming under the weight of His Word, it gives you clarity on how you should live.
- If you ever had an old school radio you know that FM and AM stations can be hard to detect.
 - It requires turning the knob to filter through the airwaves to find the right frequency.
 - You could be on the right station, but it requires some adjustments along the way – the turning of the knob to get the frequency just right.
 - But when you make the necessary adjustments to the left and right, you pick up on some familiar sounds.
 - You suddenly realize that as you tuned out the noise of the other waves and frequencies and focused in on the familiar sound of the station, you got the results you anticipated.
 - Friends, in the same way, we must tune out the noise of exterior and circumstantial frequencies in an effort to hear and know God’s word.
 - And this only comes by us having “real” knowledge (turning the knob) and discernment (knowing His Word) which is foundationally rooted in love.
 - And as Paul mentions in his prayer, this love for one another matures us!
 - In other words, the more that our love for the Lord grows the more that our affections and attitudes toward the Lord and others grows.
 - However, the opposite stands true as well. The believer’s lack of experiential knowledge of God reflects in how they deal with others and how they submit to God.
 - The most miserable people in the world to be around are Christians who know about God yet fail to come under the weight of God’s word!
 - Understand that growing in Christ is not an intellectual exercise or pursuit.
 - Yes, a part of growing in Christ is to know His word – that’s irrefutable!
 - But applied knowledge is what develops and nurtures the intimacy in the Lord.

- Check out what Kenneth Wuest, a New Testament Greek Scholar said regarding this ‘experiential knowledge’:

“A Christian can have an ‘understanding’ knowledge of the Word, that is, be able to explain its meaning to others, without having an experiential knowledge of the same. But when that Christian has put the Word of God into practice in his life, then he has what Paul is talking about here.”

- The difference between knowing your spouse and “knowing” your spouse is the level of intimacy one has with the other.
 - It is out of my love for my wife that I am able to grow more in love with her because we spend time with one another.
 - In the same way, our intimacy with the Lord produces growth in our walk and work for Christ!
 - The church in Philippi was demonstrating this in the fact that both their walk and their works produced something – gospel progression through Paul’s ministry.
 - And this progression not only aided in Paul’s efforts of reaching others, but it also goes to the account of the saints in Philippi.
 - How do we know that? Because it’s in verse 10 that Paul tells us what this growth produces.
 - Paul’s prayer for them growing in real knowledge and discerning love (v.9) is that it will enable the believer to rightly discern situations that will produce fruit.
 - In other words, regardless of circumstances, a proper response in trial matters and is rewarded accordingly based on this life!
 - Your response to those around you will either promote Gospel advancement or hinder your testimony as a witness.
 - Plainly put, how you respond in every circumstance reflects your walk with the Lord and impacts your works for the Lord.
 - So, what’s in view here is a means of evaluation regarding our present response (life and work) for our eternal reward.
 - Remember, the term “the day of Christ” is dealing with the Rapture.
 - Every believer will stand at the Bema Seat of Christ where we will be evaluated on how we lived and what we did for Christ. (Romans 14:10,12)
 - Paul’s point in mentioning things that are excellent, sincere, and blameless is speaking to what that intimacy should produce within us.
 - However, if we are not obeying the word of God and coming under the weight of the word, we leave ourselves prone to a life lacking spiritual growth.
 - The word “approve” in verse 10 is the Greek word *dokimazo* which means to examine or to approve.
 - This word was used regarding the testing of metals and coins to determine if they met a certain quality standard.
 - In other words, you and I are to examine our motives, what we do, and how we

live as if attaining a set standard.

- This is why Paul uses the phrase “The day of Christ” because upon this event, we will be evaluated on how well we walked and worked for Christ.
- Therefore, our motives, our ambitions, and our perspectives should be eternally minded and not earthly focused!
- Friends, when we have a clear view and understanding of the importance of the Rapture, it completely informs how we should live despite where we currently live!
 - That if we learn to have eyes for eternity, how we live, love, work, and lead in this life would completely shift.
 - Furthermore, this reality shows us that there is personal responsibility on the believer’s account in the sanctification process.
- Do not think that growing in Christ is something that simply happens by osmosis or intellectual exchange!
 - You must depend upon the Lord for the growth that we all need as well as for the work we must do.
- The reality is, not everyone can be in full-time vocational ministry, but your life is to be a full-time ministry to those around you.
 - Being a father, mother, employee, community leader, boss etc., is a ministry if you see it that way.
 - And the Lord has given us the ability to do that work well!
- And this can be accomplished when we use the spiritual resources given at our disposal, such as prayer.
 - James 1:5 tells us this regarding the believer’s ability to pray where there is lack:

James 1:5 But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him.

- Finally, Paul states that the things in verse 10 can be so because we have been filled with the fruit of righteousness.
 - Notice that it does not say the fruits of righteousness.
 - It is singular because the various results of righteousness produced within us comes from a single Source.
 - It’s like an apple seed that you plant in the ground. That seed will grow over time to produce fruit – and not just any kind of fruit.
 - An apple seed doesn’t produce oranges. It only produces apples.
 - And being that every believer has been justified and deemed righteous by God means that there will be fruit of some sort.
 - For some there will be stunted growth due to a lack of coming under the weight of the word of God.
 - For others, there will be much fruit because those individuals came under the weight of the word of God.

- However what remains the same for both, regardless of the production of fruit is the fact that both are saved!
 - But understand the hope is that from that Gospel seed having been planted and nourished in the word, that it should produce fruit. (The result of what is within them).
 - What is that fruit you might be asking? Well, it's what Paul expressed to the church at Galatia as the fruit of the Spirit!
 - Check out Galatians 5:22-23:

Galatians 5:22 **But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,**

Galatians 5:23 **gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.**

- The backdrop here is Paul speaking to the Galatians on how to walk by the Spirit and not by the flesh.
 - Just a few verses prior, Paul was telling the Galatians how they should walk instead of the ways in which they were walking before.
 - Yet here in Philippi, Paul is telling them that they should continue in their growth of participation in the Gospel work.
 - That as they continue to serve the Lord and give to the needs of ministry work, that they are adding to their account along with Paul.
 - And Paul's desire for them is that they continue to add to their account beyond their giving, but also in their daily living!
 - And as Paul mentions, both our walk and our work bring glory and praise to God, because at the end of the day He who began the work will finish it!
 - And what you will see in the end will be a result of what you did with the life you have been given in Christ.
 - It will either benefit you greatly or cause you to have missed on the opportunity of great eternal reward.
 - Let's Pray.



Philippians 1C

Chapter 1:12-30

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- Last week, we refreshed ourselves on some introductory points of Paul's letter to the Philippians.
 - And in doing so we covered Paul's flow throughout this letter, more specifically, the reality of the believer's perspective in suffering.
 - Tonight, as we approach the text we are going to begin to see Paul expound a bit more on this idea of suffering for the believer.
 - And in doing so we will see how Paul will use himself as an example by which to encourage the believer.
 - All the while, Paul will point us to the one in whom has set the template for his suffering, the Lord Jesus Christ, Himself.
 - If I were to outline our time tonight, we are going to see the following:
 - 1. Circumstances as Opportunities (vv.12-14)
 - 2. Right Message, Wrong Motive (vv.15-18)
 - 3. Christ is Exalted (vv.19-26)
 - 4. A Worthy Response (vv.27-30)
 - And I have entitled the title for tonight's teaching, "*How will you see it?*".
 - With that being said, I invite you to meet me in Philippians 1:12-14.

Philippians 1:12 Now I want you to know, brethren, that my circumstances have turned out for the greater progress of the gospel,

Philippians 1:13 so that my imprisonment in the cause of Christ has become well known throughout the whole praetorian guard and to everyone else,

Philippians 1:14 and that most of the brethren, trusting in the Lord because of my imprisonment, have far more courage to speak the word of God without fear.

- The Apostle Paul, after coming out of the introductory points of his letter, begins to move into practical experience on how the believer should view suffering.
 - He begins demonstrating, by way of real experience, how his present circumstances have become gospel opportunities.
 - However, for others to understand this reality, they must first have a proper perspective.
 - Notice, Paul begins with the phrase, in verse 12, "Now I want you to know brethren".
 - The phrasing presupposes that the writer knew that the recipients of this letter would have a different way of seeing his present circumstances.
 - That instead of seeing this situation as an opportunity, the Philippians would have assumed the opposite. (Hinderance of some kind)
 - However, Paul lets them know that his circumstances have actually served as a platform of Gospel progression.
 - That where perhaps Paul's circumstances could have been seen as a hinderance for ministry, it became gospel opportunity.

- Paul, in other words, is needing the Philippians to change the lens by which they are seeing these circumstances be unraveled.
 - For when we change our perspective on present trials and tribulations, it provides us opportunity to see God at work in our lives.
 - And through a proper perspective, it can become, both a testimony to others by which the Gospel can be shared and proclaimed.
 - As well as provides us encouragment as we are going through it.
- Paul mentions that his present imprisonment, because of the gospel, has caused Christ to be well known throughout the praetorian guard and to everyone else.
 - In other words, his relationship and service for Christ is what has caused him to be in this predicament.
 - Yet within this shared hardship, the Gospel of Christ is being advanced.
 - You have to love Paul's spiritual outlook on various circumstances. He provides the following outlook in 2 Timothy 2:8-9:

2 Timothy 2:8 Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, descendant of David, according to my gospel,

2 Timothy 2:9 for which I suffer hardship even to imprisonment as a criminal; but the word of God is not imprisoned.

- In other words, Paul is saying, even when you try to imprison and chain the messenger of the gospel, the message of the Gospel cannot be chained!
 - Plainly put, the circumstances Paul faced did not sour his view of Christ nor did it hinder Paul's ability to promote Christ.
 - For some, the moment that trial is introduced into their lives, the pressure causes buckling or a break down in their walk with the Lord.
 - However, Paul says in a few words, may it never be!
 - May our suffering both identify us with Christ and may His message be made known through us! (Our testimony).
 - Furthermore, we find that through Paul's imprisonment, Christ was made known to several witnesses: 1) The whole praetorian Guard and 2) "everyone else".
- The Praetorian guard were a group of about 10,000 elite soldiers assigned to guard members of high rank within the Roman government.
 - Along with their role, they were assigned to guard prisoners who sought to appeal a case before Caesar – in this case, men such as Paul.
 - The training and skill of these men were great! Somewhat like that of the Marines or the Secret Service.
 - And we find here in our text, that Paul was chained to one of these men in his rented home in Rome.
 - This means that day by day, hour by hour, these men would rotate consistently chaining themselves to Paul all the while hearing the Gospel.
 - Paul wasted no time while under house arrest. He used every opportunity as a way

to make Christ known in every situation he found himself in.

- Now, if we were to take an honest assessment of our lives, have we been able to see these moments of trial as platforms of grace?
- I'm sure that it got to a point within Paul's time in Rome that rather than being seen as a prisoner, Paul saw the rotation of guards as a door of opportunity to preach to a new person.
- Furthermore, the text mentions that along with the Praetorian guard, that this cause of Christ reached "everyone else".
 - Who could "everyone else" be?
- Everyone else would have included everyone from unsaved Jews in the Roman community, to Gentiles and even fellow believers in Rome.
 - It's not hard to see that with Paul's imprisonment for Christ word traveled quickly.
 - If social media was available during that day, Paul would have been on every Facebook and YouTube story talking about Jesus.
- And what became so profound is that through these difficult circumstances, a way for the Gospel to spread throughout the region was made.
 - It spread so quickly that Acts 28:23 tells us that the people were even coming to Paul, imprisoned, to hear about the Kingdom of God preached.
 - Check out the text:

Acts 28:23 When they had set a day for Paul, they came to him at his lodging in large numbers; and he was explaining to them by solemnly testifying about the kingdom of God and trying to persuade them concerning Jesus, from both the Law of Moses and from the Prophets, from morning until evening.

- ○ What the text seems to show us is that Paul's circumstances made way for the gospel to go to places he couldn't go, being in chains!
- In other words, the circumstances provided conditions by which made way for the Gospel to go forth.
 - Here's a question to ask ourselves: "How are you using your present circumstances as opportunities to share the gospel with others?"
 - Are our circumstances geared more towards minimal glory to the Lord (self-focus) or maximum glory for the Lord (Christ-focused)?
 - Clearly, Paul saw that in all things and in every season, Christ can and must be glorified!
- It's in verse 14 that we see the results of Paul's outlook on his circumstances, because he mentions that his circumstances have caused courage to be increased in many!
 - The word for courage in Greek is *tolmao* which speaks to one being bold.
 - This boldness is based upon one being able to endure or overcome without fear in the face of danger.
 - Consider that, for many, seeing Paul's circumstances meant that the next potential step for him could have indeed been death.

- And perhaps this is what Paul had in mind when he said this in verse 20: “Christ will even now be exalted in my body, whether by life or death.”
- We will see how Paul’s use of death in verse 20 comes into play when we arrive to verses 19-20.
- Paul clearly knew what it meant for Him to proclaim Christ – It was life or death.
 - It’s like when the pressure cooker of life has been put on, the question becomes, “What will it produce in the end?”
 - Prayerfully it produces steadfastness and dependency upon the Lord, all the while being further conformed into Christ’s image.
- And because of the believers hearing about Paul’s circumstances, they too became emboldened by the Spirit to stand firm!
 - That where this circumstance could have been opportunity to tuck tail and run, it became the means of propelling them into greater gospel proclamation.
- I remember when Steve had passed in 2021, I found myself wrestling with the question, what’s next?
 - What am I going to do? The man that had trained me and was a Spiritual father to me has gone. What am I to do?
 - Do I go back to teaching high school and leave ministry or do I move forward.
 - And I remember, when I got the news of his passing, that I could sense the Holy Spirit emboldening me to step up in ways I couldn’t imagine!
 - It was in that moment that I recalled Steve’s words to me my first week at the Fellowship. He said, “There’s no going back!”
 - Friends, our circumstances have a way of being a vehicle by which will:
 - 1. Propel us into maturity for Christ
 - 2. Increase our witness for Christ
 - 3. Give us spiritual eyes to see like Christ
 - And my prayer for each of us is that our trials are promoting these very things!
 - We now move to Paul’s next personal example of circumstances in verses 15-18 only this time they are stemming from within the believing body.

Philippians 1:15 Some, to be sure, are preaching Christ even from envy and strife, but some also from good will;

Philippians 1:16 the latter do it out of love, knowing that I am appointed for the defense of the gospel;

Philippians 1:17 the former proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition rather than from pure motives, thinking to cause me distress in my imprisonment.

Philippians 1:18 What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed; and in this I rejoice. Yes, and I will rejoice,

- We find that Paul is continuing the same train of thought as found in verses 12-14 regarding present circumstances.

- And in this case, Paul discusses the word being preached from two types of people: 1) Those who preach out of envy and 2) those out of good will.
 - Furthermore, Paul mentions that the difference between these individuals is their motives for preaching.
 - However, before we move too quickly, notice who Paul is talking about? He uses the word “Some”.
 - The question becomes: “Who are these individuals proclaiming Christ?”
- These individuals who are proclaiming Christ with ill-motives are not false teachers, rather these are orthodox teachers of the word of God.
 - Yet, these local ministers and preachers of the gospel are seeking to take advantage of Paul’s situation to increase their following.
- In other words, to these preachers, Paul’s imprisonment is an opportunity to advance their personal agendas.
 - All the while the other ministers who are proclaiming the gospel are doing it in good will.
 - Meaning, in their hearing of Paul’s imprisonment, they join in unity with Paul on advancing the gospel through suffering.
- Within many Christian circles, one of the biggest downfalls is the ugliness of the human heart intermingled in the work of ministry.
 - One of my favorite sayings from Steve was: Ministry would be so much easier if it didn’t have to deal with people.
 - And his meaning behind that statement was that when it comes to people and ministry, we are all broken people trying to point to a perfect Savior.
 - And the reality is, this does not always come across well.
 - There are many ministries that have been created simply to get a larger following because the focus is more views and site visitations.
 - Other ministries and churches will preach the gospel all the while the heart behind it is to garner crowds and bigger buildings.
 - There are even ministries that will seek to capture audiences out of a desire to get their message or teachings because of envy.
 - Whatever the case may be, you have to love Paul’s position in it all which is found in verse 18a.
 - Paul says, “What then?”
 - Another way of putting it would be, “And if that is their desire, so what?!”
 - Paul is saying that regardless of their motives, if they have a right message, then praise God!
 - Because at the end of it all, the Lord measures the motive! (Proverbs 16:2, 1 Corinthians 16:14, James 4:3, 1 Corinthians 4:5;)

1 Corinthians 4:5 Therefore do not go on passing judgment before the time, but wait until the Lord comes who will both bring to light the things hidden in the darkness and disclose the motives of men’s hearts; and then each man’s

praise will come to him from God.

- ○ Paul's perspective becomes radically different than the average person's response in this matter.
 - For some ministers and ministries, folks would be up in arms at another ministry or church being started in their area because of "competing interest".
 - Instead, Paul is saying, "If my circumstances cause an increase in an accurate gospel going forth, Praise God!"
 - Unfortunately, at times, we come across what I call "territorial Christians" who seek their own selfish interest, rather than seeing the greater picture.
 - And the greater picture is, Christ being magnified and shared throughout a lost world.
 - That rather than "click rates" and "likes" on social media, we should be more concerned with uncompromised truth being proclaimed accurately!
 - So, Paul sets the tone for us all in how we are to approach our walks in Christ.
 - That we should walk in humility and unity with our affections and focus on Christ and His message and not our personal agendas.
 - The moment that we lose sight of that, we begin to center everything around us.
 - And as a result, our lenses become skewed and our perspectives inward focused rather than Christ-focused.
 - In it all, Paul sees what could have been a messy situation as a joyous one!
 - As a matter of fact, Paul is so secure in his personal relationship with Christ and the ministry entrusted him, that Paul rejoices, doubly.
 - Notice in verse 18b he says, "Yes and I will rejoice!"
 - How can Paul have such an eternal perspective?
 - Because Paul realizes that the end result of Gospel transformation in this life leads to both his sanctification and glorification in Christ.
 - But most importantly, Christ is made known!
 - In other words, these circumstances are producing something in me, both to and for the Glory of Christ!
 - Paul is now going to mention how this provision of progression through his circumstances would be achieved in verses 19-20. Check out the text:

Philippians 1:19 for I know that this will turn out for my deliverance through your prayers and the provision of the Spirit of Jesus Christ,
Philippians 1:20 according to my earnest expectation and hope, that I will not be put to shame in anything, but that with all boldness, Christ will even now, as always, be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death.

- Paul recognizes that his present circumstances served as a means of gospel advancement no matter what he faced.

- And it was by way of the prayers of the saints and the provision of the indwelling Holy Spirit, that Christ would complete His work in Paul’s life.
 - Paul was confident that these various circumstances would turn out for his deliverance.
 - The word for “deliverance” is *soteria* which is the typical translation for the word, salvation.
 - It can mean deliverance, rescue from danger, or to make safe.
- Looking at this word, we can eliminate the fact that Paul is talking about his salvation in the first tense – he has already been justified.
 - So, it begs the question, “What tense of salvation is Paul referring to?”
 - It leaves us with Paul speaking about either his sanctification (current living state/maturity) or glorification (rapture/presence of the Lord).
- We see that Paul is understanding that what He is going through is all a part of God’s plan for him in an effort to complete the work God started in Paul.
 - Remember, it was Jesus in Acts 9:15-16, who told Ananias about the ministry Paul would take while on the Damascus road.
 - And check out how the Lord describes Paul’s coming ministry for Him.

Acts 9:15 **But the Lord said to him, “Go, for he is a chosen instrument of Mine, to bear My name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel;**

Acts 9:16 **for I will show him how much he must suffer for My name’s sake.”**

- So, it’s not by surprise that throughout the duration of Paul’s ministry that suffering would be an indication of Christ’s work through him to the Glory of God.
 - Furthermore, it’s in Acts 20:1-6 that we find that there was an assassination attempt on Paul’s life that led him to flee.
 - Check out what Luke records in Acts 20:1-6:

Acts 20:1 **After the uproar had ceased, Paul sent for the disciples, and when he had exhorted them and taken his leave of them, he left to go to Macedonia.**

Acts 20:2 **When he had gone through those districts and had given them much exhortation, he came to Greece.**

Acts 20:3 **And there he spent three months, and when a plot was formed against him by the Jews as he was about to set sail for Syria, he decided to return through Macedonia.**

Acts 20:4 **And he was accompanied by Sopater of Berea, the son of Pyrrhus, and by Aristarchus and Secundus of the Thessalonians, and Gaius of Derbe, and Timothy, and Tychicus and Trophimus of Asia.**

Acts 20:5 **But these had gone on ahead and were waiting for us at Troas.**

Acts 20:6 **We sailed from Philippi after the days of Unleavened Bread, and came to them at Troas within five days; and there we stayed seven days.**

- Remember, Acts 20 documents Paul’s third missionary journey and as we read, we see

that a visit to Philippi occurred again.

- And the visit to Philippi occurred because of a previous attempt on his life.
- So Paul, again, is recognizing something regarding his imprisonment. This prison is the means which is keeping him alive by God's grace.
 - And all the while this place that is meant to keep one locked up and oppressed has become a platform of Gospel progression throughout the region.
 - So, Paul tells Philippi that their continued prayers and the Spirit of Christ provide him the steadfastness by which he can endure.
 - And in all this, Paul says that every situation, whether a threat on my life, a beating in public, or wrongful imprisonment, Christ is exhausted!
 - That both in life and in death, I am secured in Christ, therefore He becomes the focus!
 - Friends, this radically changes how we are to see our circumstances in this life!
 - This eternal perspective provides us with a boldness that no matter what comes, it is well with my soul!
 - In plain terms, Paul's very life is at the Lord's disposal however the Lord so desires to use Paul (and us)!
 - So, Paul will now move into a time of personal praise and exaltation as to how this reality plays out in his very life. Look at verses 21-26.

Philippians 1:21 For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.

Philippians 1:22 But if I am to live on in the flesh, this will mean fruitful labor for me; and I do not know which to choose.

Philippians 1:23 But I am hard-pressed from both directions, having the desire to depart and be with Christ, for that is very much better;

Philippians 1:24 yet to remain on in the flesh is more necessary for your sake.

Philippians 1:25 Convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy in the faith,

Philippians 1:26 so that your proud confidence in me may abound in Christ Jesus through my coming to you again.

- Paul uses himself as an example for the saints in Philippi to show that we are to live for Christ and to have eyes for eternity in all things.
 - And in doing so, Paul relates this experiential joy in Christ, both in life and death.
 - Now, to those who do not know the Lord, to hear how death can be something to joyously anticipate makes no sense.
 - In fact, most infomercials that come on TV today are products and manufactured drugs that promote anti-aging solutions.
 - Other products and work-out routines seek to somehow delay the inevitable – death!
 - In an article from Pharmaceutical-technology.com in 2021, it was reported that Amazon founder, Jeff Bezos invested in an anti-aging start up.

- And the focus of this company is to develop drugs that would pro-long human life.
- What becomes certain is that people are afraid of death because many don't know what is to come!
 - However, for the believer, we know where we will be in the end.
 - Paul gives this joyful encouragement regarding believers who have died in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-14.

1 Thessalonians 4:13 But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve as do the rest who have no hope.

1 Thessalonians 4:14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus.

- Paul's point here is that death is not the end for the believer. There is life beyond the grave.
 - And this hope, Paul says, is certain! Why? Because of what was witnessed in Christ being raised from the dead.
 - And because Christ has been raised from the dead, all those who are in Christ (having been justified) will be raised as He was!
 - Therefore, Paul has no angst or worry regarding a possibility of death, such as the assassination attempt that was on his life in Acts 20:1-6.
 - Paul says in few words, whether I continue living and working for Christ in life or my life is cut short by death, Christ is exalted in both!
 - For Paul, living meant fruitful labor contributing to his rewards in the life to come. (v.22)
 - And at the same time, death meant being with Jesus in His presence, face to face, to receive his rewards!
 - Therefore, both circumstances rendered a joy of being either in Christ or with Christ!
- Unfortunately, today, even among Christian circles, many have become so content in this life that to think about death is a scary thing.
 - And this comes about because we too often tie ourselves to the glitter and glam and things of this world.
 - We begin to grow emotional ties to temporary matters rather than anchoring our affections to eternal things.
 - So Paul says, I'm not so tied to this world that I want to remain in it!
 - This is why we often proclaim, Maranatha! Come Lord Jesus, Come!
 - As one lyric to a song my wife and I love to sing says: "The earth is ghetto I want to leave!"
 - So, it's at this point that Paul comes across a bit of a conundrum as it relates to what he wants to see for himself.

- He mentions in verse 23 that he is “hard-pressed” from both directions regarding living or dying and what he would rather have.
- This is not Paul condoning nor promoting suicide by any means because the death would not be of Paul’s personal doing.
- Rather, Paul is wrestling with the beneficial outcome of both situations as it relates to those in whom he has led to Christ.
- Paul sees death, more as a benefit for himself, whereas life being more of a benefit to the Philippians themselves.
 - And as I thought about this, Steve came to mind. Lord, “Why did you take Steve when you did?”
 - Because, in my mind, having him here would be a benefit to us all to continue growing in the word of God.
 - Yet, God had other plans for Steve and knew that the Lord would provide all who He needed to continue the work that Steve began.
 - So, although we grieve the loss of the founder of this ministry, know that Steve is rejoicing because he is with the one in whom he taught about.
- So, Paul recognized that the work the Lord had set out for him to accomplish was not done yet!
 - That Philippi and the other churches needed to be written to, encouraged, developed, etc.
 - Therefore, by God’s grace and providence, the Lord continued with Paul’s ministry of suffering which provided confidence for many others.
 - And we see that reality even today as we are studying this very book written by Paul.
 - So, I ask you this question, “Why are you not dead yet?” Answer: Because the Lord still has work for you to do!
- Lastly, we see that through Paul remaining in life with them it served as development for their confidence, which was rooted in Christ and patterned by Paul.
 - What I mean by that is that as these Philippians observed Paul’s life and witnessed his work for Christ, that they in turn would imitate Paul.
- This is why in Philippians 3:17, Paul says this:

Philippians 3:17 Brethren, join in following my example, and observe those who walk according to the pattern you have in us.

- ○ So, Paul now moves to a practical means by which the believers in Philippi, and even us today, are to conduct ourselves, positionally in Christ.
 - Check out verses 27-30.

Philippians 1:27 [Only] conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or remain absent, I will hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving together

for the faith of the gospel;

Philippians 1:28 in no way alarmed by your opponents—which is a sign of destruction for them, but of salvation for you, and that too, from God.

Philippians 1:29 For to you it has been granted for Christ's sake, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake,

Philippians 1:30 experiencing the same conflict which you saw in me, and now hear to be in me.

- We find Paul now transitioning from experiential matters to more personal exhortations towards the Philippians.
 - A better reading of the beginning of verse 27 is found in the NIV where it translates, ["Whatever happens"] rather than, "only".
 - In other words, whether circumstances permit me to come and see you or my absence keeps me from you, walk in a manner that is worthy!
 - What an encouraging piece from Paul's heart to the Philippians!
 - To put it differently, Paul is letting the Philippians know they should walk in a way that reflects, positionally, who they are no matter who is watching.
 - We see this reality in the fact that Paul says that they ought to "conduct themselves in a manner worthy".
 - That entire phrase in Greek is a political term and was especially known by Roman citizens.
 - It means to "live as a citizen" and for Roman citizens, there were given many privileges.
 - One privilege was that they would not have to encounter rough treatment that non-Romans normally would.
 - I mention this example because it speaks to why Paul demanded a public apology by the Roman body in Acts 16:35-39. Check out the text:

Acts 16:35 Now when day came, the chief magistrates sent their policemen, saying, "Release those men."

Acts 16:36 And the jailer reported these words to Paul, saying, "The chief magistrates have sent to release you. Therefore come out now and go in peace."

Acts 16:37 But Paul said to them, "They have beaten us in public without trial, men who are Romans, and have thrown us into prison; and now are they sending us away secretly? No indeed! But let them come themselves and bring us out."

Acts 16:38 The policemen reported these words to the chief magistrates. They were afraid when they heard that they were Romans,

Acts 16:39 and they came and appealed to them, and when they had brought them out, they kept begging them to leave the city.

- So being that Paul understood the significance of citizenry in Rome, he amplifies its

use.

- And in doing so, he lets the Philippians know, “Understand that you are a part of another Kingdom that is greater than where you presently reside.”
- So being a citizen of the coming Kingdom means that this future reality comes with a new way of living that is unique to its citizenry.
 - It’s one thing to know your rights as a citizen but it’s another thing to live below the standards in which you have been graciously given!
- So, Paul is saying, “Whether I am with you or apart from you, live how you ought to – in a manner that is worthy of Christ. (Your Testimony)
- Paul lays out what I see as four things regarding what should emerge from our living in a manner that “positionally” reflects who we are in Christ despite opposition!
 - He says that this way of living looks like the following: (vv.27-28)
 - 1. Standing firm in one spirit (As one body)
 - 2. With one mind (Walking in soundness)
 - 3. Striving together in gospel unity (Enduring well together)
 - 4. And resilient amid opposition (No fear of man)
 - When the body of Christ in Rome failed to stand in these ways, not only did it bring into question who they represented –
 - But it would cause a hinderance in their witness for Christ.
 - In other words, “I know that positionally you have been justified, but why aren’t you living like you have been saved?!?”
- The fact that we have been justified is a work that God alone has done which means His righteousness alone has made you clean and right before God.
 - And what this means now is that you have the power in Christ to live, act, and behave in a way that reflects the grace that we have fully received.
 - The life of the believer must become a consistent reminder that God has done something magnificent in you, now get in line and live like it!
 - Furthermore, in verse 28, Paul makes the point that when we live on mission, not even the fear of man will cause trepidation in our lives because we know who holds our fate! (Verse 28)
 - That when the believer remains steadfast and unmovable in opposition, it becomes a sign of the unbeliever’s coming destruction!
 - Another way to see it is if the righteous who suffer are suffering unjustly by the hands of the unrighteous, how much more will the Lord judge those who have caused the suffering upon those in whom He has deemed righteous.
 - It’s what we find in Exodus regarding the Law of retaliation (an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth).
 - The reality is judgement is inevitable and every person will have to give an account for why they did not respond to the gospel. (Noah and The Flood)
 - Just imagine having lived a full life, not believing in God, only to come before a Holy God to give an account as to why you did not trust in Christ!?
 - Hopefully, it gives us a sense of great sadness for those who do not know

Christ.

- Finally, it's in verses 29-30 that Paul says that it has been "granted" to the believer that we not only believe with Christ for salvation, but that we also suffer with Christ.
 - There is this sense of sharing in both the joys of Christ and the sufferings of Christ.
 - And Paul makes mention in his use of the word "granted" that this is a grace in and of itself.
 - That God can use the sufferings of this life to both shape and perfect us into the very image of Christ.
 - And unfortunately for some, we tend to see suffering as a bad side-effect of the Christian walk.
 - However, Paul reassures us that suffering is in fact a key ingredient of walking in a manner worthy of Christ.
 - Because if everything came easy and nothing was worth working towards, is there really a cost to be counted?
 - As my wife and I like to say, our walk with Christ is both an individual and group project.
 - Are we walking well with each other, are we uplifting each other, are we correcting each other, are we praying for one another?!
 - Because when we approach our walk in Christ as a battlefield in this world, we recognize that we aren't alone!
 - More importantly, we know that we are able to overcome the adversity we face, because Christ overcame and His Spirit indwells us.
 - Paul's point thus far is that when we have a proper perspective on what Christ has done, our outlook on circumstances begin to change.
 - Because it's by going through those circumstances that we are fashioned knowing that it's a type of grace to suffer with Christ.
 - Let's Pray.



Philippians 2A

Chapter 2:1-11

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- Within our time in Chapter 1, we came to understand that our purpose is to live for Christ.
 - And in understanding that purpose, we can better understand how we are to accomplish/actualize that purpose.
 - That the way to live like Christ is to see things the way in which Christ sees it.
 - And we can see things the way in which He sees things because He has provided access for us to do so in a ‘positional’ sense.
 - Meaning, because He has saved us and reconciled us to the Father, we have been enabled to walk, live and respond like Him by the Spirit.
 - And this reality is realized through what He alone accomplished in His death, resurrection, ascension and glorification.
 - Tonight, we move into Chapter 2 where we will learn how to think like Christ.
 - It’s one thing to be in Him, but it’s a whole other thing to think like Him.
 - And this goal is achieved when we learn to put on the mind of Christ and abandon the mindset of our ‘old man’ (sin nature).
 - If I were to outline our time tonight, we are going to see the following things:
 - 1. Live Like Christ (vv.1-5)
 - 2. Christ, the Ultimate Example of Humility (vv.6-8)
 - 3. Christ’s Exaltation by way of demonstration (vv.9-11)
 - If I were to put a tag on our text tonight, it would be: *The Way of Humility: Christology in Practice*.
 - With that being said, I invite you to meet me in Philippians 2 and we will begin by reading verses 1-4, together.

Philippians 2:1 **Therefore if there is any encouragement in Christ, if there is any consolation of love, if there is any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and compassion,**

Philippians 2:2 **make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose.**

Philippians 2:3 **Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves;**

Philippians 2:4 **do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.**

- Paul begins this section of the text with the transitioning word, “Therefore”.
 - And for any bible student, you should always ask the question, what is “therefore” there for?
 - In doing so, we find that Paul is connecting his previous statements with these “if” clauses in verse 1 as he continues this singular thought.
 - And that thought begins in verses 27-30 of Philippians 1.
 - It’s in those preceding verses that Paul summarized how the life of the believer should be reflective of the grace demonstrated towards the believer.

- In other words, because Christ has made this life available to you by way of His service, by grace, we should live in such a way that brings attention to that great grace which brings Him glory.
- So, it's His grace that provides the believer the ability to live 'in a manner worthy of Christ', because we have been justified through His work!
- You might recall, the phrase "conduct yourself in a manner worthy" is one word in Greek which means to "live like a citizen."
 - And this citizenship has moved us from death to life and provides us with a new outlook and mind which is fully realized in Christ.
- However, as Paul's letter brings to light, there seems to have been some issues within the church of Philippi which warranted correction.
 - And one of the issues that has been raised is this issue of humility and unity within the body.
 - And this internal schism is personally addressed by Paul in Philippians 4:2. (Euodia and Syntyche)
 - So, in the meantime, Paul is going to remind them that because we are in Christ our motives and mind-set should be Christ-focused and not self-focused.
- Therefore, Paul transitions from the previous statement in verses 27-30 into verse 1 with the believers' "positional reality" in Christ.
- He tells the Philippians in verse 1, that because you are in Christ and have encountered this gracious gift by which you are a new creation, live according to what you have received!
 - And Paul makes this point through the use of these "if" clauses.
 - Notice that Paul uses the word "if" four times in verse 1 alone.
 - This "if" clause is in what is known as a first-class condition which simply means that Paul's use of the word assumes each statement is true.
 - Plainly put, all these things in verse 1 are fully yours and possible, because you are in Christ.
 - So, another way to read verse 1 would be:
 - *"Therefore, [because you have] encouragement being united in Christ, [because you have] comfort from His love, [because you have] common sharing in the Spirit, and [because you have] affection and compassion in Christ...make my joy complete..."*
 - All of this is fully expressed by Paul because as he mentioned in verse 29 of Chapter 1, this life has been "granted" or graced to us.
 - In other words, the grace in which the Lord has made us new creatures in Christ is a work that Christ alone accomplished.
 - His work alone sufficed for us to be reconciled to God and not any meritorious efforts of our own.
 - Therefore, Paul is saying that there is no room for the believer to respond in arrogance, pride, dissension or with a lack of humility toward one another.
 - So, because you are saved, you should function in unity amongst one another and

in submission to Christ in your behavior.

- The reality is, these things would be impossible to accomplish if we were not saved, because we were dead in our sin.
- Prior to coming to Christ, we had no desire to live in such a way!
 - It's this grace-oriented reality that makes possible the ability for the believer to be grounded in Christian unity, joy, humility, and submission.
- So, Paul says in verse 2, “make my joy complete” by doing, meaning “walk in this way”.
 - Plainly put, your living well in Christ will bring me (Paul) great joy in the process.
 - It's like a parent who has raised a child from childhood to adulthood and they have grown to become a productive, God-fearing individual.
 - That parent or grand-parent will beam and burst with pride – and this is Paul's sentiments!
- Paul mentions that his joy would be made complete when the Philippians pursued the following descriptions that they positionally possessed:
 - 1. Being of the same mind (to be one in intent and disposition – single-mindedness)
 - 2. Maintain the same love (the agape self-sacrificial love that Christ showed)
 - 3. United in Spirit (literally, one-souled)
 - 4. Intent on one purpose (having our lives directed toward a single aim)
- Being of the same mind is much more than simply thinking in general, rather it is setting our mind to think similarly.
 - Within the original language the phrase “being of the same mind” is *autos phroneo*.
 - *Autos* meaning “same”, *Phroneo* meaning “setting one’s mind to”.
 - So, Paul is saying may your thinking be in complete alignment with Christ and not your flesh.
 - We will see Paul express this juxtaposition in verses 3-4 regarding how not to live, a little later.
 - But know that Paul is expressing how we must choose to allow our Spirit to dominate our affections rather than our flesh.
 - And the question the believer will have to face in every area of our lives is: “*Will I choose to respond in the flesh or respond by the Spirit?*”
 - In other words, will my response be one of spiritual maturity or spiritual infancy? (1 Corinthians 3) (Slide)
 - Check out what Paul says about this distinction of mind and behavior in Romans 8:5.

Romans 8:5 For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.

- As Pastor Steve has mentioned in his teaching of Romans, “Which dog in the fight are you going to feed?”
 - “Will it be the flesh, which produces fleshly responses, or will it be the Spirit, which produces Christ-like responses?”
 - Your response matters and will either bring Glory to God or stain to your witness of Christ!
 - Paul is concerned with the believer’s response in all things, from external pressures especially the rising internal pressures from within the body.
 - Yet, in all things, Paul implores the Philippians to act according to the grace they richly possess in Christ!
- Growing up as a child, before my sister and I would go into a store that would have a lot of delicate items, my mom would always give us “the talk”.
 - And she would tell us, “When we go into this store, don’t touch anything, don’t breathe wrong, and don’t take a wrong step.”
 - “Act like you know who your mother is!”
 - This firm moment is what Paul is doing for the church at Philippi. He’s saying in few words, “Behave like you know the grace that you have been met with!”
 - And this reality is what leads Paul to caution the believers in Philippi in verses 3-4.
 - He says in verse 3, “Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind, regard one another as more important than yourselves;”
 - Notice that Paul expresses the Christian virtue of humility in both its demonstrative sense as well as opposing sense (selfishness).
 - He provides the Philippians with what it looks like when the believer responds in a manner that lacks the Spirit’s influence.
 - That where the Lord desires regarding one another’s needs more highly than our own, we seek our own self-interest and agendas.
 - That rather than serving the needs of those around us, we see their needs as a hinderance.
 - Moreover, Paul provided us with an example of what this looked like in those who were preaching the gospel with ill-motive, in the previous chapter.
 - For those individuals, Paul’s suffering became more advantageous for their personal ministry pursuits and agendas.
 - Understand that the motive for those ministers were not centered on making Christ known.
 - Rather, at the heart of what they were doing was self-promotion rooted in envy.
 - The reality is, within our natural state as human beings, it is easy for us to focus more on ourselves than it is the needs of others.
 - However, Paul is saying that the effort of the believers should be more focused on the needs of others, more than themselves.
 - As one person once said, “Love finds a need and meets it.”

- It's this type of love that is experienced in Christ and as believers in Christ, we have been graciously gifted to pursue service to others, in Him.
- Paul says the following in Romans 12:10 regarding our spiritual service of worship which demonstrates the will of God!

Romans 12:10 Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor;

- This type of devoted love that Paul is talking about is familial love.
- That because we are one in Christ, we should love one another in such a way that we desire the best for one another.
- It's this sense of "good-will" towards the interest of others in loving service.
- And anything outside of that is seeking our own personal interest, and is reflective of our sin nature. (v.4)
- And this very nature originated from Satan, Himself! (Isaiah 14:13-14)

Isaiah 14:13 "But you said in your heart, 'I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God, And I will sit on the mount of assembly In the recesses of the north.

Isaiah 14:14 'I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.'

Isaiah 14:15 "Nevertheless you will be thrust down to Sheol, To the recesses of the pit.

- So, Paul's view of humility is rooted in mutual service which confirms their unity in Christ.
- In fact, this very sense of service and humility is mentioned by Christ when the sons of Zebedee sought their own personal agendas.
- Check out what Jesus tells His disciples in Mark 10:45 addressing their misunderstanding of greatness in the Kingdom.

Mark 10:42 Calling them to Himself, Jesus said to them, "You know that those who are recognized as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them; and their great men exercise authority over them.

Mark 10:43 "But it is not this way among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant;

Mark 10:44 and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be slave of all.

Mark 10:45 "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."

- So, Jesus burst their bubbles and explains that the way to greatness is a way of humility and submission.
- That to go up requires one to be brought down. And this reality was not the norm

in society in that day or even today!

- For Roman individuals in the 1st century, the word humility was a troublesome word even before the New Testament era.
 - As a matter of fact, humility was a virtue that was greatly looked down upon.
 - The word humility was often connected to that of the mentality of a slave.
 - It often spoke to someone being unfit or being of no value.
 - So, with Paul using this word to describe the necessary position of the believer in a society that thought much of themselves, this was counter-cultural.
 - Understand what Paul was NOT saying.
 - He wasn't saying for the believer to devalue themselves or think of everyone as better than them.
 - Rather, Paul is saying consider the needs of others more than simply looking out for you. (Leviticus 19:17)
 - And Paul will expound further by using a perfect example of humility in the person of Jesus Christ. Check out verses 5-8.

Philippians 2:5 Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus,

Philippians 2:6 who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped,

Philippians 2:7 but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men.

Philippians 2:8 Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

- Paul says here that we are to have the same mind (*phroneo*) of humility, service, and unity of purpose amongst one another as Christ had in His 1st coming. (Condescension and Humiliation)
 - Paul provides us with a very clear Christology regarding both Jesus' Person and His Purpose!
 - And Paul moves on to how Christ, through His work and mission, through His own humility, accomplished the Father's plan.
 - Paul says that Christ who has always existed with the Father, at a certain point in time in human history, added to His Divinity, humanity.
- The word 'form' in Greek is *morphe* which simply means nature or being of the same essence.
 - In other words, Christ who is fully divine, when He took on human flesh did not take away from or relinquish His divine attributes or nature.
 - Rather, He simply added humanity to His deity to become human, therefore the Godman is 100% God and 100% Man.
 - John properly identified this glorious reality, wrapped up in the person of Jesus Christ when he wrote the following words in John 1:14.

John 1:14 And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.

- John says that the very Glory of God was ‘tabernacled’ or ‘dwelt’ among the people because the Second member of the Trinity put on flesh.
 - In other words, the Son of God stepped into His very creation so that He could make peace between us and the Father!
 - What humility it was for Jesus, who is of the very nature (*morphe*) of the Father to condescend and die?!
 - This means of humility, Paul adds, was accomplished because Christ “emptied Himself”.
 - The word for “emptied Himself” in Greek is the word *kenoo* which is where we get the word Kenosis from.
 - It is the idea that Christ did not surrender His divine attributes as God, rather He voluntarily restricted their independent use.
 - This means that the Lord Jesus chose not to use His omnipotence to curtail His mission and purpose of His coming – to become a ransom.
 - John Walvoord in his book, *Jesus Christ Our Lord*, made this statement regarding the Doctrine of Kenosis as it relates to Philippians 2:

“The act of kenosis as stated in Philippians 2 may therefore be properly understood to mean that Christ surrendered no attribute of Deity, but that He did voluntarily restrict their independent use in keeping with His purpose of living among men and their limitations.”

- Notice that in both verses 6 and 7, Paul uses the word ‘form’ (*morphe*). And in both instances, He speaks to both Jesus as God and Jesus as Man.
 - For to deny Him of one or the other is to err in sound doctrine!
 - Therefore, Jesus wasn’t just a good teacher, or just a good man, or simply just God, but Jesus is both fully God and fully man.
- We see throughout the Gospels both natures at play. For instance, Jesus walking on the water in the Sea of Galilee.
 - This was not accomplished simply because He was indwelled by the Holy Spirit – this was possible because He is Creator God!
 - We also witnessed Jesus being able to both forgive the paralytic man of his sins and cause him to walk. (Greater to the Lesser)
 - The reason why this was such an issue for the religious leaders is because no man could forgive sins but God alone!
 - Yet here we see Jesus being able to do both. This is because of His divine nature.
 - And at the same time, we witnessed Jesus become hungry, get tired, be tempted, yet without sin.
 - One of the best illustrations to see is Jesus, after He has been baptized, is

thrust into the wilderness to be tempted by satan.

- And in being tempted with the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, He overcomes each one through the power of the word!
 - What we see at work within Christ's example is that through His humiliation, submission, and voluntary nonuse of His divine attributes, is He demonstrated true humility to the point of death!
- This type of death that Jesus underwent was not a simple death, but this was the worst type of death one could undergo.
 - To die by crucifixion was excruciatingly painful, humiliating, and at times greatly disfiguring.
 - He was pierced, beaten to the point that He was unrecognizable, with a crown of thorns pressed against His brow.
 - Spat on and cursed, mocked, and abused.
- All of this, the Son of God took upon Himself so that we would live eternally and be reconciled to God!
 - Interestingly enough, the author of Hebrews records that Jesus' mind was fixed on the greater reward in the end.
 - Therefore, He could have joy as He endured the torture of the cross.
 - Turn with me to Hebrews 12:2-3:

Hebrews 12:2 **fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.**

Hebrews 12:3 **For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.**

- Both Paul and the writer of Hebrews seem to come to an understanding that through Christ's humiliation came exaltation.
 - That when we examine the life of Christ, His goal and purpose was clear – in that He came to accomplish the will of the Father.
 - And it would be through the gruesomeness of the cross that there would be greater reward and honor in the future.
 - It is this example of like-mindedness in which Paul says the Philippians need to put on and adopt!
 - It is through patterning oneself after the humility of Christ in recognizing that our single joy and focus should be the service to one another!
 - It's not by coincidence that after Paul says Jesus emptied Himself that Paul equates it to Christ being a bondservant (slave).
 - That whatever the Father desires, that is what I will do!
 - So, the only way that we can truly live to Christ and experience joy in every season, no matter what comes, is to put on the mind of Christ and humility of Christ.

- Secondly, our ability to be service-oriented with our lives brings about greater joy in our mission in life.
- When we realize that our spiritual gifts are to be used to build up and serve the body of Christ, it changes how we see serving.
 - When we understand that our gifts don't serve ourselves for self-aggrandizement, but rather, they serve to encourage our fellow believers in Christ!
 - One of the things I remember while serving as an Associate Pastor under Pastor Steve is his protection and guarding care for the pulpit.
 - One thing he told me was, "Wesley, you have to make sure that you guard the sacred desk and don't allow anyone to preach just because they can speak well."
 - Because often what people are looking for in ministry is an opportunity to have a platform!
 - And they will use their gift of gab or administrative skills to seek opportunities to accomplish their goal.
 - However, when it comes down to matters of the Gospel, there is no room for personal agendas and self-promotion – only Christ and Him alone!
- I remember being 13 years old and sensing the Lord calling me to ministry.
 - One day, I met with my Youth Pastor at the time and shared with him this calling that I felt.
 - My youth pastor then proceeds to tell me, "Praise God that the Lord has been calling you – let's start with this, and proceed to hand me a broom."
 - He did that to let me know the call to ministry is never about a microphone or a platform, but it is a service unto the Lord to teach the body of Christ about our Great God!
 - This is what Jesus had to address with James and John in the Gospels. True greatness is not in being seen, but rather in serving others!
 - For when we can serve with humility unto the Lord, with a mindset like Christ, we find that it is God alone who rewards!
 - And in the end it is rewarding to see the progress!
 - Check out verses 9-11.

Philippians 2:9 For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name,
Philippians 2:10 so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
Philippians 2:11 and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

- It would be the result of Christ's incarnation, humiliation, and death, through His perfect obedience, that God the Father would "highly exalt" Him.
 - This phrase "highly exalted" means to give exceptional honor beyond what is usual and to place someone in a high position.

- So, Paul expresses that it was through Christ's humility and submission to the Father's plan that gave way to this glorified position.
- That Jesus' exaltation (resurrection, ascension, and glorification) was a response to His prayer and obedience to the Father during His High Priestly prayer in John 17:4-5.
 - Here is what Jesus prayed:

John 17:4 “I glorified You on the earth, having accomplished the work which You have given Me to do.

John 17:5 “Now, Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.

- So, because of Christ's obedience, from the incarnation to His death, in full obedience to the Lord, He requested His pre-glorified state with the Father.
 - To put it a simpler way, “Dad, I've done what you've asked...I'm ready to come home.”
 - And in the Father's response to the Son, Paul tells us the reward bestowed upon Christ.
 - Not only is Christ given a name that is above every name, but He is given an exalted position by which all will be under Him.
 - Not only will all believers respond to this majestic name and authority and power of Christ, but even those that rejected Him MUST acknowledge Him.
 - Every creature will bend the knee to the soon coming King!
 - This does not mean that every person in the world will become a believer!
 - This simply attests to the fact that even in the rejector's state of condition, they have no choice but to acknowledge.
 - That where, at one point they willfully rejected Jesus, His grace, and His sacrifice, they will now by force admit who Jesus always was and will forever be.
 - This reality, through the example of Christ and His glorification should become a joy and comfort for all believers in Christ!
 - That although it may seem like delayed gratification, in the here and now, it will all be worth it in the end.
 - That as we serve humbly without the need for applause or recognition, but serve as unto the Lord, our reward awaits us too in the future.
 - And what a glorious reward it will be!
 - We may be tempted to give in and at times seek the easy route, yet as Christ led by example, He obeyed to the very end and so should we.
 - When we look to Jesus, you will find that He leads the way.
 - When you spend time with Jesus and put on the mind of Christ, you will see growth in your walk with Him.
 - That the closer you walk with Him, the more you will look, think, act, and respond

like Him.

- May I encourage us all with this famous hymn:

**Turn your eyes upon Jesus
Look full in his wonderful face
And the things of earth will grow strangely dim
In the light of his glory and grace**

- ○ Let's Pray.

- Last week, the Apostle Paul expressed to the Philippian church what true humility and service looked by describing Christ as the ultimate example.
 - Paul mentioned in his example of Christ, how through Jesus' humility (emptying Himself) and obedience to the Father that we too are to put on that type of attitude.
 - That a mindset of humility and service, submitted to the plans of God, both individually and communally, aids in experiencing true joy.
 - In other words, biblical joy is not circumstantially motivated, rather it is experientially participated in.
 - That regardless of who you are around, what you're facing, and what you're going through, an attitude set on Christ and Glorifying God provides fresh perspective.
 - And it is from that perspective (*having eyes for eternity*) in which our ability to live well for the Lord, leads to being rewarded well by the Lord.
 - Tonight, we continue in Paul's train of thought as he provides exhortation towards the believers to continue in a manner that Glorifies God.
 - Remember, in Chapter 2, Paul's focus is on the believer's service as a servant of God towards one another in Christ and to the world. (How to live for Christ!)
 - This type of service requires one to have a mind of humility like Christ and a sense of otherness over self.
 - And as Paul showed us last week, Christ exemplified humility to the fullest in His obedience to the Lord, even to the point of death on the cross.
 - That through the gruesomeness of the cross would come the joy set before Him – and that joy was to be glorified with the Father.
 - And as we will see, this means of living for Christ in a dark and sinful world can be a joyous walk with the proper perspective.
 - If I were to provide us our outline of thought, we will see the following things:
 - 1. Work "out" not Work "for" (vv.12-13)
 - 2. My Hope and Stay (vv.14-16)
 - If I were to put a tag on our text tonight it would simply be: Right Doctrine leads to Glorious Doxology.
 - With that being said, I invite you to meet me in Philippians 2:12-13, for the reading of the word of the Lord.

Philippians 2:12 So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling;

Philippians 2:13 for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.

- So, Paul, off the heels of this beautiful exhortation of Christ's glorification by way of His

obedience to the Father, now moves to the believers' practical application.

- This application being that the believer is to continue in their obedience unto Christ, whether Paul was with them or not.
 - And the way that Paul expresses this very firm truth is done with such compassion that is tied to their shared reality.
 - He begins by letting them know that because they have this shared reality of salvation in Christ, that they are his "beloved".
- This is key, because it further confirms that Paul is speaking to a group of believers in Philippi.
 - Furthermore, it confirms why these brothers and sisters can "walk in such a worthy manner".
 - That because they are saved, they have been enabled by God to walk in progressive sanctification.
 - As I mentioned last week, a non-believer would not be able to ascertain this ability to live in such a way, nor would they have the desire to do so.
- So, Paul, continuing his previous thought, reminds them of their obedience to the Lord, as when he first arrived to them in Philippi, up to this point.
 - Now notice what Paul says, he mentions "as you have obeyed, not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence..."
- So, Paul's issue is not that they haven't been obedient to the Lord, his encouragement is that they continue even in his absence.
 - That whether Paul returned to them in person or was never able to see them again, he desired that they remain steadfast in their faith and in unity with one another.
 - The idea here is that there is a constant ongoing dependence on the Lord!
- In other words, their obedience should be rooted in Christ who is ever present with them by way of their fellowship with His Spirit.
 - Family, our obedience to the Lord shouldn't be, what I call, "Light switch Christianity".
 - Meaning, the moment I'm in front of the pastor or church leadership I behave in this manner or act a certain way.
 - But the moment I leave the church, I respond in a manner that doesn't reflect Christ having done a new thing in me.
- Paul is saying that our lives should be consistent in every season and area of life because we have the very Spirit of God indwelled in us.
 - Therefore, it should be that our motivations and mindsets should be affected by this reality of knowing what He has done in our lives and is actively doing through our lives!
 - This is why Paul says these words in verse 12b, "work out your salvation with fear and trembling."
- The word "work out" is the Greek word *katergazomai* which means to bring about a

result by doing something.

- Now for some, if you're not careful, this text could easily sound as if you must "self-will" yourself and your desires to "do better".
 - In other words, it (salvation) becomes a self-willed growth, rather than a Christ-enabled growth in submission to His word and Spirit.
 - This is not what Paul is saying!
 - For if our salvation was a means of us doing something in our own strength to achieve something, then it fails to be a "divine work" of God.
- Paul tells us this about the gift of salvation in Christ in Ephesians 2:8-9:

Ephesians 2:8 For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God;

Ephesians 2:9 not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.

- So, this begs the question, "If salvation is a gift from God and not of any effort or merit of our own, then what tense of salvation is Paul referring to?"
- Well, through the simple process of elimination, we can eliminate Justification being expressed here because that work is done by God alone.
- We can eliminate Glorification because that work is done by God alone and is finalized through the removal of the believer from the presence of sin. (Death or Rapture)
 - Therefore, it only leaves us with one option: Paul is speaking about progressive sanctification.
 - And it is this work too, that is accomplished by God, yet also requires the participation and partnership of the believer to live it out!
- In other words, the emphasis on sanctification is not on working for something, but rather working out something.
 - This means that, as believers in Christ, we can live, behave, act, and think like Christ because of what we positionally possess by His grace alone.
- The believer has been enabled to live in such a way that pleases the Lord and brings glory to God.
 - That where we were once dead in our trespasses and sins, we now are able to live to the Glory of God because the Lord, by His Spirit has turned us on!
- Did you notice in verse 12b, how we are to work out this middle tense of salvation? Paul says with "fear and trembling".
 - What does Paul mean regarding working out the middle tense of salvation with "fear and trembling?"
 - Paul is speaking to the reality of the Holiness of God. That in knowing God's Holiness it also helps us recognize our lowliness and need of Him.
 - Psalm 110:10 tells us this:

Psalm 111:10 The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; A good understanding have all those who do His commandments; His praise endures forever.

- The writer of this psalter mentions that the fear of the Lord is directly tied to wisdom.
- And as we discovered earlier in our time through Philippians is, wisdom is applied knowledge.
 - This is why the writer says, “a good understanding have all those who “do His commandments””
 - Therefore, we should be evaluating our lives and motives, because a failure to do leaves room to fall into sin.
- We shouldn’t desire to give the enemy any room in our hearts and minds to wreak havoc in our fellowship and walk with the Lord.
 - Because the moment that we give the enemy room due to our lack of submission to the word of God, is the moment our frail flesh gets the best of us.
- I remember when I was old enough to stay at home by myself, my parents would leave me with certain chores to be done upon their arrival.
 - The goal was that all chores should be done before turning on the television – however, when the opportunity presented itself, I snuck in some TV time.
 - I had gotten so good doing this that I knew I could get what I wanted done first and manage to hustle the chores before my parents arrived.
 - One day, this self-assurance I had in my plan, failed.
 - As I was watching my cartoon of choice, I heard the garage door going up and hadn’t begun doing the dishes.
 - Needless to say, there was a great deal of fear that arose because I did not follow my parent’s instructions.
 - And in the end, it cost me more heartache, all because I failed to abide by their instructions.
 - Paul, in the same way, is imploring these believers in Philippi to obey the Lord and seek to serve and live as unto the Lord, even if he were not there.
 - And he mentions that this is to be done because, it is God who is at work within them, both to will and to work for His good pleasure!
 - Paul wasn’t at work in these individual’s lives, God was!
 - Your Pastor, elders, small group leaders, or even your favorite bible teachers are not actively at work in your lives – God is!
 - And because God is at work and has accomplished such a great work on your behalf, we should take hold, in partnership with God, with what He is working out in us!
 - And even when there are points in our walk where we are weak or even unwilling to walk it out two things will occur.

- 1. We will either seek the help of the Lord through prayer to enable us with what we need to accomplish this growth, or:
- 2. The Lord will allow certain circumstances in your life that will cause you to depend on Him as He uses that situation to respond accordingly.
- Because at the end of the day, God is for God!
- I mentioned seeking the Lord in prayer for the motivation and opportunity to work alongside the Spirit in your growth because prayer is a powerful spiritual resource.
 - I love what Dr. Stanley Toussaint said about prayer. He said that: "Prayer is nothing more, nothing else, nothing less, than asking God for something."
 - He mentioned that the purpose of prayer is: That God may be glorified!
 - And when asked "What is God's Glory?" he responded: God's glory is anything that makes God seen!
- Because we are God's workmanship (Ephesians 2:10), our very lives are to express who He is!
 - Therefore, if as believers we are not walking in obedience and submitted to the word of God, we diminish God's glorious opportunity to shine forth in our lives.
 - The question that we have to ask ourselves is: "Is the image of Christ exuding from our lives or is it more of ourselves?"
 - We must learn to exchange our own personal glory for the glorious radiance of Christ to shine forth in our lives.
- As we discussed last week, which dog in the fight are you going to feed? Will it be that of the flesh or that of the Spirit?!

 - What's so powerful about this text is that Paul says that the Lord is actively at work to will and to work within us for His glory!

- The word "will" is dealing with our motivations and desires to do something.
 - Whereas the word "work" is the Greek word *energeo* which is where we get the word energy from.
 - And this deals with the power that activates the work within us to truly live and do for Christ.
- And when we consider this work being activated in the life of the believer, we realize that it is the Holy Spirit that energizes and enables the believer.
 - So, I want to quickly highlight some important qualities regarding the role that the Holy Spirit plays in the life of the believer.
- We must first understand that the Holy Spirit is not some type of mystical force or energy ball, rather the Holy Spirit is a Person.
 - This is often missed because of improper teaching of doctrine and denominational emphasis.
 - The Holy Spirit by some is seen as an "it" and not a "He", therefore our ability to understand the Spirit's role becomes either diluted or distant.
 - Scripture, however, explicitly states both the role and responsibilities of the Holy

Spirit in the life of the believer. For example:

- 1. The Holy Spirit is given to all believers (1 Corinthians 2:12)
- 2. The Holy Spirit is a Teacher (John 16:12-15)
- 3. The Holy Spirit promotes Christ and not Himself (1 John 2:27)
- 4. The Holy Spirit is our guide (Romans 8:14)
- 5. The Holy Spirit assures us our salvation and position (Romans 8:16)
- 6. The Holy Spirit guides and directs our prayers (Ephesians 6:18)
- 7. The Holy Spirit Sanctifies us (1 Peter 1:16; 2 Corinthians 3:18)
- So this progressive work within the believer's life is all accomplished through and by the Power of God to conform us into the image of Christ! (Romans 8:29)
- Ultimately, it is God, who in every tense of our salvation is at work to bring about His intended purposes through our lives.
 - The work of salvation is initiated by God being that He has made it possible for men and women to be saved through the person and work of Christ alone. (Justification)
 - The work of Sanctification, without the empowerment of the Holy Spirit could not enable men to overcome the power of sin in our lives.
 - Lastly, it is the power of God, that will glorify our broken and sinful bodies and exchange them with incorruptible ones when we see Him face to face. (Glorification)
 - It is at every point of our salvation in which God is clearly seen and His power, powerfully at work!
 - It is not our glory but God's that is made known because of what He has graciously done.
 - Paul says these very words in 2 Corinthians 3:4-6:

2 Corinthians 3:4 Such confidence we have through Christ toward God.

2 Corinthians 3:5 Not that we are adequate in ourselves to consider anything as coming from ourselves, but our adequacy is from God,

2 Corinthians 3:6 who also made us adequate as servants of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

- So, Paul is going to double down on his point by emphasizing, in verses 14-16, why a position of servanthood, humility, and unity, like Christ, is essential.
- Check out verses 14-16.

Philippians 2:14 Do all things without grumbling or disputing;

Philippians 2:15 so that you will prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world,

Philippians 2:16 holding fast the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I will have reason to glory because I did not run in vain nor toil in vain.

- Paul tells the believers in Philippi that they are to do “all things” in such a way that reflects Christ, upholds the witness of His word, and provides sound testimony.
 - As a result of this way of Christlikeness, Paul in turn will be able to find joy in the fact that the gospel he brought to Philippi worked mightily in them.
 - Paul does this by beginning with the words, “Do all things”.
 - And he says this considering everything that precedes this statement.
 - So, it could be read as, “Since these things are true, do all things without grumbling and disputing.”
 - Notice, Paul doesn’t say do “some things”, or “a few things”, rather he says do all things without grumbling or disputing.
 - The way in which we serve one another and those around us should be done without grumbling or complaining.
 - The way we should choose to respond in times of trial and circumstance should not reflect that of grumbling or complaining.
 - The way in which we engage with the non-believing world should not be as that of the world but of Christ.
- Years ago, the trend within evangelicalism was the bracelets in black and white that had the acronym W.W.J.D (What Would Jesus Do)
 - And for many Christians, that bracelet became this badge of honor identifying themselves as followers of Christ.
 - And in doing so, the purpose of the bracelet was to show that in all that we do, say, live, and behave, we want to do it through the lens of Christ.
 - How would Christ respond to this situation or that situation?
 - Paul would make the point, in few words, a badge or piece of memorabilia is not what identifies you as one who lives for Christ – your life and living is proof!
 - That when we respond in such a manner that does not boast the efficacious work of the cross of Christ, we leave no room for Christ to be magnified!
 - The results of a grumbling and disputing Christian simply display an attitude that Christ is not enough or that the Spirit’s empowerment is not enough.
 - Furthermore, this worldly response provides poor witness as to the mighty deeds of God throughout human history and creation itself.
 - As a matter of fact, Paul’s reference here to “grumbling” goes even further back than the 1st century church-age believers.
 - Because Paul’s use of this response is provided in the example of the Israelites during their wilderness wanderings.
 - That where the Israelites had been set free from the bondage of Egyptian captivity and enslavement, God by His power and grace freed them. (Exodus narrative)

- From their freedom, He leads them through the Red Sea, where they were able to witness the destruction of their oppressors.
- While traveling, the Lord provided them manna from heaven which would satisfy their need of hunger.
- His guiding them with a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night allowed the ravaging animals of the night to be disbanded.
- Yet in all of God's provision, they managed to grumble under their breaths, wishing to go back to captivity.
- Even with the Lord sending spies to scout the land that He was giving to them, they responded in an unbecoming manner. (Numbers 13-14)
 - That where they were to provide evidence of what they saw, they mixed their evidence with their emotions (what they felt).
 - That where they should have trusted the Lord for what He had done for them before, they should have taken Him at His word.
- The grumblings of men simply confirm a lack of dependence and trust in the Lord's ability to work and will in our lives!
 - We will either assess the situation and ask the Lord, "Lord, how should I respond in this season?"
 - Or we will fold into our feelings, responding in our flesh, and fail to allow God's Glory to be maximized in our situation.
- In other words, the believers' response should be so "counter-cultural" that it causes the world to look at us in a peculiar way.
 - And this becomes Paul's point, because he mentions that in our refrain of grumbling and disputing with one another it displays something different.
- Paul says that we will "prove ourselves to be blameless and innocent children of God..."
 - That word "prove" in Greek is *ginomai* which means to come into a new state of being or to become. To assume a certain state or condition.
 - In other words, when the believer comes under the weight and authority of the word of God and the influence of the Spirit, we will look more like Christ.
- Friends, the goal of sanctification is not to look like a better or more improved you!
 - The goal is to look more, think more, act more, and do more as Christ richly lives in you, by His Spirit!
 - And the only way that this can become fully realized outside of the positional reality, is when we put in the work through submission.
- I often use the example of the gym. Most people have a gym membership where they can go to work out and meet certain health goals.
 - The holder of this membership has access to the entire gym and its privileges.
 - You have access to the machines, the trainers, the classes, etc.
 - However, if you do not utilize the privileges that you are exposed to, you can

never see the transformation you desire to see.

- So what it looks like for a believer in Christ is you going into the gym, watching others work, yet you become content in knowing what you have access to.
 - The true transformation in it all is when you can put yourself under the weight of the equipment and utilize each machine accordingly.
 - Each machine is meant to target a particular muscle, and consistency in the use of that machine, overtime, develops you more.
- How can a believer in the Lord Jesus ever experience true joy in their lives if they never participate in the life that they have been given?
 - If you choose to not tap into the game, suffering in your life will always seem unfair!
 - If you choose to not tap into the game, everyone else will always be the problem and not your need to grow!
 - If you choose to not tap into the game, circumstances will always be seen as an inconvenience and not an opportunity!
 - If you choose to not tap into the game, service to others will always be seen as a burden and not a blessing!
 - If you choose to not tap into the game, humility will look like a position beneath you and not a proper position for you!
- If we want to see through a Christ-prescribed lens and live as Christ lived, we must put on the mind of Christ and get out of our own way!
 - Because notice what Paul says, that when we respond in a proper Christ-like manner, we will be “above reproach”.
 - In other words, the allegations of others, both inside and outside the church and the world, will fail because of your uprightness before the Lord and others.
- Paul mentions that these Philippians, and all believers for that matter, should appear as lights in the world.
 - The first thing that comes to mind when you hear of the believer being a light in the world is Jesus’ teaching at the Sermon on the Mount.
 - And within the context of Jesus’ teaching, while the people were still under the Law, His audience and ministerial focus was Israel, specifically.
 - Because it would be that Israel being a light to the Nations by which the Messiah would come out of.
- So, Paul is making an applicational point to Jesus’ contextualized teaching and his point is that because you have the Spirit of Christ within you, represent Him!
 - Jesus says these words in Matthew 5:14-16:

Matthew 5:14 “You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; Matthew 5:15 nor does anyone light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house.

Matthew 5:16 “Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.

- So the biblical principal for the church believers is:
 - Just as Israel was to be a light to the Nations and sharing the Messiah with the world, so should the Church represent Christ, because they have His Spirit in them! (Isaiah 42:6)
 - The purpose of light is to illuminate the dark areas so that what has been hidden or seeks to hide can be revealed.
 - And the problem with the darkness being exposed is that darkness hates the light.
 - You try turning on the lights first thing in the morning without being warned about it – you'd be grumpy too!
 - And with light illuminating dark places, it will render disdain and hatred from those who love to dwell in the dark.
 - And Paul makes clear that the reason you can be a bright light in this dark and perverse world is because you are “holding on to the word of life”.
 - It is the Spirit of God that gives life and brings life to dead things.
 - Furthermore, it was through the proclamation of the Gospel of Christ that you and I responded to His truth.
 - This means that the Gospel is not only convicting, but the outworking of the word of God is illuminating.
 - You can't read through this book as a believer and not be convicted and changed!
 - And what this convicting message of the gospel will do is establish truth which, by default, brings about division.
 - You will either respond to truth or hide from it!
- Finally, it's in verse 16 that Paul mentions that as the believer remains steadfast in the word of the Lord, there is great hope that comes from it!
 - And Paul uses the Philippians as an example of his joy in the Lord on the day in which all believers will be raptured with Christ in the clouds.
 - That as Paul stands before the Lord at the Bema Seat Judgement, he will be able to know that the time spent with the Philippians was time well invested.
- It's that anticipated joy that you have as a teacher, where you have spent hours every week preparing and training your students for a test.
 - Day by day, month by month, you work tirelessly to make sure that student is prepared for the state exam.
 - Because it's that exam that will determine a promotion to a new grade and graduation for seniors.
 - And it's the moment those results come back that as you glance at the paper you see that the students' exceeded mastery level, that you are overjoyed!
 - The time spent and long hours you put in have finally paid off!

- Paul has this imagery in mind, that as He is evaluated and judged before Christ that his labor was not in vain.
 - Because as the lives of those Paul touched are impacted, that credit goes to Paul's efforts as a minister of the Gospel.
 - But most importantly, God is glorified through the work of the Gospel that has gone forth through Paul's ministry.
- How is your life impacting others around you to the point that your witness carries weight?!
 - When people see you are they able to connect you to a positive image of Christ or is that image marred by lack of Christian Character?
 - Will others who you are around want to know more about Jesus because of how they have engaged with you?
 - Or will their desire to know the Lord be a “turn-off” because your life and the life of Christ, don’t seem to quite match up.
 - If that is the case, the good news is, God is not done with you yet!
 - Because, if you still have breathe in your lungs, there is still work to be done.
 - Let’s Pray.

- Over the past four teachings, we have come to understand what it means to be positionally in Christ, by way of being ‘Justified’.
 - This aspect of the first tense of Salvation is what Paul says was a gift of grace and was not based on any effort of our own.
 - From there, we understood that because we have been justified, we are therefore enabled to respond contrary to our flesh.
 - Meaning, because we have the Spirit of God, we can see our lives and circumstances through a different set of lenses.
 - That lens being a Christlike prescription and not a flesh-like prescription.
 - And because of this we can live and view our circumstances in this life with joy.
 - From there we have been able to see how with this positional joy our walks in Christ (living) should reflect that reality. (Sanctification)
 - And walking out this Christlikeness requires a human component of “walking in a manner worthy of the Gospel”.
 - And this work is enabled and empowered by the Spirit for us to walk out well. Moreover, Christ is provided as an example in whom we can follow.
 - Tonight is no different because Paul is going to provide us with more examples by which we can imitate because they too are reflecting Christ in their living.
 - Outlining our time in the text tonight, we are going to see the following:
 - 1. Paul’s Service (vv.17-18)
 - 2. Timothy’s Service (vv.19-24)
 - 3. Epaphroditus’ Service (vv.25-30)
 - If I were to put a tag on tonight’s text it would simply be: A Servant and His Service.
 - With that being said, I invite you to open a copy of the scriptures and meet me in Philippians 2:17-18 for the reading of God’s word.

Philippians 2:17 **But even if I am being poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I rejoice and share my joy with you all.**

Philippians 2:18 **You too, I urge you, rejoice in the same way and share your joy with me.**

- Paul continues his thought on rejoicing from the previous verse (v.16) regarding his anticipated joy in seeing Christ.
 - This joy of future reward would be a result of Paul’s laboring for Christ and knowing that the time spent with them was well worth it.
 - And because of Paul’s selfless service, there would be beneficial results from the lives of the Philippians that reflected Christ in all things.
 - So, we now find that Paul begins to transition the readers’ mindset on joy, from the joy of labor in living for Christ to the reality of the joy in suffering for Christ.

- You'll notice there is this sense of contrasting between labor in our living versus the legacy left of faithful service even in our dying.
- There almost seems to be this single thread of thought that connects us back to Paul's words in Philippians 1:21.
 - This is where Paul states that, "For me to live is Christ and to die is gain."
 - That either way, if in his living or in his dying Christ becomes the focal point and the destination.
 - While I'm living it is about Christ and when I die, I get to see Christ! Both things should produce great joy for the believer in Christ!
- Therefore, Paul says that "even if I am poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrifice and the service of your faith, I rejoice..."
- Within this statement there are two phrases worth highlighting or underlining: "drink offering" and "sacrifice and service".
- The term "drink offering" hints at Old Testament language and is dealing with this idea of a "sacrifice to the Lord" or "for the Lord".
 - Paul, using this language, expresses that he is essentially being poured out for the Lord.
 - In the Old Testament, when the priest would sacrifice an animal to the Lord, they concluded with pouring wine next to the altar.
 - This type of practice was connected to sacrificial ceremonies and symbolized the dedication of the believer to the Lord as an act of worship.
 - It's this idea of sacrificing oneself in order to accomplish the work of the Lord – in a way it is emptying oneself.
 - "All that I have and all that I am I leave here to you Oh' Lord!"
 - One question that comes to mind is, "Where is the Apostle Paul getting this imagery to use as an applicational point?"
 - Well, it's not too hard to track that Paul is picking up on the very example of the Lord Jesus Christ who poured Himself out as our ransom.
 - In all things, the believer's proper posture of service to the Lord is selfless acts of service for His purpose and Glory.
 - Friends, this is why the Apostle Paul says these very words, emphasizing this picture of the alter and sacrifice, in Romans 12:1.

Romans 12:1 Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.

- Paul's desire for every believer in Christ is that they daily present their bodies as "living sacrifices".
 - As Dr. Crawford Loritts once said, "The problem with living sacrifices is that they

have a tendency to crawl off the altar.”

- However, Paul is saying that the believer should be so Christ-focused that they lay down willingly to serve the cause of Christ and the advancement of the Gospel.
 - And he wraps up verse 1b of Romans by saying that this is our “spiritual service of worship.”
 - That brings us to the use of the phrase “sacrifice and service”.
- The phrase “sacrifice and service of your faith” is a figure of speech which speaks to the sacrificial service of someone’s outworking of their faith in action.
 - So, if we are following Paul’s thought process accordingly, it seems that Paul’s present imprisonment and potential death is in view here.
- If that is the case, then Paul is saying that his present circumstances, because of the advancement of the gospel, even if it leads to death, he counts it all joy!
 - That whatever the results of his hearing before Caesar may bring, Paul knows that his sacrifice for the Lord is worth it all!
- This is a type of confidence that is settled and rested in a work and promise that cannot be shaken or moved – and in fact that is the case.
 - That the work of Christ on the cross has been finished!
 - That through His death and resurrection, we too not only have a life in Him, but we have an eternity where we will be with Him!
- So, Paul is urging these brothers and sisters in Philippi to have this same joy and disposition in their present circumstances in life.
 - That a mind that is set on the Person and work of Christ, the life of Christ, and the mission of Christ, is a life focused on eternal things.
 - For when our perspective shifts from a heavenly perspective to an earthly perspective, we end up being stripped of the positional joy to be realized!
- Well, it is after Paul uses himself as an example for the Philippians for having joy in suffering that he provides another familiar co-laborer, Timothy.
 - Check out verses 19-24.

Philippians 2:19 But I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you shortly, so that I also may be encouraged when I learn of your condition.

Philippians 2:20 For I have no one else of kindred spirit who will genuinely be concerned for your welfare.

Philippians 2:21 For they all seek after their own interests, not those of Christ Jesus.

Philippians 2:22 But you know of his proven worth, that he served with me in the furtherance of the gospel like a child serving his father.

Philippians 2:23 Therefore I hope to send him immediately, as soon as I see how things go with me;

Philippians 2:24 and I trust in the Lord that I myself also will be coming shortly.

- Paul mentions his young protégé or “spiritual son” as it related to whom he desired to send to the Philippian church in his absence and their well-being.
 - The purpose of sending someone of “kindred spirit” was to get a report of their present condition given the circumstances they were facing.
 - And in doing so, this would allow Timothy to convey information to Paul in which would give Paul a way to further equip the church.
 - Furthermore, this shows us something regarding Paul and Timothy’s relationship.
 - We can see how with the time and energy Paul spent with Timothy; Timothy was well equipped to take on such a role.
 - And from that time invested with Timothy, rendered a level of maturity that Paul felt was adequate for Timothy to lead by example.
 - Notice, that Paul mentions that his hope in wanting to send Timothy would serve as encouragement for Paul to hear of the Philippians’ present state.
 - Two things we find here:
 - Firstly, what a beautiful expression of the heart of a shepherd of the Lord!
 - Secondly, the practical expression of sacrifice for Paul to potentially send a close son in the ministry.
- When you consider things such as church plants and sending out missionaries to foreign mission fields from a local church, the goal of sending is to multiply.
 - This is why a culture of church planting and evangelism is so necessary in churches today.
 - You show me a church that has a mission to evangelize the lost, I’ll show you a church that is committed to planting churches.
 - The goal of planting a church is not for that church to become a mega-church that is more interested in numbers in seats than sending people out!
 - And in the same way, the indication of a healthy church or ministry is identifying their rate of multiplication and sending of people.
 - This shows that their commitment and focus is on making Christ known and not their own name or agenda!
 - They will send both the people and the resources to serve the development of other Godly Church Plants.
 - What should bring the pastor, elder, and fellow believers great joy is seeing their efforts being expressed through the lives of others coming to Christ.
 - And in the same way, we find the Apostle Paul wanting to have a ‘check-in’ of sorts to see how this church in Philippi is doing in the midst of trial.
 - So Paul, seeing the needs of the Philippians, seeks to send someone out to check in on the people and Timothy seems to be a great candidate.
 - Paul mentions that he knew of no one else of “kindred spirit” who would be as concerned for the welfare of the Philippians like Timothy.

- This begs the question: “Were there not trustworthy men around Paul in Rome or Caesar’s household who could go to ease Paul’s mind?”
- It would seem as if Paul’s confidence in the Christian ministers in his immediate context were not of the “same mind”.
 - I say this because the word “kindred spirit” in Greek means “like souled”. Literally of one soul, same character, affections, and mind.
 - And Paul’s lack of confidence in these ‘other men’ is because, “they all seek after their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ.” (v.21)
- It’s not a stretch to see that Paul is speaking about the same group of people he mentioned earlier in Philippians 1:15 who are preaching out of envy.
- It’s like the parent who sends their child to daycare and entrusts the care of their child to the childcare workers for the first time.
 - They’ve done their research, as much as they could, and know this is the place for their child to be cared for while they are away.
 - Only, that parent realizes that no one can care for their child but them and decides to upgrade their daycare package to include camera visitation.
 - In other words, although this is a top-notch facility of care, there is no one that can provide as adequate care as me.
 - In the same way, Paul says that these men, although they preach a sound gospel, their intentions, character, and care are not to my standards.
 - Therefore, Paul identifies that those men do not have a ‘kindred spirit’ like Timothy does.
 - Again, not only has Timothy spent time with Paul and has been discipled by Paul over the years, but Timothy has assisted Paul in starting this church 10 years prior.
 - Notice what Paul says in verse 22, “But you know of his proven worth...”
 - The phrase ‘proven worth’ is one word in Greek which is *dokime* which means “standing a test to be determined genuine”.
 - In other words, Timothy wasn’t simply thrown into ministry the moment he got saved.
 - As a matter of fact, Paul speaks to this very point in 1 Timothy 3 regarding the qualifications of an overseer in the Church. Check out the text.

1 Timothy 3:2 An overseer, then, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach,

1 Timothy 3:3 not addicted to wine or pugnacious, but gentle, peaceable, free from the love of money.

1 Timothy 3:4 He must be one who manages his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity

1 Timothy 3:5 (but if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God?),

1 Timothy 3:6 and not a new convert, so that he will not become conceited and fall

into the condemnation incurred by the devil.

1 Timothy 3:7 And he must have a good reputation with those outside the church, so that he will not fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.

- Paul mentions that there are certain character traits, behaviors, and stewardships that a man must possess before he takes on leadership in the church.
 - These character traits are things that the existing church leadership should see and recognize in their observation for considered candidates.
 - For if you are simply looking for an ‘overseer’ who contributes well to the church or ministry, then you have missed the point.
 - This was Paul’s point in Philippians 1:10, that through the Philippians’ growth and maturity in wisdom they would be discerning of their own intentions and lives.
 - So, Paul makes it known that Timothy’s career with Paul has been one of great conforming and shaping.
 - Paul has seen and examined Timothy’s life so much so to the point that Paul was confident that Timothy could very well take on this role in his stead.
- Over the past year and a half, the number of Pastors retiring or dying in their pastorate has increased significantly.
 - It has increased so much so that the ability to fill those positions is little to none, causing Churches to go without pastors for long periods of time.
 - What would it be for Pastors to train and equip young men in their church who they have been watching to train them for ministry?
 - The work of ministry is too costly to waste time in searching for men to take on the weight of the pastorate when they should be trained in the church.
 - These men should not only know the Pastor’s vision and mission but the doctrine of that church so much so that it’s ingrained in who they are.
 - That as that young man grows up in that church, the pastor is able to come alongside him, and train and equip him like a Father to His son. (v.22)
 - That is the role of a Pastor to shepherd the flock and to care for them as if they were his own child.
 - Paul says these similar words in 1 Thessalonians 2:11-12. Check out the text:

**1 Thess. 2:11 just as you know how we were exhorting and encouraging and imploring each one of you as a father would his own children,
1 Thess. 2:12 so that you would walk in a manner worthy of the God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.**

- This is why Timothy is being used as an example of service and sacrifice because he has proven himself, by Paul’s standard, for the call of shepherding.
 - Timothy’s focus is Christ focused and not self-affirming.

- If you ever come across a church or ministry where that pastor or leader is more concerned with his image rather than the word of God, run!
- Paul continues after his great commendation of Timothy and expresses his hopeful intentions of sending Timothy their way as soon as he got word on his case.
 - In the very midst of Paul’s concern for the church in Philippi, he himself is still dealing with a legal case before Rome that he is waiting to be resolved.
 - And according to the text, it seems as if Paul is rather confident in his ability to be released from prison so that he too may continue in his ministry work to Philippi and others.
 - And Paul’s confidence of release, as we see in verse 24 is based upon his trusting in the Lord to finish the work in which the Lord began in him.
 - And what great assurance that is to know that because Paul is still alive and has not yet been killed that he recognizes, there is still work to be done.
 - So, it is after providing Timothy as an example of sacrifice and service unto the Lord that Paul mentions another man much closer to home for the Philippians.
 - Check out verses 25-30.

Philippians 2:25 **But I thought it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother and fellow worker and fellow soldier, who is also your messenger and minister to my need;**

Philippians 2:26 **because he was longing for you all and was distressed because you had heard that he was sick.**

Philippians 2:27 **For indeed he was sick to the point of death, but God had mercy on him, and not on him only but also on me, so that I would not have sorrow upon sorrow.**

Philippians 2:28 **Therefore I have sent him all the more eagerly so that when you see him again you may rejoice and I may be less concerned about you.**

Philippians 2:29 **Receive him then in the Lord with all joy, and hold men like him in high regard;**

Philippians 2:30 **because he came close to death for the work of Christ, risking his life to complete what was deficient in your service to me.**

- Paul mentions a man by the name Epaphroditus who is a member of the Philippian church sent to Paul as both a minister and messenger.
 - Epaphroditus, whose name means ‘charming’, was sent to aid the Apostle Paul in his time of need by means of the church’s financial giving and his personal service.
 - However, we come to find that Epaphroditus, while on his journey to the Apostle Paul, becomes terribly ill almost to the point of death.
 - And what becomes such an incredible thing to witness from Paul’s encounter with Epaphroditus is Paul’s use of him as another example.
 - Paul expresses that through Epaphroditus’ ministry to him, that Epaphroditus had

served him well and expressed great care for the saints in Philippi.

- And because of both the urgent need to send Epaphroditus home and his longing for the Philippian saints, Paul felt it best to send him home.
- However, he would not send him home without first expressing to them how great of a 'sacrificial servant' Epaphroditus was.
- Paul begins his commendation of Epaphroditus by mentioning four things about him.
 - He mentions that Epaphroditus is a:
 - 1. Brother (in Christ)
 - 2. Fellow worker
 - 3. Fellow soldier
 - 4. Messenger/minister
 - Each of these traits describing Epaphroditus pleased Paul and would inform the Philippians that the duties and service of Epaphroditus was well received.
 - You may notice that there is this sense of a building order by which Paul mentions these traits – and the order matters.
 - This is because it is building up both the capability of Epaphroditus' service as well as his service and sacrificial oriented heart!
- Paul begins by mentioning that Epaphroditus is his brother. This simply shows that these two men are brothers in faith because they share a common salvation in Christ.
 - When you got saved into the family of God, you moved from being an orphan to joining a family of brothers and sisters in Christ.
 - This is how we are able to have such a large family of God because we have all been grafted into the body of Christ and take on both a new identity and become a part of a large family.
 - Secondly, because they are sharers of the grace of God through the death and resurrection of Christ, they are now able to co-labor together in ministry.
 - Therefore, they are both fellow workers of Christ and are able to service and minister to both one another and others in the body of Christ.
 - Thirdly, Paul mentions that Epaphroditus is a fellow soldier.
 - The imagery here is what you would expect, brothers in uniform, fighting side by side in an effort to complete the mission of sharing the gospel.
 - That when difficulty and circumstances arise, both brothers are in the trenches together as they encounter spiritual warfare.
 - Lastly, Paul mentions that Epaphroditus is a messenger to Paul.
 - The word for messenger in Greek is the word *apostolos* which means "a messenger".
 - This word and role 'apostolos' is not to be confused with the office of Apostle in which Jesus designated 12 men.

- We find in scripture that there were certain qualifiers by which men were appointed Apostles in scripture.
 - And we find that text in Acts 1:15-22, however the emphasis of the text will be found in verses 21-22. Check out the text.

Acts 1:15 At this time Peter stood up in the midst of the brethren (a gathering of about one hundred and twenty persons was there together), and said,

Acts 1:16 “Brethren, the Scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit foretold by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus.

Acts 1:17 “For he was counted among us and received his share in this ministry.”

Acts 1:18 (Now this man acquired a field with the price of his wickedness, and falling headlong, he burst open in the middle and all his intestines gushed out.

Acts 1:19 And it became known to all who were living in Jerusalem; so that in their own language that field was called Hakeldama, that is, Field of Blood.)

Acts 1:20 “For it is written in the book of Psalms, ‘Let his homestead be made desolate, And let no one dwell in it’; and, ‘Let another man take his office.’

Acts 1:21 “Therefore it is necessary that of the men who have accompanied us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us—

Acts 1:22 beginning with the baptism of John until the day that He was taken up from us—one of these must become a witness with us of His resurrection.”

- So where in Jesus' public ministry he hand selected His Apostles, Peter, by the leading of the Spirit states that the one who will replace Judas must have done the following:
 - 1) He will need to have been with the present Apostles at the beginning of the baptism of John until the day he was taken up (Ascension)
 - 2) And have been a witness of the resurrection.
 - So, this means this man has also been directly taught by Jesus and has been invested with the authority to speak on Christ's behalf.
 - If these qualifiers were not met, then no man could be deemed an occupier of the office of Apostle.
 - However, we see that there is another use of this term “apostle” in scripture. Check out Acts 14:14.

Acts 14:14 But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard of it, they tore their robes and rushed out into the crowd, crying out

Acts 14:15 and saying, “Men, why are you doing these things? We are also men of the same nature as you, and preach the gospel to you that you should turn from these vain things to a living God, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and all that is in them.

- We see the same use of the word *apostolos* in 1 Corinthians 15:5-8. Check out the text.

1 Corinthians 15:5 and that He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve.

1 Corinthians 15:6 After that He appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom remain until now, but some have fallen asleep;

1 Corinthians 15:7 then He appeared to James, then to all the apostles;

1 Corinthians 15:8 and last of all, as to one untimely born, He appeared to me also.

- So, we see from Paul and some of his writing that there is a clear distinction between the Apostolic “office” and the gift of apostleship.
 - The Apostolic office belongs to the 12 in which Christ appointed.
 - And the gift of apostleship is simply those who carried the message of the gospel with God’s authority.
 - So, in this context, Epaphroditus is a messenger or an envoy for the Apostle Paul regarding the Philippian church.
 - And at the same time, through providing the financial gifts of the Philippians, he also serves as a minister to the needs of Paul.
 - It would be the intent of the Philippians sending Epaphroditus that he was to remain with Paul indefinitely, or until the court case concluded at best.
 - However, Paul mentions in verse 26 that there was a bit of a setback in those plans causing Paul to send him back.
 - And Epaphroditus being sent back seems to have been caused by one thing – The Philippians have heard that Epaphroditus had become sick.
 - As you can imagine, hearing of one in whom you hold in great regard and has been sent from you in service to others as being sick can be difficult news to receive.
 - Interestingly enough, the phrase ‘he was sick’ in the Greek is in the ingressive aorist which means that Epaphroditus’ sickness grew progressively worse.
 - Although the text doesn’t suggest what illness Epaphroditus had, it is certain that he was more concerned for the Philippians’ well-being than his own.
 - This seems to be Paul’s use of commanding Epaphroditus in his writing to the Philippians.
 - That amid his service to Paul, despite his own sickness to the point of death, Epaphroditus still seeks to give his all to the end.
 - This deep concern speaks volumes to the selflessness of Epaphroditus and serves as an example for us to pattern.
 - This type of deep anguish yet commitment to ministry work is what we see Jesus anguish with profusely in the Garden of Gethsemane.
 - That in Jesus’ greatest anguish burst forth the reality of His greatest commitment – accomplishing the will of the Father.
 - Paul continues in verse 27 by mentioning that despite the sickness in which

Epaphroditus was experiencing, that God intervened in a mighty way.

- So, Paul describes this divine healing as a mercy from God.
- That where the death of Epaphroditus would have caused great sorrow for the Philippian church, it would have caused greater sorrow for Paul.
 - Realize that to have Paul's imprisonment on top of a near death experience would have been a difficult pill to swallow.
 - Yet the mercy of God intervened which brought about great eagerness and joy for Paul to send Epaphroditus back as a great encouragement to the church.
- The reality for many of us, especially in seasons of great sorrow, is that it often feels unbearable to get through because so much is happening.
 - And the moment that you think it's enough, it can sometimes feel like you are hit with another fist from life.
 - Yet, Paul shows us that there are moments in our suffering that we can see God's divine hand of mercy in the situation.
 - Because the reality is that the Lord is with us in it all.
 - What I find so encouraging in the text is that in verses 28-30, Paul after witnessing the Lord divinely heal Epaphroditus, he sends him home.
 - The sending of Epaphroditus back home wasn't out of disappointment for his untimely sickness, but rather for the joy and comfort of the church.
 - It's almost as if Paul anticipated that the return of Epaphroditus to the Philippians would seem as if Epaphroditus had failed the mission.
 - I mention this because Paul relays the reality of the severity of Epaphroditus' sickness three times (vv.26, 27, 30).
 - So, perhaps it is Paul's desire to both reassure and encourage the Philippians as to their effort of giving and service to his needs.
 - Paul wanted the Philippians to be encouraged in knowing that their work was not in vain and that Epaphroditus has not failed his mission of service.
 - So Paul states that they are to receive Epaphroditus in the Lord with joy and to hold him in high regard (with great value).
 - Once again, we see the fatherly affection that Paul has towards the Philippian church.
- So Paul, using Epaphroditus as an example of humility and service, models for the church a Christ-like focus in service and humility to others.
 - The fact that Epaphroditus almost died in his service for his fellow brothers for the sake of Christ speaks to Epaphroditus' imitation of Christ towards his ministry work.
 - For when we as a body of believers work as unto the Lord, and live as unto the Lord, with a mind set upon the Lord, it causes us to move differently.
 - This is the service and humility of a soldier for the Lord!
 - A soldier who is on the battlefield has a single mind set on the mission no matter the cost.

- This is Paul's exact sentiment regarding his service for the gospel to the elders of Ephesus in Acts 20:24.

Acts 20:24 “But I do not consider my life of any account as dear to myself, so that I may finish my course and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify solemnly of the gospel of the grace of God.

- The lives of Paul, Timothy, and Epaphroditus serve as examples in whom we could look to as men who walked in a manner worthy of the gospel.
 - However, as we witnessed last week the ultimate example in whom has been set before us to imitate is Christ.
 - In all things, we must pursue our service to the Lord as living sacrifices.
 - Ones in whom daily lay our lives before the Lord for service to God and to our neighbors.
 - In all of that the goal in and through our lives is that Christ can be exemplified through our living.
 - Because in all things, our living for Christ becomes a light to the world which shines brightly in the darkness.
 - Let's Pray.

- We've arrived at Chapter 3 of the book of Philippians where Paul is beginning to wrap up some of his final statements to the church of Philippi.
 - He has walked these believers through understanding their justified positions in Christ and the sanctifying work of God in us, by faith.
 - He began this book with the fact that what they positionally possess is a grace gift from God, started by the Lord and continued by the Lord.
 - And what we will find tonight is a sub-theme of God's grace being critical so that we may not be misled by a work-based gospel.
 - Tonight, Paul will address the dangers of failing to rest in the grace-oriented Gospel that the Philippians first received.
 - Because the moment that we lose sight of the grace of God is the moment we move to a legalistic, man-oriented life.
 - And this shift in understanding of the grace of God and the Gospel of Christ will suck the joy out of our Christian walk.
 - Paul, for the past 2 chapters, has been adamant about the joy that is experienced in Christ and His finished work on the cross.
 - That when we pursue living for Christ through and by His enabling power and not our own strength, we find that there is joy to be had in it.
 - So, we will witness Paul express the need to remember the joy of the Lord that they both positionally and experientially possess.
 - Moreover, Paul is going to help both the Philippians and the readers of this letter today see that there is no adding or subtracting from Christ's work.
 - If I were to outline our time in the text tonight, we are going to see the following:
 - 1. Rejoice in the Lord (v.1)
 - 2. Avoid Legalism (vv.2-3)
 - 3. Crushing of Self-Confidence (vv.4-7)
 - If I were to put a tag on tonight's text it would be: The Danger of Legalism.
 - With that being said, I invite you to meet me in Philippians 3:1 for the reading of the word of God.

Philippians 3:1 Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things again is no trouble to me, and it is a safeguard for you.

- Last week, we saw Paul conclude Chapter 2 with the example of Epaphroditus as an example of Christ-like humility and service.
 - That through his example, the Philippians should hold Epaphroditus in high regard knowing that in every circumstance, Epaphroditus served well.
 - Now, in Chapter 3, verse one, Paul transitions to some concluding remarks that will go from Chapter 3 verse 1 to Chapter 4 verse 1. ("Finally")

- Paul's emphasis throughout the majority of this letter has been on the believer's reality and perception on both their positional and experiential joy in Christ, respectively.
 - Joy and rejoicing in the reality of what Christ has accomplished, and by His grace enabled us to do by His Spirit, is reason to have great joy.
 - That despite what we may face or the difficult circumstances we may come across, that there is reason to have joy through it.
- Our joy, as we have been studying, is not dictated by our feelings or trials we face.
 - Rather, when we put on the mind of Christ and place the lense by which Christ prescribed us, we can start to see things differently.
 - That instead of our circumstances being seen as burdensome, we can see them as opportunities to live and look more like Christ.
 - Or when we encounter opposition or disunity, that rather than trying to 'make a point' or 'be right', we seek a humble response in the matter.
- So Paul, at the start of this chapter says, "Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord."
 - In other words, "If you have missed the other times I have mentioned the need for joy in the Christian life in Christ, let me repeat it again."
 - That in all things and in every season, joy is and should be the common theme in the life of believers.
 - Whatever circumstances we find ourselves in, when we have the proper perspective, we can approach the situation like Christ.
- Paul continues by mentioning that the repetition of his teaching on joy to the Philippians is one worth repeating.
 - It's as if Paul, knowing how much the theme of joy is woven into the very fabric of this letter, saw a benefit in sounding like a broken record.
- You may recall instances growing up or even as a parent how there may have been common teachings or lessons your parents taught you growing up.
 - And as the opportunity came to share those words of wisdom with you repeatedly, your ears, years later could repeat them, word for word.
 - I recall my mom saying. "I might be sounding like a broken record, but I hope you get the picture."
 - The point being that repetition is not always an annoyance, and in this case, Paul considered it a "safeguard" for the Philippians.
 - And what timely instruction even in our world today, that we should never get tired of teaching the same message of the gospel.
 - As one Pastor once said, "The majority responsibility of a teacher/Pastor is to remind their congregants of the same things that have been previously taught."
 - So in this case, a "broken record" is a good thing because it becomes a constant reminder of setting our affections and mind on Christ and not our circumstances.
 - So as Paul reminds the believers of how they received Christ (through grace) and

who they are in Christ, he cautions them to mind their ears.

- Look at verses 2-3.

Philippians 3:2 Beware of the dogs, beware of the evil workers, beware of the false circumcision;

Philippians 3:3 for we are the true circumcision, who worship in the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh,

- Notice, how Paul suddenly shifts his attention from reminding the Philippian church to firmly warning them.
 - He mentions the word “beware” three times in verse 2 alone and it’s not for passive purposes.
 - This word “beware” is one that we have heard before in some of Paul’s writings.
 - It is the Greek word *b/epo* which means to be on guard against and to watch out for.
 - And all three instances of this warning are speaking to the characteristics of certain men who sought to chain the believer with legalistic requirements of the Law.
 - These types of men who Paul is speaking about were what was known as Judaizers.
 - These individuals were a Pharisaic group who looked to impose Judaism upon the believing Gentiles of that day.
 - They taught that the circumcision was a necessary work in addition to the saving work of Christ on the cross.
 - In other words, these individuals looked to add additional work to God’s provisional means of Salvation. (Jesus plus ‘something’)
 - However, when you examine the scriptures to understand how one comes to faith, there are no additional steps.
 - There is no requirement of needing to have your life together before coming to Christ.
 - There is no sin-less, repent of your sins, and then ‘you can be saved’ process.
 - Salvation simply requires a transfer of confidence from yourself to the Lord’s provision for you.
 - All scripture requires for one to be saved is to believe upon the Lord Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins.
 - These Judaizers not only required circumcision alongside the work of Christ, but they took it a step further.
 - They would then require Christians to follow the Laws of Moses.
 - So, if I were to provide a comparison of what these Judaizers were teaching in contrast to Paul, it would be the following:
 - 1. Where Paul taught Justification by faith in Christ, the Judaizers taught

justification through circumcision.

- 2. Where Paul taught Sanctification by the Spirit, the Judaizers taught sanctification through the Law.
 - This very point was the cause of the meeting at the Jerusalem council in Acts 15:1.
 - This gathering was to gain a consensus of how men were saved, because up to a point the Gospel was being preached to the Jews.
 - Remember, it wasn't until Peter had preached to Cornelius and his family in Acts 10 that he witnessed what God was doing among the Gentiles.
 - So, when Peter reported what he and some of his brothers witnessed with Cornelius, they reported to Jerusalem.
 - And you'd never guess who took issue with it. Check out Acts 11:1-3.

Acts 11:1 Now the apostles and the brethren who were throughout Judea heard that the Gentiles also had received the word of God.

Acts 11:2 And when Peter came up to Jerusalem, those who were circumcised took issue with him,

Acts 11:3 saying, “You went to uncircumcised men and ate with them.”

- ○ It would be from Peter's lengthy explanation of their experience at Cornelius' home that these men concluded the following.
 - Check out Acts 11:18.

Acts 11:18 When they heard this, they quieted down and glorified God, saying, “Well then, God has granted to the Gentiles also the repentance that leads to life.”

- Furthermore, as Paul goes into his first missionary journey to preach the gospel, his message is that Justification is found through Christ and not the Law (Acts 11:39)
 - So, when Paul now goes before the Jerusalem Council, he too finds that there is contention between what he taught versus some other Jewish believers.
 - Here is what Acts 15:1-5 says:

Acts 15:1 Some men came down from Judea and began teaching the brethren, “Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved.”

Acts 15:2 And when Paul and Barnabas had great dissension and debate with them, the brethren determined that Paul and Barnabas and some others of them should go up to Jerusalem to the apostles and elders concerning this issue.

Acts 15:3 Therefore, being sent on their way by the church, they were passing through both Phoenicia and Samaria, describing in detail the conversion of the Gentiles, and were bringing great joy to all the brethren.

Acts 15:4 When they arrived at Jerusalem, they were received by the church and the apostles and the elders, and they reported all that God had done with them.

Acts 15:5 But some of the sect of the Pharisees who had believed stood up, saying, "It is necessary to circumcise them and to direct them to observe the Law of Moses."

- The result of this meeting of the council in Jerusalem was a letter to be circulated to the churches concluding that salvation is solely through Christ alone.
 - And this official letter from the council served as the final authority on how one comes to faith in Christ.
 - Here is just a bit of how it reads in Acts 15:24-28.

Acts 15:24 "Since we have heard that some of our number to whom we gave no instruction have disturbed you with their words, unsettling your souls,

Acts 15:25 it seemed good to us, having become of one mind, to select men to send to you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul,

Acts 15:26 men who have risked their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Acts 15:27 "Therefore we have sent Judas and Silas, who themselves will also report the same things by word of mouth.

Acts 15:28 "For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay upon you no greater burden than these essentials:

- So, it was determined that no additional works or effort on the human end is required to be justified by Christ!
 - It is only believing upon the Lord Jesus Christ by which men are saved!
 - So, we see that the problem with legalism was that it was adding to a work that had already been worked out, in and through Christ!
 - All legalism is at its core is man's efforts of trying to look good to God on their own merit and in their own confidence.
 - At the very core of it all, legalism is man seeking to get to God in their own way and not the way in which God had intended.
 - The Apostles and Elders in the council stated that there was no need to lay upon any a "greater burden".
 - Friends, that burden of making one right with God was laid upon Christ!
 - Isaiah tells us that it pleased the Father to crush the son, not you and I. (Isaiah 53:10)
 - It was only Christ alone who could take upon Himself the wrath of God so that peace

could be made between God and man.

- However, it seemed that although this letter of clarity was circulated to combat the false teaching in that day, the false teachers weren't backing down.
- This is why Paul writes a 'frank' letter to the Galatians, because they were failing to hold dear the teachings Paul first delivered to them.
 - That where they should have remained steadfast, some were beginning to slip.
 - Check out what Paul says to the Galatians in Galatians 2:16.

Galatians 2:16 nevertheless knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, so that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the Law; since by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified.

- Paul's point is to be mindful of these men's character, be cautious of their evil deeds, and stay away from their mutilating teaching.
 - The teaching of these legalistic teachers only served to the compromise and complication of the true gospel.
 - Did you notice, how Paul draws the contrast between what these false teachers are saying versus who Paul says these believers truly are in Christ.
 - He says that "...we are the true circumcision..."
 - So, Paul's comparison really begins to communicate his point which is Justification in Christ is not a matter of one's conforming in the flesh.
 - Rather it is something that is made possible spiritually through the cutting of the heart and having eyes to see and ears to hear.
 - This is why you can have Believing Jews, who may have been circumcised due to their culture and Gentiles who become believers but are not circumcised.
 - This work that God has accomplished in Christ is a Spiritual work.
- You have to consider that as this letter circulates throughout the churches in Philippi, that these false teachers had gotten word of the content of the letter.
 - So, hearing Paul characterize them as dogs, evil workers, and most especially of a false circumcision had to be a heavy and embarrassing blow.
 - Moreover, our English translations don't do justice as to the word "circumcision" found in verses 2 and 3.
 - These are actually 2 separate Greek words.
 - Circumcision in verse 2 regarding the Judaizers is the word *katatome* which means mutilation.
 - Whereas circumcision in verse 3 is the Greek word *peritome* which correlates with God's people (chosen ones).
 - So, Paul, in few words, throws the book in these men's faces and says, "You may think you are God's chosen, but you are only mutilated men."

- True worship, service, and honor to the Lord is motivated out of a heart that has been transformed by God and in return gives praise in one's living.
- However, the reverse stands true as well, that a heart that has not been transformed will seek praise for itself and not the Creator.
- And the warning in it all is that if you fall victim to this legalism, you too can find your motives transferring from Savior to self.
- This is why Paul states three times, be watchful!
- Therefore, when we safeguard ourselves from false teaching and false gospels, we can walk confidently in knowing the grace we have received.
 - Because this life in Christ has been made available not through our confidence in ourselves, but our confidence in Christ.
- Notice that Paul in verses 4-6 is going to provide the reader with quite an extensive yet impressive resume of Paul's "worldly accomplishments".
 - However, in Paul doing so, he is using his past experiences as an example as to why he could have the confidence to boast in himself.
 - Yet, that is not his point and that's what we will see in the subsequent verses. Check out verses 4-6.

Philippians 3:4 although I myself might have confidence even in the flesh. If anyone else has a mind to put confidence in the flesh, I far more:

Philippians 3:5 circumcised the eighth day, of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the Law, a Pharisee;

Philippians 3:6 as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to the righteousness which is in the Law, found blameless.

Philippians 3:7 But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ.

- Paul makes the point that if there be 'any individual', outside or inside of Christ, who had the audacity to boast, it would be him.
 - And he proceeds by mentioning 7 reasons for this sense of confidence or boasting. He says:
 - 1. Circumcised the eighth day
 - 2. Of the Nation of Israel
 - 3. Of the tribe of Benjamin
 - 4. A Hebrew of Hebrews
 - 5. A Pharisee
 - 6. Former persecutor of the Church
 - 7. Followed the Law of Moses
- He begins with the circumcision being that this is the "hot topic issue" for the Judaizers'

incessant false teaching.

- Not only does Paul mention that he has been circumcised, but he mentions that he was circumcised on the eighth day.
 - That detail would make known to the Judaizers that Paul was not a proselyte, moreover that he was an ethnic-Jew, by blood.
- Next, Paul mentions that he was of the people of the nation of Israel. This established heritage.
 - For someone to be Jewish means that they can trace their family lineage back to Abraham.
 - And in this case, Paul by way of this statement shows that both his parents were Jewish.
 - Therefore, his claim to being a true Jew, in every sense of the word, was validated.
 - Next, Paul mentions the tribe of which he was from – the tribe of Benjamin.
 - This being the tribe of Israel's first king.
 - Although, there was failure in Saul's rule as king, this tribe was held in a place of honor and remained faithful to David's house.
 - Fourth, Paul was well versed in the Hebrew language as well as the customs and traditions of the Israelite people. (Cultural/ethnic expert)
 - Fifth, Paul was a Pharisee and being that he was an expert of the Law meant he had to be schooled in this manner.
 - And Paul was taught by the leading scholar of that day, by a man named Gamaliel. (Acts 22:3).
 - And along with this zeal for the Law would by default cause uproar for the movement of "The Way" (Church) throughout Jerusalem in that day.
 - Lastly, in all of his studies, traditions, accolades, awards etc., according to the Law, he could do no wrong. (blameless)
- And in all of these means of confidence, we find in verse 7 that none of it meant a thing to Paul, in comparison to Christ.
 - It's like a guy from Harvard University saying, "Yeah I have a Harvard degree, but it means nothing in the grand scheme of things."
 - Within our world and society today, we soak up every opportunity to flaunt our degrees and accolades.
 - We aim to find value and worth in the things that we do because the world looks at the exterior whereas the Lord looks at the heart.
 - And because God is concerned with our heart condition, why would His Gospel espouse a self-improvement, works-based salvation.
 - The reality is, the Lord is a jealous God and shares His glory with no man.
 - Therefore, for one to truly walk in the freedom and joy of the Lord, it requires an abandonment of trust within self and a dependence on Christ.

- This is why Justification by works is heretical by every definition provided.
 - You cannot work your way into heaven.
 - You cannot tithe your way into heaven.
 - You cannot perform your way into heaven.
- The only qualifier by which gets you into eternal life is you placing your trust in the provision by which God made available for you – His Son.
 - Jesus did all the heavy lifting and hard work necessary to make peace with the Father for us.
 - And to reject His provision is to reject the only way into heaven and eternal life.
- To reject the Person and work of Christ is to run the hamster wheel of life trying to find out what truth is.
- So, Paul says in verse 7, “whatever things I attained as reward or accolade in this life, I count it as loss for Christ.”
 - What freedom that is to know that access to the Father doesn’t require your need for effort or work to be saved.
 - It simply requires a transfer of trust (belief) in the Lord Jesus Christ!
 - When we begin to add things, or steps, to coming into a relationship with Christ, we set up barriers for people to receive the free gift of grace.
 - The gospel of Jesus Christ has no barriers because Christ through His death and resurrection has bridged the gap between God and man.
 - And as scripture tells us, who the Son has set free is free indeed.
 - You don’t have to wake up day after day questioning, “am I still saved”, after you have fallen short of the Glory of God.
 - The same grace that saved you from the wrath and rightful judgement of God is the same grace that is keeping you!
 - May we all learn to walk in the freedom of this grace and live in such a way that reflects this glorious work of Christ!
 - As we will see next week, when we grow in our knowledge of the Lord Jesus and what He has richly done for us and is doing in us, we can truly behold the Joy of the Lord.
 - For when we walk in the confidence of the Lord, we will come to see that there should never be a need or desire to boast in ourselves.
 - Let’s Pray.

- The first time you got behind the steering wheel of the car, you most likely experienced a rush of excitement.
 - Your hands on 10 and 2 of the steering wheel as you prepared to move the gear from park to drive.
 - Every good driver who has been taught how to drive is cautioned to always be aware of their surroundings, most especially blind spots.
 - We were taught not only to drive for our own safety but for the safety of others as well.
 - And in all of the cautioning and warning, we were never instructed to use our rearview mirrors as the means to get to our destination.
 - The goal for where we are seeking to go on the road is always found in a forward moving direction.
 - Not only does driving with a focus on what's behind you cause failure of being aware of what's ahead, but you also miss the beauty of the journey before you.
 - This principle not only applies with that of driving but is true in life.
 - Looking back on things in the past has the ability of causing one to have the joy of life sucked right out of you.
 - Because if we constantly harp on about what has been, we can never joyfully anticipate what is to come.
 - Ultimately, our joy in all things is rooted in our present reality of our position in Christ.
 - And even more so, it is the joyous anticipation of being with Him in Glory.
 - Tonight, we will see that this perspective, one set with eyes for eternity, is the proper perspective that is at the forefront of Paul's mind.
 - Forgetting what was behind him, for the sake of gaining what is in front of him.
 - If I were to put an outline together of our time tonight, we will see the following:
 - 1. Loss for the sake of Christ (vv.7-9)
 - 2. That I May Know Him (vv.10-12)
 - 3. Pressing On (vv.13-14)
 - If I were to put a tag on our text tonight, it would simply be: "Let the Past be the Past".
 - With that being said, I invite you to open up a copy of scripture and meet me in Philippians 3:7-9 for the reading of the word of the Lord.

Philippians 3:7 But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ.

Philippians 3:8 More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ,

Philippians 3:9 and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith,

- Last week, we covered some material that on the surface would have seemed as if the Apostle Paul was boasting in himself and his works.
 - However, we came to understand that Paul was using verses 4-6 as a means to further his argument on why those things mean nothing.
 - So tonight, we see that Paul provides the explanation of the usage of his previously held 'resume of the flesh', if you will.
 - He begins verse 7 with the statement, "But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ."
 - It doesn't require much work to see what these "things" are that Paul is referring to.
 - He had just listed out an entire resume which could've, most certainly, justified him before a court of law, especially the legalist Judaizers.
 - Yet, Paul states that those previously listed "notches on his belt", were considered all a loss for the sake of Christ.
 - Whenever we are looking for a new job and preparing for the interview, we will put together a resume folder of sorts.
 - And that folder will contain the resume, the cover letter, and some business cards to promote who you are and your skill set.
 - And we go through this effort of time-consuming prep work just to sit in a room for 30 minutes to an hour.
 - Yet, when it comes down to the believer desiring to grow in Christ, we take less time to spend in the word than we do the efforts of other "things".
 - The point being, we will prioritize the things that are most important to us and where we can, we try to "fit Jesus in".
 - But in this case, it seems that Paul pushes back on this idea of self-aggrandizement and meritorious work as a means of pleasing God.
 - That somewhere between Paul and his previous pursuits to destroy the church to the Damascus Road experience, something changed.
 - And isn't that often the story of our lives, that when it came to us experiencing Christ, personally, that in some ways it required great loss.
 - In fact, the word "counted" in verse 7 is this idea of considering something or someone having come to a particular conclusion regarding a matter.
 - Hence, perhaps why Paul used his own personal testimony as an example for the Philippian church to see.
 - He needed them to know that even on our best day, what we bring to the table in our efforts pales in comparison to knowing Christ.

- The reality is, as one pursues Christ more deeply, you will come to the fork in the road.
 - You will have to ask yourself the question of priority as you pursue a discipleship relationship with Jesus.
 - Because it's one thing to have come to faith in Christ, but to walk with Him as a disciple requires a letting go of self and a yearning for Him.
 - This is why Jesus mentions in Luke 14:33, in the context of the discipleship relationship with Him, a cost that is required. Check out the text:

Luke 14:33 “So then, none of you can be My disciple who does not give up all his own possessions.

- This simply goes to say that although Salvation in Christ (Being Justified) costs you nothing, but following Christ costs you something.
 - And that cost to be counted, when weighted against what we have freely and richly gained in Christ, won't even compare.
 - This is why in verse 8, Paul continues by saying, “More than the things I just listed to you, I count all things to be loss.”
 - And in this context, all means all – that there are no reservations by which Paul withholds from Christ, things that are to be counted as loss.
 - Paul, in few words, expresses the fact that none of what he lost means anything in comparison to knowing Christ!
 - Notice, that Paul extends this point even further and he does so in a very colorful way. He mentions a “value” difference.
 - That where knowing Christ more deeply becomes the priority and goal, he mentions that what he has lost in pursuit of knowing Christ was “rubbish”.
 - The word ‘rubbish’ is the Greek word *skybalon* (ski-balon) which means dung, excrement, or manure.
 - This word only appears in use here (Philippians 3:8) in the New Testament. Where it derived from is uncertain.
 - In any case, Paul uses this word to illustrate the “value of his works” in comparison to “the Person and work of Christ”.
 - Plainly put, Paul is saying my works are to be flushed down the toilet – here today gone tomorrow.
 - But to know Christ, that is a relationship of value and high regard and is worth every ounce of our pursuit!
 - This begs the question for some which is: “What is this surpassing value and joy that Paul sees in Christ beyond what Jesus did on the cross?”
 - This value of knowing Christ goes beyond simply knowing Jesus on an intellectual/academic level.

- This knowing of Christ comes about through a personal relationship.
- This type of knowledge is paired with both a head and heart-knowledge of the Lord.
- When we begin to recognize the implications of what Jesus' death and resurrection means for us both on a provisional and experiential aspect, it changes things.
 - The implications of His death help in shaping our metaphysical realities in how we deal with society and our understanding of justice.
 - The implication of His resurrection provides us with future hope and anticipation of things to come.
 - Yet, we can only experience these ever-present realities if we grow in our pursuit and knowledge of Him.
 - I can know my wife in the sense of surface level conversation. (i.e, where you from, who's your parents, etc.)
 - Yet there is an opportunity in knowing her personally by spending time to know the things that irritate her, make her smile, make her laugh.
 - So, once I get to know my wife on this personal level it changes how we can engage and interact with one another in the world.
 - This becomes the distinction between knowing Jesus versus 'knowing' Him on an experiential level.
 - Paul is saying, I desire to lose everything I have and hold dear to, so that I may gain Christ in the most intimate of ways.
 - This leads us to verse 9.
 - Paul's logical progression leads the reader to this future anticipation of glorification and ability to stand before Christ at the Bema Seat.
 - Paul not only mentions the great value of being in Christ presently, but that he will be found in Christ in an evaluatory manner.
 - This positional reality at a future point is only made possible because of the finished work of Christ and not any work of our doing.
 - This is why Paul states "this is not of a righteousness derived from the Law."
 - In other words, the Law could not keep us in the sense of Justification nor could the Law perfect us (sanctification).
 - The purpose and intent of the Law was to make the people keenly aware of what they could not do.
 - Notice, how Paul characterized the "assumed righteousness" of the Law in Galatians 3:23-27.

Galatians 3:23 **But before faith came, we were kept in custody under the law, being shut up to the faith which was later to be revealed.**

Galatians 3:24 **Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith.**

Galatians 3:25 **But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.**

Galatians 3:26 **For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.**

- Paul mentions that the Law was not the point, but rather Christ was the point.
 - The point of a tutor is to point you to the proper answer.
 - This is why one's pursuit in performance-based Christianity or work-based Christianity is a constant moving of goal posts.
 - Therefore, God, in His kindness and mercy, has made it possible for those who could never stand blameless before Holy God (all of us), to stand blamelessly in Christ alone.
 - We must recognize that a righteousness that requires us to maintain it, fails in and of itself to be righteousness.
 - Why? Because righteousness is a standard that is accomplished through the perfect accomplishment of one who is Holy because Holiness is the standard.
 - And as scripture informs us time and again, there is none in the earth that is righteous.
 - Isaiah states the following in Isaiah 64:6.

Isaiah 64:6 **For all of us have become like one who is unclean, And all our righteous deeds are like a filthy garment; And all of us wither like a leaf, And our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.**

- - None can be clean in and of our own striving and merit. The only one in whom can cleanse us of our iniquities is God through Christ.
 - Therefore, Paul boldly states that because of His understanding of this foundational theological truth, his sole desire is to know Jesus!
 - Check out verses 10-12.

Philippians 3:10 **that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death;**

Philippians 3:11 **in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.**

Philippians 3:12 **Not that I have already obtained it or have already become perfect, but I press on so that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus.**

- The first half of verse 10 alone has become one of my favorite scriptures to meditate on.
 - Paul continues in this thought by rounding it out by expressing the reality of his deep affections for the Lord Jesus.
 - His confidence is in realization of what the work of Christ has accomplished both positionally and experientially for the believer.

- And within that confidence of his faith in Christ, rests his contentment in the finished work of Jesus and his abandonment of self-assurance.
- Therefore, Paul expresses in this beautiful statement what the focus of his mind, heart, and affections are – “that I may know Him...”
 - In other words, there is no greater desire or thing that can outweigh the love-pursuit that Paul has for Christ.
 - For all things are realized and complete through the word of God (knowledge) and the work of God in the Person of God – Jesus Christ.
- This sense of ‘knowing’, *ginosko* in Greek, is to know by way of experience.
 - Paul had acquired such an appetite for Christ in his walking with him that he couldn’t just settle for a “kiddie meal experience” with Jesus.
 - That as his knowledge of the Lord increased so did his spiritual pallet.
- It’s in verses 10-11 that Paul mentions several outworking desires of his increased spiritual appetite.
 - He mentions that along with his increased spiritual hunger for the Lord would render:
 - 1. Him knowing the Power of the resurrection of Christ
 - 2. Fellowship in the sufferings of Christ
 - 3. Being conformed to Christ’s death
 - Let’s begin with the first.
- Paul begins with this ongoing inner working of the Power of the resurrection.
 - The word ‘power’ in Greek is *dynamis* which is where we get our English word dynamite from.
 - It is power, more specifically it is the very power of God, that raised Jesus from the dead.
 - And we find in Acts 1:8 that this same power is actively and permanently at work within every believer in the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - Check out Acts 1:8.

Acts 1:8 but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.”

- Luke mentions in Acts that this very power exhibited in the Person of the Holy Spirit is the active agent by which enables and empowers us in Christ.
- Secondly, Paul desired to share in the fellowship of the sufferings of Christ.
 - Obviously, the sufferings of Christ related to His work for the sake of salvation was a type of suffering in which only He could take on.
 - Therefore, it’s clear to understand that Paul could not share in His suffering in

that way.

- However, being that Paul was positionally in Christ, having been Justified, Paul understood there was a place of suffering for Christ.
 - The reality was, for those identified as followers of Jesus, it was an open invitation to suffer for the sake of the advancement of the Gospel.
 - This is why those who began by following Jesus in the start of His ministry would begin to fizzle out when the pressure turned up.
- For the invitation of the cross of Christ was not an invitation to convenience and comfort.
 - This was a life to follow Jesus even if it meant death.
- Today we have individuals who will promote the “fish emblem” or the cross on their vehicles, yet those emblems become symbols of an idea rather than a lifestyle.
 - Paul on the other hand has embodied the very life of Christ by putting himself out on the line for the sake of Christ being made known. (Imitate me as I imitate Christ)
 - Clearly, Paul is less concerned with his ‘resume and reputation’ and is solely seeking for Christ to be the focal point.
 - Paul makes this point in 2 Corinthians 4:5-12. Check out the text:

2 Corinthians 4:5 For we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your bond-servants for Jesus' sake.

2 Corinthians 4:6 For God, who said, “Light shall shine out of darkness,” is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.

2 Corinthians 4:7 But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, so that the surpassing greatness of the power will be of God and not from ourselves;
2 Corinthians 4:8 we are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not despairing;

2 Corinthians 4:9 persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed;

2 Corinthians 4:10 always carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body.

2 Corinthians 4:11 For we who live are constantly being delivered over to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh.

2 Corinthians 4:12 So death works in us, but life in you.

- Those who are pursuing a deeper more mature relationship with the Lord are ones that respond differently amid persecution.
 - Because their maturity is directly tied to their intimacy and their intimacy is directly correlated with their spiritual outlook.
 - In other words, the mark of a mature believer in Christ is one that, in every season of life, has eyes for eternity and not the temporal.

- The walk of discipleship is not for the faint of heart but for those who are willing to count the cost and pursue Christ beyond the surface.
- The word “conformed” in Greek, in verse 10, is *symmorphizo* which means to be conformed into or to share the experience of.
 - In other words, the sharing in the sufferings of Christ become a mechanism by which conforms us to look more like Christ.
 - The question we have to ask ourselves is, “Do we see our present suffering as an aid to becoming more like Christ or is it an inconvenience?”
 - Our response becomes the measure by which indicates where we fall on the spectrum of spiritual maturity.
 - But the grace in all of this is whether you find yourself with an immature response or not, God’s grace is actively at work for you to grow in.
- What Paul is alluding to is this reality that because Christ has died on our behalf, we now have the power and ability to overcome sin’s present hold. (Choice)
 - This does not mean that we are perfect or will be perfect in this life.
 - However, this does mean we are enabled and empowered to choose to respond in a manner that cuts sin off day by day.
 - Which dog in the fight are you feeding?
- Lastly, Paul mentions the resurrection. But in the English translation it reads as if this is something he is striving towards.
 - We know, according to Paul’s logical flow from the start of this letter, that each tense of Salvation is a work that God begins and completes.
 - Therefore, to suggest anything different would be to assume that God can somehow change His mind as to His salvific outworking.
 - Instead, when reading the text, the best rendering would be one of hope in the sense of great expectation of this coming resurrection.
 - In fact, this is the hope of all in the Christian faith, that because Christ has been raised, we too will be raised.
 - In fact, the Resurrection itself is the lynchpin to the very faith we have in Christ.
 - Our assurance of what Christ accomplished on the cross is affirmed and confirmed because Jesus is not in the tomb!
 - During the Easter season, every news channel and media outlet displays the historical reality of the resurrection of Christ but don’t believe His word!
 - This event is one that should provide great hope for every believer knowing that because Christ was raised, we will be raised too.
 - Notice however, a quick glance through verse 11 will cause us to miss this distinct distinction between the word resurrection in verse 10 versus verse 11.
 - The word for ‘resurrection’ in verse 10 is *anastasis* (an-a-sta-sis) which deals with being raised up from the dead.
 - Yet the Greek word for ‘resurrection’ in verse 11 is *exanastasis* (ex-an-a-sta-sis)

and this word is found only once in the Greek New Testament.

- *Exanastasis* is what is known as the “out-resurrection”.
 - Paul would not mention a need to strive to attain resurrection from the dead, if eternal life is given to all who are justified by faith in Christ. (1 Corinthians 15:21)
 - Paul must have something else in mind here and we will see it fully flushed out next week.
- So this assumes that there would be a removal of individuals from amongst those who are not resurrected.
 - And clearly, the group in which Paul has in view here, who have this confidence of hope of an “out-resurrection”, are believers themselves.
 - Therefore, this could very well be a grammatical descriptor of Paul expressing the Rapture event.
- The reality is those who are in Christ should live with confidence knowing there will be a coming time in which the church will be ‘snatched up’ from among those who have not professed faith in Christ.
 - And with this reality is understanding Paul’s desire to strive for this future event.
 - Because along with the out-workings of this anticipation is the prize in mind which is realized through having lived in such a way to receive our spiritual rewards.
 - Titus 2:11-13, Paul writes the following:

Titus 2:11 For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, Titus 2:12 instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, Titus 2:13 looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus,

- As we seek to pursue Christ and conform to His image and share in His suffering, our eternal perspective begins to shape joyful anticipation and prepares us for future rewards to come.
 - This is why Paul mentions in Titus 2:13, that while we are in this present age, that we are to live well and look eagerly for His appearing.
 - Check out this excerpt from “The Out-resurrection from the dead” by Dr. S. Lewis Johnson.

It is not only a blessed hope; it is also a purifying hope, for John, speaking of His manifestation, writes, “And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure” (1 John 3:3). F. E. Marsh used to tell the story of John Brown, the faithful attendant of Queen Victoria of England. When her Majesty was about to visit any of the cottagers at Balmoral, in Scotland, as she was in the habit of doing, John Brown used to go on ahead and say to the

person to be visited, “Feckle yersel’, the Queen’s a’ comin’.” “Feckle” meant *to hustle, to get ready, to have everything in place*. The believer, longing for the coming of his Lord and the rapture of the church, would do well to “feckle” himself in order that His face might be beheld with joy and confidence.

- Notice, in verse 12 that this attaining a prize is something that Paul anticipates, whether in his lifetime or at a future date.
 - He mentions that he has not yet attained this state of perfection of a glorified body.
 - This also means that this is not some type of “spiritual resurrection” but something that is literal yet future.
 - Yet, Paul describes that in the meantime, while he awaits this moment, that he will press on so that he may “lay hold of it” as Christ laid hold of Him.
 - Paul is not insinuating that his efforts within the Salvation work is something he has both mastered nor earned himself.
 - Rather this work of salvation, in all three tenses, is a work in which Christ Himself initiates, enables, and completes.
 - And at the same time, because of Christ’s finished work, we are able to engage in this sanctifying work as we put in the work alongside the Spirit.
 - So, what we are seeing in the grand scheme of things is that our spiritual maturity is directly tied to our growth in both our knowing of Christ and submission to Him.
 - Where there is no intimacy with Christ, there is no growth in Christ.
 - This is why you can have a believer that has been saved for 30 years yet still be walking in spiritual infancy.
 - They have not put the word of the Lord to work in their lives because they don’t want to count the cost.
 - And this reality causes this infant believer in Christ to miss the fullness of Christ and the joy found therein.
 - Lastly, we come to verses 13 and 14 where Paul mentions the focus of the believer in light of their positional reality.

Philippians 3:13 Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead,

Philippians 3:14 I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

- Lastly, Paul reassures the Philippians that even he himself has not yet laid hold of this sense of “perfection” or full maturity in Christ.
 - The reality was that, as long as we are in these corrupted bodies we are constantly going to duel between our spirit and our flesh.

- But there is one thing that Paul lays out for certain and that is his abilities, traditions, customs, and pride of heritage were not the goal.
- Although to the Judaizers, these were worthy things to stand on, Paul recognized those things don't uphold eternal life.
- Those things do not Justify one before a Holy God.
- Paul reiterates his point from earlier in the text (verses 3-7) – that he is not looking behind him, but rather he is looking ahead.
 - I asked the rhetorical question at the start of this lesson – when has driving by looking at the rear-view mirror ever been helpful?
 - If the destination is ahead, why would we jeopardize our race by looking back.
- If you've ever watched a track meet such as the baton relay, it is one of the most fascinating sports to witness.
 - The objective is to have an entire team get the baton from the starting runner to the final runner in a set amount of time.
 - For speed and efficiency in the race, such as a 4X100, the objective is for the starting runner to run to the receiving teammate.
 - And upon a certain set distance the receiving runner is to anticipate the oncoming teammate.
 - At this point the starting runner needs to extend their reach to hand over the baton while the receiving runner extends their back hand to receive the baton.
 - Once the team member receives the baton they are not looking back to see where the starter is, but the goal is the next runner to get to the finish line.
 - Paul in verse 13b states that he is reaching forward to what lies ahead – that's where the goal is.
 - The imagery here seems to suggest a race of sorts and that the runner is solely fixed on the prize in which he anticipates at the end.
 - Finally, it's in verse 14 that Paul says "I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ."
 - The word 'press' is this idea of straining toward or pursuing the goal ahead.
 - The moment that the believer begins to look back at their past failures, short comings etc., is what causes the baton to drop.
 - The moment that our eyes are taken off the prize is the moment we experience spiritual paralysis.
 - We find ourselves in a cycle of defeat because we fail to rest in the amazing grace in which the Lord has provided us to walk in.
 - The enemy's greatest ploy is to have the believer rehearse the brokenness of our past.
 - The enemy is an accuser of the brethren in Christ and therefore he seeks to always bring up accusations before the Lord.
 - However, when we realize that we have been justified through the blood of

Christ, we stand before a Holy God clean and in the clear.

- In Romans 8:1 Pauls tells us this:

Romans 8:1 Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

- When we come to realize what we have received in Christ, our outlook on things can begin to change.
 - We can walk in a worthy manner because we serve a worthy and Holy God.
 - Let's Pray.

- Tonight, we come to the end of Chapter Three, where we have been discovering, according to our chapter breakdown, our reward comes from Christ.
 - Last week, we discussed that how joy in this walk of life can be snuffed out if we are constantly looking back to the past.
 - The enemy tends to utilize our past failures as obstacles of hinderance.
 - Paul's primary focus was for the believer in Philippi to understand that our measly works pale in comparison to the glory of Christ and His work!
 - Paul stated that his works and ours as well are luck dung compared to what Christ has accomplished.
 - Therefore, as believers in the Lord Jesus, our primary aim is that we may "Know Him".
 - And as we grow in knowing Him, we are able to behold the true prize and that is in being with Him.
 - Therefore, our joy in Christ is experiential and is fully realized when we learn to grow in Him, beyond just knowing about Him.
 - This reality helps believers in Christ walk through this life with a light grip on the things that we have and attain.
 - Because in the end our rewards are those that are incorruptible.
 - Tonight, Paul is going to further expound on this premise of growing in the second tense of our salvation.
 - That as we mature in Christ, our aims and priorities begin to shift from this world and on to eternal things.
 - If I were to outline our time through the text tonight, it would be the following:
 - 1. Attitude of Maturity (vv.15-16)
 - 2. Set your mind on things eternal (vv.17-19)
 - 3. Eternal Perspective (vv.20-21)
 - If I were to put a tag on our text tonight it would simply be: The Hope of Things to Come.
 - With that being said, I invite you to open up a copy of the scriptures and meet me in Philippians 3:15-16.

Philippians 3:15 **Let us therefore, as many as are perfect, have this attitude; and if in anything you have a different attitude, God will reveal that also to you;**

Philippians 3:16 **however, let us keep living by that same standard to which we have attained.**

- Paul is starting to wrap up his point in these latter verses by emphasizing the need to continue striving for a level of maturity in Christ towards completion.
 - And in his encouragement to pursue this walk and lifestyle of maturity he mentions that this way of life requires having a certain attitude in mind.

- This attitude in which Paul is speaking about is an attitude of daily striving to look more like Christ in every area of our lives.
- In other words, our positional reality in Christ should produce in our hearts an appetite for knowing all that we can, experientially, in Christ.
- Remember, joy is not circumstantial but rather it is experiential and the more that we experience Christ in our walk with Him, the more we become like Him.
 - And the reality is for some, this can become quite difficult because as mentioned before, everyone is on a different level of spiritual maturity.
 - This means that some will have greater difficulty in their walks than others, however, the grace that God provides for us all is the same.
- So, this becomes the reason why Paul began these concluding remarks in Chapter Three verse 15 with the phrase, “Let us therefore...”
 - Paul wants the main thing to be the main thing!
 - Because, as we saw Paul state last week, we all should be “pressing toward the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.”
 - The idea of “pressing toward the goal” was that of an Olympic race in mind.
- With anyone who runs in a tournament or competition, the only point of focus is not the person to your left or right, but the prize up ahead.
 - And in this case as we saw last week, Paul’s ultimate point is that Christ is our goal!
 - Christ is the one in whom we run for, strive for, and live for, because we are found richly in Him.
- We also discussed last week: God in Christ began this work in us, sustains this work in us, and we will be glorified because of the work He has accomplished.
 - Therefore, even with the spiritual rewards that we are able to attain because of our losses in this life, the true prize to behold is Christ alone.
- As one theologian notes: “Christ is the goal of our faith for a heavenly righteousness, the goal of our love for heavenly fellowship, and the goal of our hope for heavenly blessedness”.
 - So, although, in this life, as we serve Christ, there are rewards to be attained, know that the ultimate reward is being with Christ and knowing Him.
 - Therefore, our striving for maturity is not for the sake of rewards, just for reward’s sake, but to fully know Christ and to be with Him.
- So, Paul continues on by mentioning that if there is one who has a different mindset apart from that of Christ, that “God would make it known to you”.
 - That is to say that where our focus on the pursuit of Christ begins to pivot, the ministry of the Holy Spirit will bring about revelation to see.
- A few lessons ago, we came to understand, in a general sense, the roles of the Holy Spirit within the life of a believer.
 - And some of the roles that the Holy Spirit takes on is that of a teaching, convicting, and revealing ministry.

- That because the Holy Spirit is also our teacher, as we submit in obedience to the Lord's leading, our mindsets begin to be reframed.
- As a matter of fact, this is in direct connection with what Paul mentioned earlier about having an 'appetite for Christ'.
 - This means that as you condition your heart and mind to respond positively to the enablement of the Holy Spirit, so will your life follow suit. (Obedience)
 - So, you can't expect to understand God's will for your life on a day-to-day basis if you fail to make the time to know what His word says.
 - Because it is in His word that you will understand His will because you are seeking to understand His ways!
- So Paul, in verse 16, makes a simple point which is: "Keep living" in a way that reflects positionally who you are in Christ.
- The term "keep living", outside of its use in the New Testament, was a military term.
 - It means to be in a row or in rank of position or to fall in line.
 - And the idea of the use of this word connotes obedience and submission.
 - Therefore, the only way by which one can continue in a manner of growth and maturity in Christ is through submission to the leading of the Holy Spirit.
 - So Paul encourages these already mature believers in Christ, to keep on putting on the mind of Christ and living in a way that reflects who they are in Christ.
 - The reality is, we are to put on the mind of Christ and adopt His attitude in all things and continue striving to know Him intimately.
 - And as a reminder, this striving that Paul was talking about was not a sense of striving for what we have already attained by grace.
 - But rather strive in obedience to know Christ even more so that we may grow in conforming into the very likeness of Christ.
 - And as discovered in a previous lessons in Philippians, this journey of Spiritual maturity is one that does not happen overnight.
 - The process of sanctification is a constantly ongoing journey that requires one to be patient, humble, and reliant upon the Lord every day.
- In the present world we live in, everyone wants the quick path to success or the instant pathway to health, yet no one wants to put in the work.
 - The only way that a bodybuilder gets to the level of intense weightlifting that they do is starting off by first going to the gym.
 - And from there, they make up in their mind that they want to put themselves under the weight and pressure of the weights day by day.
 - Friends, in the same way, if you desire to see your growth in the Lord, you must get in the game, and at the same time be patient in the process.
 - This is why having healthy discipleship relationships is important.
 - Going to the gym to exercise is much more encouraging when you go and engage in a workout with somebody else.

- You can't expect to do this Christian journey of progressive sanctification by yourself, even more so with the mindset of independence rather than dependence.
 - A grace-oriented sanctification is one in which is ever reliant and dependent upon the Holy Spirit.
 - Whereas a legalistic approach to growth, rules on top of self-appointed righteousness, is a by-product of independence from God.
 - Well, we now come to see Paul's use of the military term "keep living" worked out in verses 17-19. Check out the text.

Philippians 3:17 Brethren, join in following my example, and observe those who walk according to the pattern you have in us.

Philippians 3:18 For many walk, of whom I often told you, and now tell you even weeping, that they are enemies of the cross of Christ,

Philippians 3:19 whose end is destruction, whose god is their appetite, and whose glory is in their shame, who set their minds on earthly things.

- As Paul continues in thought he transitions to a practical example of maintaining this way of living and appetite for Christ.
 - On the onset, it may come across as Paul boasting in his leadership as somehow being more mature than others – but that isn't the case.
 - You may recall, Paul in Philippians 2 provided a list by which individuals should follow.
 - And in that list, he begins with Christ as the ultimate example in who we are to pattern our lives after. (Philippians 2:5-11)
 - Furthermore, it was in verse 16 that Paul used the military term for "keep living", *stoicheo*, which means to "fall in line".
 - So, when you put together what Paul is saying, his "MO" is not to follow him because he thinks he's reached full maturity.
 - Rather, Paul is encouraging the Philippians and us to fall in line, get into rank as we, together, follow Christ!
 - As a matter of fact, the phrase "join in following my example" is one word in the Greek.
 - It is the word *symmimetes* (sym-mim-etes) which means fellow imitator or joint imitator.
 - And the idea here is that of: "As I walk, you walk. As I obey, you obey."
- If you've ever watched any military shows, those in basic training are all in sync with one another.
 - And in their daily routine, there is a captain and then those who follow behind in rank and file.
 - And as the captain chants the statement of command, those behind follow suit:

- “Everywhere we go...people want to know...who we are...so we tell them.”
- In the same way, Paul is saying that Christ is the leader of this commanding line called the bride of Christ. Christ is the head.
 - And those who are composed of the body of Christ are to submit to the commanding instructions and call of God and follow suit.
 - Therefore, Paul is not boasting, but encouraging others to fall in line with Christ – don’t get out of sync with Christ and His Gospel.
 - And in this sense, because Christ is not physically present before the Philippians, Christ is at work within them. (The Spirit of Christ)
- And being that the Apostle Paul is a good example of following Christ to these individuals in Philippi, he invites them to follow him.
 - Again, Paul stakes no claim as to have reached this sense of perfection in his maturity.
 - He is simply saying, join me in this pursuit together.
- Paul continues by offering not just himself as an example in which the Philippians can observe, but he mentions there are those in whom the Philippians know as well.
 - It was in Philippians 2:19-30 that Paul mentioned two other men, Timothy and Epaphroditus who were worthy men to follow as well.
- There becomes a sub-theme here of Practical Discipleship meaning that discipleship goes beyond just knowing information.
 - It requires that one observe the very life of those who live in a way that reflects the mind of Christ in their living.
 - That these individuals exercise wisdom in their lives so that they may be further conformed into the image of Jesus Christ.
- Please understand that listening to the teachings provided on the ministry app are one thing.
 - However, it’s a whole other thing to put into practice the truths that expository teaching and preaching provide.
 - Gospel transformation does not happen by osmosis, it happens through putting in the sweat equity through the enabling work of the Spirit.
- There are many people that think simply being under sound expository teaching is enough to help them grow in maturity.
 - Sound teaching is a huge component, but it must be accompanied with accountability to apply what you have learned.
 - This is how you can have well-knowledgeable and learned people yet lacking the ability to walk out their sanctification well.
 - Wisdom, at its core, is applied knowledge.
- Therefore, Paul’s encouragement becomes similar to what he shares with the Corinthian church in 1 Corinthians 11:1.

1 Corinthians 11:1 Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ.

- Christ is the goal! To look more like Christ in our lives, actions, responses, in our love etc.
 - And the way in which this is worked out in our lives, along with the fellowship of the Spirit, is the discipleship of godly men and women.
 - Food for thought: Who's discipling you? Who do you walk alongside that points you to Christ, not just in word, but in deed?
 - This encouragement in which Paul gives also becomes a warning of sorts because depending on who you lend your ear to gives way to the direction in which your life goes.
 - There will either be a molding in your life that is being shaped into Christlikeness, or looking and sounding more like the world.
 - Notice, how Paul transitions to verses 18 and 19. He moves from the positive modeling to negative modeling.
 - And he desires that the believers in Philippi not give in to the way of negative modeling.
- He begins by saying “For many walk, of whom I often told you, and now tell you even weeping, that they are enemies of the cross of Christ...”
 - Paul’s affections and love for the Philippian church become demonstrated in a very real way, even to the point of tears.
 - His desire is that the Philippian church not be tricked by the deceptive teaching and lives of others who claim to believe the truth.
 - Paul’s address now seems to be targeting another group of individuals who potentially seem to be outside of the church yet are managing to have influence.
 - This group that Paul calls “enemies of the cross of Christ”, were none other than a group known as Gnostics.
 - Gnostics were of the belief that their group alone possessed “additional” secret knowledge regarding matters of salvation.
 - Therefore, this group’s antinomastic disposition led them to do what seemed right in their own eyes.
 - Ultimately, this led to the rejecting of the truth of scripture thereby granting license to sin.
 - Clearly, these individuals that Paul had in mind here were not within the church of Philippi but were misleading Christians elsewhere, and potentially the threat was getting closer.
 - In any case, it is certain that Paul was moved deeply to the point of tears in how believers were being misled by these false teachers.
 - And what this shows us, is that the Philippian church was held closely to Paul’s heart.
 - He wanted to guard them from this spiritual confusion and chaos creeping in and around the church.

- So, like a father to a child, he writes with a heavy heart conveying the reality that these Gnostics were indeed, enemies of the cross of Christ.
 - The phrase “enemies of the cross of Christ” simply means individuals or groups alienated in the sense of hostility towards the cross.
- Meaning, that where the cross of Christ meant dying to self, they saw this as a hinderance and an opportunity to indulge in their own personal delights.
 - That where grace was an opportunity of growth in the power of the Spirit, they would abuse the understanding of God’s grace as a license to sin.
 - So, what we find in verse 19, is Paul spelling out three characteristics of these particular people.
- Notice, Paul begins by mentioning what the result of these individuals were – their end was destruction.
 - The use of this term within the New Testament would suggest that destruction in this context is regarding eternal destruction for the unbeliever.
 - And this seems fitting because as Paul mentioned earlier, if this “were a believer” engaging in this abhorrent lifestyle of sin, they would be convicted. (End of verse 15)
 - And the reason for this is because all believers have the indwelling Holy Spirit, therefore because we belong to God, He will deal accordingly with us. (Conviction, discipline etc.)
 - However, if there comes a point in the believer’s life where they have gone so far into sin where there is no return, there is what is called “sin unto death”.
 - This is where the believer’s sin has transpired to the “point of no return” (habitual sinning) resulting in pre-mature physical death as discipline.
 - Check out quickly what 1 John 5:16 states:

1 John 5:16 If anyone sees his brother committing a sin not leading to death, he shall ask and God will for him give life to those who commit sin not leading to death. There is a sin leading to death; I do not say that he should make request for this.

- ◦ However, within the context of these verses Paul is referring to unbelievers, their false teaching and their eternal end.
- Secondly, Paul continues by saying, “whose god is their appetite”.
 - That the ruling of their desires because the things that they value and pursue above the things that are to be rightly sought after.
 - Paul speaks about such individuals in Romans 16:17-19. Check out the text:

Romans 16:17 Now I urge you, brethren, keep your eye on those who cause dissensions and hindrances contrary to the teaching which you learned, and

turn away from them.

Romans 16:18 For such men are slaves, not of our Lord Christ but of their own appetites; and by their smooth and flattering speech they deceive the hearts of the unsuspecting.

Romans 16:19 For the report of your obedience has reached to all; therefore I am rejoicing over you, but I want you to be wise in what is good and innocent in what is evil.

- Thirdly, Paul mentions “whose glory is in their shame”
 - Simply put, the things that should naturally bring about shame becomes the very thing they revel in.
- Gone are the days where one becomes shameful of disgraceful acts whether done in private or in public.
 - We live in an era now where wrong is right and right is wrong.
 - People desire to do what is right in their own eyes and expect others to endorse their sinful acts as if to condone it.
 - So, imagine that if Paul was dealing with this very thing then, what makes us think we wouldn’t see it now.
 - Paul’s focus is that the believer be able to rightly discern good from evil because friends there is a clear distinction whether the world wants to see it or not.
 - As we just read in Romans 16:19, Paul’s desire is that the believer be wise in what is good and innocent of what is evil.
 - That word ‘innocent’ in the Greek is speaking about being free from guilt and sin. (Avoid sin)
 - Meaning, this way of sinful living or lifestyle, can’t even be tied to you because you should always be mindful of how you are to live.
 - Friends, Paul does not want the Philippians to be fooled and I pray that you and I will not be fooled either.
- Lastly, Paul mentions that these individuals set their minds on earthly things.
 - In other words, the temporal pleasure for these individuals becomes the prize they pursue.
 - For the unbeliever, they can’t have their minds set on eternal things because they do not know Christ.
 - However, Christians on the other hand do, and therefore, they should have their eyes on eternity and not the temporal things.
 - So, Paul provides this encouragement of following his example as he follows Christ.
 - And in the same breath, provides a loving warning to not fall into the false teaching of these wicked men.
 - He wants them to remain eternally minded!
 - For when we remain eternally minded, it is there where we are able to experience

true joy in Christ that is untainted!

- Paul mentions this fact in Colossians 3:2. Check out the text:

Colossians 3:2 Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth.

- As we transition into verses 20-21, Paul is going to make mention as to why the believer should not only be aware of these things but should remain eternally minded.
 - Check out verses 20-21.

Philippians 3:20 For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ;

Philippians 3:21 who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself.

- Paul reinforces the point of citizenship because we have a heavenly citizenship, therefore, our pursuits and values must be different from the world we presently reside.
 - Again, the use of the term citizenship brought about certain privileges for residents in Roman colonies, in this case those in Macedonia.
 - To say one was a citizen of Rome meant that they had certain privileges that others from non-Roman colonies did not have. (Crucifixion for example)
 - So, Paul parallels this idea of citizenship as a statement of heavenly privilege as well as encouragement to live in a manner that reflects their heavenly reality.
 - And this is all in juxtaposition to the previous verses regarding those who are unbelievers (worldly).
 - Paul says this in Ephesians 2:19:

Ephesians 2:19 So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household,

- In other words, although you may live in this world you are not of this world.
 - And with receiving this new citizenry means adopting the mindset and attitude of that country. (The Coming Kingdom and its King.)
 - This is why Paul has made mention about imitating him and others like him as they follow Christ.
 - Because their minds too were set on eternal matters!
 - Paul goes on to say that along with knowing we are not of this world that “we eagerly await the coming of Christ.”

- He mentions that as citizens of heaven, while living here on earth, we anticipate and eagerly wait “for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ”.
- This anticipation is one of expected arrival!
- This anticipation for the coming of Christ is for the dawning of the next stage of the first resurrection.
 - Meaning, that because Christ’s resurrection was the first, Him being the first fruits of those who are asleep (1 Corinthians 15:20), we too will have a similar experience.
 - That when the Lord meets us in the clouds, we will be raised and receive new bodies.
 - This is what Paul describes in verse 21.
- He says that the Lord Jesus will transform the body of our humble state (in the original – bodies of humiliation) and provide us with a glorified body like His.
 - This moment, at the Rapture, is where we will experience the third tense of salvation (glorification).
 - At that moment, when our bodies are raised and we are given new, glorified bodies, we will attain incorruptible bodies.
 - Therefore, removed from the presence of sin.
- This further confirms Paul’s teaching of the imminency of the Rapture.
 - Simply put, Paul was very much anticipating the Rapture could take place in his day. That this event could happen at any moment.
- This event is what Paul described as the moment in which every believer should anticipate with great expectancy.
 - So, in the meantime, in our present state, we wrestle between both our flesh (earthly condition) and our Spirit (heavenly reality).
 - And as we have mentioned before, these two are at war with one another.
- However, understanding what is to come (at any moment) allows the believer to live in a way that we are always ready.
 - And what we can be confident about is knowing that the Lord is soon to return to remove us from this wasting wicked world to be with Him.
 - How do we know this and can be confident about this? Well Jesus mentions this to His disciples in John 14:1-4. Check out the text:

John 14:1 “Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me.

John 14:2 “In My Father’s house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you.

John 14:3 “If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also.

John 14:4 “And you know the way where I am going.”

- What was Jesus talking about here as He was comforting and preparing His disciples for His soon to be departure?
 - He was letting them know that He would come back for them again and receive them unto Himself.
 - Jesus coming for His Church is at the Rapture. And it will be there that we will be with Him and be like Him.
 - Paul makes this point to the Thessalonians in 1 Thessalonians 4:17. Check out the text:

1 Thessalonians 4:17 Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord.

1 Thessalonians 4:18 Therefore comfort one another with these words.

- What is the comfort in knowing those words?
 - The comfort is knowing that we will be caught up to the Lord with the saints who have died and will “meet the Lord in the air”.
 - And in this new glorified state, the text states that we will always be with the Lord.
 - Lastly, notice how this amazing transformation will happen – with us transforming from these earthly mortal bodies to these glorified bodies.
 - Paul states that it is accomplished by the exertion of the power of the Lord Jesus.
 - The word exertion is the Greek word where we get our English word ‘energy’ from – *energia*.
 - This will be the very power of God, the very same power that raised Jesus from the dead will be the same power that transforms us!
 - And that same power of God will be demonstrated in which the Lord will subject all things unto Himself for His glory!
 - Friends, in this new glorified state, we will be made perfect as children of God!
 - And in His perfect Power the Lord will accomplish all things in which the Father has set for Him to be over – and that is all things!
 - What a glorious salvation we have in Christ! This friend should produce incorruptible joy because we know the end!
 - This reality should produce an appetite and a hunger to serve the Lord well in this life knowing that we will have an eternity being with Him.
 - And just imagine how much more we will be able to know the Lord Jesus in a perfect state beyond what we know of Him and how we experience Him in our imperfect state.
 - The best is yet to come for the believer in Christ!
 - May we live daily in the Joy of the Lord and the anticipation of the coming of our

Bridegroom.

- Let's Pray.

Citation:

- Baxter, 6:193

- Within the New Testament, most especially in John's gospel, we find sprinkled throughout, statements from Jesus about the identity and necessary unity of His disciples.
 - In one instance, found in John 13:35, we find that Jesus makes the following statement.

John 13:34 “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another.

John 13:35 “By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”

- Jesus makes mention that the world would know who His disciples are based upon not how they interacted throughout the world, but how they would interact with one another.
 - That there would be a clear distinction of who are followers of Christ based on how they love one another.
 - And Jesus provides Himself as an example by saying, the way in which I have loved you is how you should love one another.
 - Yet, when we evaluate and take an honest assessment of the church today, this framework of unity and love is difficult to see at times.
 - It's hard to see because the Big "C" church has done a poor job in developing men and women to do what Paul is going to show us here tonight.
 - Tonight, we are going to see Paul continue in this grand theme of Joy, but he will ground this experiential joy in the practical application of unity in community.
 - And he does so by simply reinforcing what he has taught the Philippians in the previous chapters.
 - Here is just a quick cliff notes version of what we have covered in Chapters 1-3 of Philippians: (PPT slides of the outline of Chapters 1-3)
 - If I were to provide us an outline of thought in our time through the text tonight, we will see the following:
 - 1. Stand Firm (v.1)
 - 2. Address of disunity (v.2)
 - 3. Remain in Unity (v.3)
 - 4. Living with Joyful anticipation (vv.4-5)
- If I were to put a tag on tonight's text, it would simply be: The Necessity of Unity in Community.
 - With that being said, I invite you to open a copy of the scriptures and meet me in Philippians 4:1.

Philippians 4:1 Therefore, my beloved brethren whom I long to see, my joy and

crown, in this way stand firm in the Lord, my beloved.

- As we enter the concluding chapter of the letter to the Philippian church, we find at the start of verse 1, the Apostle Paul's use of the word, "therefore".
 - And as we previously discussed at the top of our time together, Paul is simply wrapping up his previous statements in the preceding chapters.
 - The thrust of Paul's letter to the Philippian church has centered on joy.
 - Along with having joy amidst suffering, is the proper attitude in which sustains that joy for the believer within these circumstances.
 - That as believers in Christ, our primary aim is to put on the mind of Christ in every area of our lives and to live with eyes for eternity.
 - As we all know, life has a way of knocking us down and tossing us around, yet through it all, there is an attitude in which we posture.
 - This is not to say that these trials will feel good, but it is to say that when we have on the proper set of lenses, we can see things differently.
 - So, Paul is wanting these believers in Philippi to practice what he has taught them from Chapters 1 up to this point.
 - Secondly, notice again who Paul is talking to. He uses the phrase, "my beloved brethren".
 - Throughout the duration of this letter, the audience has remained the same, meaning, Paul is writing this letter to believers in Philippi.
 - I mention this point because what we are going to see Paul address in verse 2, for some, will seem a bit "out of character".
 - And before one begins to misrepresent the text, we must first understand contextually what the author is saying and meaning.
 - So, it becomes quite clear that Paul is not just writing to believers, but he is writing to a group of believers in whom are dear to his heart.
 - Remember, it was only about 10-11 years prior to this letter being written that Paul had started this church.
 - He had witnessed these brothers and sisters come to faith in Christ and begin to grow in their faith in the Lord.
 - So, at best, this longing to see them was a deep desire within his heart.
 - On top of that, Paul, being imprisoned in Rome, had no idea as to when he would be freed from house arrest.
 - He had to await a date for trial given to him by Caesar, so in the meantime, his only connection to the people was by letter and verbal updates.
 - One could imagine this longing as that of a parent to a child that has gone off to college for their freshman year.
 - You prepared the dorm room, set up the lunch account etc., and the moment comes where you have to depart.

- That deep sadness of seeing your child or grandchild going to a school hundreds of miles away.
- They aren't at home for nightly family dinners at the table or coming along with you for midnight trips to the corner store.
- This is the expression in which Paul has at this moment, after having expressed the content of Chapters 1-3 to them.
- As a matter of fact, this deep affection was earlier expressed by Paul at the top of this letter. Check out Philippians 1:8.

Philippians 1:8 For God is my witness, how I long for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus.

- So although Paul longs to lay eyes on the Philippians, due to his present circumstances, he can't.
 - However, this does not deter him from reminding them of who they are to him, even more so, how they are to live in light of their positional reality.
 - Notice, how Paul expresses who they are to him after having expressed his longing desire to see them.
 - He mentions that they are his "joy and crown".
 - Paul's joy, while being imprisoned, are the believers in whom he is writing to and longing to see.
 - Their spiritual well-being and fortitude in the faith, being in Christ, is what motivates his work in the ministry.
 - Ministry at times is not an easy thing to do because in doing it many fail to realize that the Pastor or the bible teacher is going through difficulty too.
 - Yet, the Pastor's desire, even amid their own distresses, is for the people in whom they serve.
 - Are the people growing, are they being fed well, etc?
 - On top of that, if arguments and disagreements in the body arise, that becomes another layer of stress.
 - And although Paul could have provided extreme criticisms regarding the Philippians, he lets them know they are not the "bane of his existence".
 - Rather they are his joy and crown!
 - In other words, Paul's efforts in teaching and discipleship were not in vain.
 - His efforts in them were producing Kingdom value not calamity!
 - Beyond them being his joy, the Apostle Paul mentions that they are his 'crown' as well.
 - What crown is Paul referring to here and what is he talking about when he says they are his crown?

- Well, remember, he began Chapter 4 with the word, “Therefore”.
 - And the previous points Paul discussed addressed in this letter were continued matters of sanctification and coming glorification.
- The emphasis in Chapter 3 was regarding the rejection of legalism and self-promotion which are the hindrances of joy in Christ.
 - Furthermore, Paul’s focus began to center on forgetting what lies behind (the past) and embracing what we have gained in Christ.
 - That as we adjust our appetites from the things of the flesh to the things of the Spirit, we realize the true treasure we have is being in Christ.
- Paul’s point towards the end of Chapter 3 began to zoom in on the aspect of glorification and how the Philippians should live in light of the appearing of Christ.
 - In other words, our goal in living is Christ, and as we live well for Him in this life He will reward us in the end.
 - The question one must consider in the meantime is: How are you running your personal race in the Lord?
 - Is your running centered on glorifying Christ as to receive His applause and reward, or is it centered on you being seen and applauded?
- In a sport’s magazine entitled “Outside”, it featured an article titled “The Problem with looking over Your Shoulder during a Race”.
 - And in this article, the author writes about why “looking back” is not a “smart idea”.
 - They go on to say that a runner looking back signals a negative shift in the mindset of the athlete.
 - For if the runner looks back it’s because they are afraid someone is catching up (other-minded)
 - And when that happens, they are no longer running to win, they are running to avoid losing.
 - Therefore, the race in this journey of sanctification is about your personal growth and maturity in Christ.
 - So, this use of the term crown, contextually, has something to do with how the believer would be rewarded in the end, depended upon how well he/she runs.
- In fact, the term ‘crown’ is the Greek word *stephanos*, which is a wreath, prize, or reward of a runner, especially those in Greek competition.
 - And what we see here is Paul’s connection of his prize being the very lives of these saints because of his ministry to them being established in the faith.
 - What we see from Paul’s language here also speaks to the opportunity of reward that all believers have at the Bema Seat of Christ.
 - In other words, how a believer runs their race results in the type of crown/reward they will receive.
 - We find within scripture 5 types of crowns in which can be attained by believers according to how they run their race in this life.

- Those crowns consist of the following:
 - 1. An Incorrputible Crown – this crown deals with gaining mastery over the flesh (sin nature). (1 Cor. 9:24-27)
 - 2. Crown of Exaltation (Rejoicing) – this crown is based on winning souls for Christ. (1 Thess. 2:19)
 - 3. Crown of Life – this crown is given to those who persevere under trial and have been approved. (James 1:12, Rev. 2:10)
 - 4. Crown of Glory – this crown is given for the purpose of shepherding God's people. (1 Pt. 5:2-4)
 - 5. Crown of Righteousness – this crown is given to those who are longing for His appearing. (2 Tim. 4:8)
- So, Paul's point is that he desires for his beloved brothers and sisters to have victory in this life as they await the appearing of our Savior, Jesus Christ!
 - As we discussed prior, the Doctrine of the Rapture becomes such a vital teaching for the growth and maturation for believers.
 - Because, if you understand that Christ can come at any moment, it will better inform how you should live accordingly now.
- Growing up, there was a phrase my parents used to say when I was doing something I shouldn't have.
 - And that statement was: "Wesley, you better make sure you are doing what you're supposed to. You don't want to be caught with your pants down."
 - This idiom wasn't suggesting that one's pants are literally not on.
 - Rather it meant, "You better make sure you're doing the right thing at all times so that you aren't embarrassed or caught off guard."
- In a similar way, Paul is encouraging the church at Philippi to not be caught off guard in their living for Christ.
 - He tells them, that the way to receive the prize is to remain steadfast and firm in the Lord.
 - This becomes the same echo in which the Apostle Paul gave to the church of Philippi at the onset of this letter in Philippians 1:27. Check out the text:

Philippians 1:27 Only conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or remain absent, I will hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel;

- The beginning thrust of Paul's emphasis on the Philippians conducting themselves in a worthy manner is based on them being in unity with one another.
 - And this unity was to be actualized whether Paul was there physically with them or not at all.

- And through this unity of community, there was to be consistency in attitude, mindset, and Spirit!
- It's like my mother used to tell my sister and I growing up – "My disciplining you doesn't change whether we are in public or private. You can get this work either way!"
- In other words, proximity is not the problem persistence is.
 - Paul is saying, whether I'm with you or not, be of one mind as I have taught you 11 years ago!
 - Don't be duped by the legalistic teachings that are being murmured throughout the city.
 - Don't be bamboozled by the gnostic lifestyles of the day – rather stand firm on the truth in which you have been taught.
- It's interesting that in our last teaching, Paul utilized a military term "keep living" (*stoicheo*) which means "following in a line".
 - The point being: Don't allow your behavior (your living) to get out of sync with what you believe.
 - Because the moment that we allow our flesh to become the dominant voice in our lives is the moment that we begin to live like the world.
 - For if this weren't the case, why would Paul write to the Galatians the following words:

Galatians 5:1 **It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery.**

- We must make a daily decision to stand firm on what has been taught in scripture so that we do not become slaves to sin.
 - But as we will see in the following verses, standing firm requires the believers to live in unity with one another. Check out verses 2-3.

Philippians 4:2 **I urge Euodia and I urge Syntyche to live in harmony in the Lord.**

Philippians 4:3 **Indeed, true companion, I ask you also to help these women who have shared my struggle in the cause of the gospel, together with Clement also and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life.**

- It's here in verses 2-3 that Paul provides some real-time evaluations of a present matter within the Philippian Church.
 - According to the text, there were two individuals named Euodia and Syntyche who were evidently at odds with one another.
 - We know this because Paul addresses this quarrel in a public manner to confront the disunity at hand.
 - And we discover from further reading in verse 3 that these two individuals are

women in the church who are causing issue.

- One question that might be asked in observing the text is: What is the issue of disunity for these two women in the church.
 - This is oftentimes the first question that circulates within congregations when internal disturbances arise: Who did it and why?
 - And if not careful, the circulation of information amongst individuals can easily turn into gossip if not approached correctly.
- What becomes a detail worth noting is, Paul does not address what the issue is.
 - As Dr. Andy Woods said on his teaching on Philippians, “The issue is not really the issue.”
 - Meaning, whatever the cause of the disunity amongst these two women was not the true problem at hand.
- We can, from the text, come to understand what the root issue behind the issue truly was by looking at Paul’s use of the phrase “to live in harmony.”
 - The word there in Greek is *phroneo* which means to set one’s mind or attitude on something.
 - Plainly put, where there is independent thought on a matter, there must be a unified front and one-mindedness.
- So what the specific issue was isn’t the issue at hand, it’s the fact that their attitudes were more independently minded rather than Christ-minded.
 - Well, the question becomes how did these women lose this attitude of Christ as it relates to the root matter.
 - It’s what Paul had previously addressed in Philippians 2:5 regarding having an attitude of humility like Christ. Check out the text:

Philippians 2:5 Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus,
Philippians 2:6 who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped,
Philippians 2:7 but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men.
Philippians 2:8 Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

- Paul expressed Christ as the ultimate of how to pattern their lives regarding true humility.
 - There was an “emptying” that Christ demonstrated through becoming a man having voluntarily restricted the use of His divine nature. (*Kenosis*)
 - So, what Paul seems to be getting at here is that these women needed to regard one another as more important than the other. (Phil. 2:3-4)
- We find ourselves in the universal church struggling with this reality at times. Who’s

going to host the small group?

- Well, my house is bigger. Well, I have better hospitality! And this vindictive cycle goes on forever because of our lack of humility.
 - The goal in gathering, or whatever the “issue” is, is never about who does it better, the purpose is serving one another to the Glory of God!
- We can become so territorial regarding matters within the church, and Paul is saying, “Put on the mind of Christ, be of one mind, be in unity with one another.”
 - There is no room within the body of Christ for petty territorial wars, etc!
- It’s in verse 3 that Paul continues by requesting that his “true companion” in Philippi help these women to resolve this issue.
 - The goal for this individual, who Paul does not name, is to restore fellowship between these two women.
 - What makes this portion of the letter so personal is that these two women have labored alongside Paul in the sharing of the Gospel in Philippi.
 - This brings up a rather interesting point here: These women knew what the word of the Lord said!
 - Most assuredly, they had knowledge of the Gospel that Paul taught and were not indoctrinated with the false gospel of the Gnostics.
 - I mention this because it helps us understand that these women have been immersed in solid gospel teaching from the Apostle himself.
 - Therefore, it is to say that they should have “known better”, yet there came a point where they allowed their flesh to get the best of them.
- Herein lies the tendency of many believers in Christ.
 - It is the reality that we often give way to allowing the flesh to dominate our mind and attitude, regardless of the issue at hand.
 - Therefore friends, believers are prone to wonder and respond in a way that is not “Christ-like”.
 - And this means that responding in our sin-nature is possible but not desirous!
 - In other words, we should always be dying to ourselves so that Christ may be fully formed in our motives and attitudes. (Romans 12:1-2)
 - “Which dog in the fight are you going to feed?”
 - This unity within the body should not be unorthodox to the church but should be the norm for the believers in Christ.
 - Furthermore, this unity that should be exhibited within the body of Christ will be foreign to the unbelieving world.
 - This is how you have non-believers who look at the church struggling with understanding how the church proclaims a transformative gospel yet do not carry themselves as transformed people.
 - Or how can the Church talk about the triunity of the Trinity yet there be dysfunction within the body of Christ.

- The reality is, as long as we are on this side of glory and remain in this flesh, there will always be issues and dissensions of sorts.
 - However, when we submit to the spiritual resources in which the Lord has provided, we realize that we can overcome the power of sin in our lives!
 - The issue becomes, will you consciously make the choice to submit unto the enabling power of the Spirit or will you give in to the flesh?
 - The choice is yours, but understand believer, that there are things at stake if you fail to run your race well.
- Most assuredly, we praise God that our salvation is not on the line, however as Paul expressed last week, our rewards are!
- So, the Apostle Paul requests his un-named true companion in Philippi, more than likely an elder or Pastor in order to reconcile the broken fellowship.
 - And as a quick side note, an indicator of disunity amongst the body of Christ, is often a sign of out of sync fellowship with the Lord in some way.
 - Meaning, if fellowship with others in the body become an issue, there is a failure in submission to the Head of the Church, Jesus Christ!
 - Paul is stressing the point that if there is to be unity anywhere in the world, it is to be seen among the body of Christ!
- If we look at the present condition of the world today, it is not marked by unity but division.
 - The world is divided politically, socially, economically, varied social classes, the haves versus the have nots.
 - Yet, in Christ, all men and women who have professed faith in Christ have been made one in Him – no longer divided, but united.
 - If you want to see a picture of unity in this world, the modeled display should be the Church.
 - Paul, in Colossians 3:12-15 mentions the following as it relates to unity in the body of Christ and how we should deal with one another.

Colossians 3:12 So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience;

Colossians 3:13 bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you.

Colossians 3:14 Beyond all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity.

Colossians 3:15 Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful.

- Moving on, Paul mentions that along with Euodia and Syntyche sharing in the struggle of the gospel was a man by the name Clement and other “fellow workers”.
 - The fact that Paul mentions Clement, which was a common Roman name, is

important to note.

- However, there is not much information, if any, on who Clement was.
- Whatever the case, Paul mentioning him speaks to Clement's maturity and behavior along with the others who co-labored with him.
- Lastly, notice what Paul says about all these individuals who have shared in the cause of the gospel with him.
 - He says that their names are written in the “book of life”. This is comforting to hear.
- Within scripture when you read about the “Book of Life” it is often always dealing with those who have placed faith in Christ.
 - The Book of Life is a heavenly account of all believers in all dispensations who are the “elect of God”.
- This further confirms for us that although these two women are at odds with one another at that time, it has no bearing on their positional reality in Christ.
 - In other words, because they are saved by the justifying work of Christ, they are forever saved. (Once Saved always saved)
- And this reality and teaching is hard for most because they expect that once you got saved, it's only up from here (emotionally).... wrong!
 - This journey of sanctification is a continual process until we die or are raptured.
 - Therefore, we must daily entrust ourselves unto the Lord in humility and with great dependency.
- As I mentioned before, if our salvation was predicated upon our actions and works, we would be in a constant state of “working” – because there is always the question of, “What about tomorrow?”
 - So, the fact that believers' names are written in the lamb's book of life, there is nothing that can take you out of the book because it's been written in permanently.
 - Therefore, it's this reality and understanding of what Christ has done for us positionally, and is doing in us experientially, that Paul states the following in verses 4-5:

Philippians 4:4 Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice!

Philippians 4:5 Let your gentle spirit be known to all men. The Lord is near.

- Paul provides the Philippian church with a practical solution on how to overcome the various obstacles they have faced as a body.
 - From the sickness of Epaphroditus, to the legalistic teachings of the false teachers in their day, and even the in-fighting amongst the body of believers.
 - Paul tells them that despite all that you are encountering – rejoice!
 - And he further emphasizes the point again by saying, “and again I will say,

rejoice!"

- The question most would ask is how?! How can I rejoice when I'm at odds with my neighbor, I'm being attacked on all sides, where is the joy to be found?!
 - This is often a question of misappropriating our emotions.
 - Most seek to be happy and think that happiness is the key to experiencing joy in this life.
 - However, happiness is simply an emotion that is dictated by the circumstances one is in.
- You are happy when payday rolls around, but the moment that bills have to be paid, that happiness turns to frustration.
 - You are happy when you get the promotion on the job.
 - But the moment you have to deal with the conflict that comes with the higher pay and promotion, that happiness soon turns to annoyance.
- What Paul is informing the Philippians about is that the root of their joy is found in what Christ has done, doing, and will soon do!
 - Joy, in other words, is a positional reality realized in the practicality of that knowledge.
- This is why believers can have joy in the midst of persecution, because we realize that we aren't in the trial alone.
 - This is why a believer who has suffered great loss can, through the grief, say without being moved, "It is well with my soul."
 - Because positionally, we have something that the world did not give us and the world can't take away from us and that is a vibrant relationship with Christ!
- Understand what Paul is not saying in all this. Paul is not saying that you aren't going to cry or experience natural human emotions.
 - Nor is Paul saying that you are to suppress your emotions as it relates to what you encounter in this life.
 - However, Paul is saying don't let your emotions be the driver of your life.
 - Emotions are a great passenger because they help identify your surroundings, however, if you let the emotions drive your reality, they can suck the joy out of living.
- So, Paul is saying that our reality should be ruled through and by the lens of Christ by having eyes for eternity.
 - Understand that this is easier said than done, especially if you are a babe in Christ.
 - But the longer you walk with the Lord and grow in your knowledge of Him, you can exercise this knowledge practically, day by day.
- The rejoicing that is being done is done "in the Lord", not within oneself – His strength not our weakness.
- So, Paul continues to encourage the Philippians in practical ways by exhorting them to

allow their “gentle” spirit be known to all men.

- The word “gentle” in Greek is *epieikes* (epi-e-kes) which connotes that of gentleness, forbearance, and patience.
 - This patience is not only to be exhibited to the unbelieving world, but it should most especially be shown to those who have been born-again!
 - This sense of humility and patience is what the Lord Jesus expressed on the cross for you and me.
 - He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. (Phil 2:8)
- It’s interesting that Paul mentions at the tail end of verse 5 that “The Lord is near.”
 - It’s this idea of living in light of the nearness of Christ.
 - This simply means that I should live, behave, respond in a way that Christ will come back at any moment, and I want to be ready.
- The reality is, the Rapture is an imminent event, meaning it can happen at any moment for no man knows the day nor hour.
 - So, in light of not knowing when the Rapture will occur, as my mom used to say, “You better make sure you’re living right!”
- We should want to be ready at any moment for His appearing because we don’t want to be caught with our pants down, so to speak.
 - Because how we live well among the unbelieving world will either be a “sign of their coming destruction”.
 - Or a grave misrepresentation of the cross of Christ, and clouds what Christ has truly accomplished.
- I love how Paul summarizes this reality in Colossians 3:16-17. Check out the text:

Colossians 3:16 Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

Colossians 3:17 Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father.

- Friends, in all that we do, it should be pursued firstly, to glorify Christ and make much of His name.
 - And in doing that, we know that this can only be accomplished if we put on the lens of Christ, having eyes for eternity and not the temporal.
 - For the reality is, this life that has been given is one that we don’t deserve but has graciously been given.
 - Therefore, let us live in such a way that reflects that reality.
 - Because when we focus on the richness we have in Christ, that is when we can understand what it means to truly walk in the joy of the Lord!

■ Let's Pray.

- As we approach tonight's text, I want to quickly recap several essential items that we covered in Lesson 4A.
 - The Apostle Paul, in verses 2-6 began to outline several things the believer should implement in their lives in order to stand resolute in both external and internal conflict.
 - In verse 4, Paul mentioned that the believer should learn that, in all circumstances, joy can be experienced when our perspective is heavenly minded.
 - In other words, our joy in this life is not based on what we are going through, but rather who we are going through it with.
 - That Person in whom we are going through our circumstances with, Jesus Christ, is the very object of our faith.
 - As Paul has pointed out from Chapter's 1-3, God, by His grace, has provided us the provision necessary to not only overcome the penalty of sin, but to escape the coming judgement upon the world, by way of the Rapture.
 - Paul then wrapped up last week with the necessity of the body of Christ remaining steadfast in the Lord and in unity with one another.
 - This was off the heels of rejoicing in the glory that is to come when the Lord Jesus appears in the clouds and conforms our earthly bodies into "the body of His Glory".
 - Paul, in other words, is saying that the believer has not only a secured promise in Christ, by way of Justification, and growth in maturity by way of Sanctification, but we have a secured hope in the future by way of Glorification.
 - That within every tense of our salvation, it is not only upheld by the word of God but it is sustained by the hand of God.
 - This is why Paul exhorts the Philippians to rejoice in the Lord – the emphasis being "in" the Lord.
 - This positional reality is to become more and more apparent for the believer as we grow to know Christ more and more.
 - When we can realize the fullness of the spiritual resources and privileges we have in Christ, it begins to cause our perspectives in this life to shift.
 - After that, Paul exhorts the Philippians in how they are to live in light of their current circumstances.
 - And the caveat to how they are to live is rooted in the imminent event Paul has taught about prior – the Rapture.
 - So, Paul informed the Philippian church in verse 5 that they are to be kind, not only to one another but to "all men".
 - Meaning, how you deal with people becomes a reflection of how people will see the God in whom you serve.
 - Kindness, therefore, becomes a virtue of the Christian life.
 - As my wife often says, there is a distinct difference between being nice and being kind.
 - For example, being nice is telling someone it's raining outside.
 - Being kind is giving someone the umbrella they need for the rain they will encounter.
 - Therefore, kindness requires a sacrifice, yet it does not lack boundaries.
 - Whereas being nice is conditional and is based on a transactional exchange or response.

- Therefore, external factors will either determine the outcome of your responses or, at best, inform it.
- Lastly, we found in verse 5b, Paul concluded with the sentence, “The Lord is near.”
 - In fact, it is interesting that in the NASB translation, the translators close the statement with a period.
 - Whereas the ESV places a semicolon at the end of this phrase.
- Now, in grammar class, we learned that a period separates two complete sentences, and a semicolon connects two complete sentences.
 - The semicolons connect the two sentences because there is a shared idea.
 - So, it’s possible that the ESV picks up on this point because, as we will see at the start of our reading, the command in verse 6 is because of the reality of what verse 5b states.
- However, before we get into the thrust of tonight’s teaching, I want to provide us an outline of what we will see in the text. We will see the following:
 - 1. Pray on these things (vv.6-7)
 - 2. Think on these things (v.8)
 - 3. Practice these things (v.9)
- If I were to put a tag on tonight’s text, it would simply be: As a Man Thinketh.
- With that being said, I invite you to meet me in Philippians 4:6-7, for the reading of the word of the Lord.

Philippians 4:6 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.

Philippians 4:7 And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

- If the sentence structure flows correctly, then Paul is saying that by walking in the joy of the Lord and in kindness accompanied with the reality of Christ’s nearness and coming at any moment, then anxiousness becomes a back-burner matter.
 - Anxiousness at its core is an amalgamation of fear and worry about things that are outside of our control.
 - Anxiety rises when our focus becomes more on the problem than the Problem-Solver.
 - This is not to say that day-to-day concerns will not flood your mind from time to time. (Issues, various circumstances, illness, loss of loved ones...)
 - So, we shouldn’t be so foolish to think that genuine concerns people have are to be minimized or for them to be deemed as “less spiritual”.
 - However, it is to say that for the believer in Christ, the worry and fear should not outweigh the nearness of our God both presently and in His coming.
 - In other words, although life’s circumstances can be daunting, as the old folks used to say in the Baptist church, “Trouble won’t last always.”
 - And in knowing this truth and in whom we serve, Paul provides the Philippians with insight to the spiritual resources all believers have access to – prayer!
 - Paul says that in everything, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your

request be made known to God.

- Our prayer life, as believers, is a game changer not only in our outlook on life but our comfort in the storms of life.
- Because the reality is prayer is a direct line to the Lord for all that we need.
- One of my favorite quotes from Dr. Stanley Toussaint of Dallas Seminary is:

“Prayer is nothing more, nothing else, nothing less than asking God for something.”

- ○ What this resource of prayer indicates is a personal connection with a Personal Creator.
- The unbeliever does not have this type of intimate connection with the Creator of the Universe, yet, by His grace we do.
- And therefore, because we have this type of relationship, we know that there is a confidence that comes with that type of communion.
- Jesus stresses this fact on the Sermon on the Mount, specifically in Matthew 6:25-34, where He talks about not being anxious. Check out the text:

Matthew 6:25 “For this reason I say to you, do not be worried about your life, as to what you will eat or what you will drink; nor for your body, as to what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?

- ○ ■ Quickly skip down a few verses to verses 33-34.

Matthew 6:33 “But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

Matthew 6:34 “So do not worry about tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

- ○ What is to be understood from Paul is that there should be a great confidence and trust in the Lord, regardless of what circumstances may be at hand.
 - And to know that even when anxiousness and worry is high, our trust in God's provision and power is much greater.
 - In other words, an eternal perspective provides a positional confidence in any circumstance.
- So, Paul lets us know that through our relationship with Christ, who has made peace for us with the Father, we have prayer as a spiritual resource to tap into.
 - And when we learn how to tap into our spiritual resource of prayer, in turn, we can experience the peace of God.
- This type of peace that Paul is speaking about here is not a peace that the world can understand nor even comprehend.
 - The phrase, “the peace of God” is found only once in the New Testament and it's here in verse 7 of Philippians 4.
 - This peace is not dealing with the peace that has made us right with God – regarding justification.
 - The peace that Paul is discussing here is dealing with what I consider the calm in the storm. (The eye of the storm)
 - Have you ever experienced a peace in your most difficult of circumstances that makes

no sense?

- The kind of peace that others around you stare and wonder, how did you get though what you got through?
- This type of peace makes no sense because it is a peace that is given to believers, by God, as we are going through what we are going through.
- I'm reminded of Peter as Jesus calls him out onto the Sea of Galilee.
 - The waters are chaotic, the scene is a bit turbulent, yet as long as Peter is keeping his eyes on Jesus, he is able to stay afloat.
 - But the moment that Peter took his eyes off of Jesus he began to sink.
- Peter being with Jesus on the water didn't change the scenery or the situation on the water itself.
 - In other words, the circumstance didn't change, but the peace remained as long as Peter's eyes were on the Lord.
- In the same way, when we pray and make our petitions known to God, although the situation may remain or not, we are confident that the Lord is in it with us.
- Most recently, a famous artist who claimed that he once was a believer, stated on national television that he now has many issues with Jesus.
 - And the reason for his issue was centered on the fact that God did not answer his prayers on a particular matter.
 - If our faith becomes so damaged by an unanswered prayer, the object of your faith was never in Christ, but in what you wanted from Him.
 - As believers, we are going to have to become discerning in our apologetics as it relates to dealing with the world and how we live in the world.
 - Because the world desires a Christ in which is fashioned in their image and can do what they want.
 - Rather than trust in Jesus of Scripture who has made truth known through His life, death, and Resurrection.
 - For even when we fail to understand how the Lord uses suffering in our lives to shape and conform us into His image, we too can easily become intolerant of the sanctification process.
 - The peace of God is in knowing that we are in Him and that He is near.
 - The nearness of the Lord should provide confidence for the believer in our living for Christ and our outlook (perspective) in life.
 - Notice, that Paul says this "peace of God" will guard both our hearts and minds in Christ.
 - The term 'guard' in Greek is a military term which means to protect or to keep watch over.
 - This term is found four times in the New Testament and in every sense it is speaking about protection or guarding.
 - And with Paul's use of the word "guard", speaking to the resultant peace of God actualized in our prayer life, it is quite significant.
 - In other words, it is through our prayers to the Lord, which provide the confidence necessary to experience the peace of the Lord, that guards our hearts and minds.
 - It's as if our confidence in communion with the Lord provides a dispatchment of

peace to surround us and comfort us.

- Have you ever prayed during a devastating or overwhelming time in your life, and after you prayed a sense of calm came over you?
- This is what the peace of God is for believers!
- This is the benefit of the nearness of Christ, and this peace comes from Christ!
- Jesus says this to His disciples in John 14:26-27. Check out the text:

John 14:26 “But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you.

John 14:27 “Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful.

- ○ The confidence we have in Christ is because of the truth which He has left for us and in us!
 - We are indwelled with the Holy Spirit who teaches us, comforts us, guides us, convicts us.
 - We have Peace with the Father, who has saved us from the penalty of sin which is death.
 - We have been justified through the death of Christ.
 - And because of the Resurrection, we will be raised like He was and be with Him for all eternity!
- This confidence, in the grand scheme of things, when weighted against the issues of this life, allow us to gain a greater perspective on things.
 - Therefore, we no longer have to walk in fear and worry but can walk in confidence.
 - And when the trials of life rage wildly, we know that when we put on the mind of Christ and seek Him in it, His peace will be given to us.
- And we are to know that the world will not understand this reality unless their eyes become open to who Christ is!
 - This “guarding of our hearts and minds” is dealing with the affections of our hearts in light of what we are experiencing.
 - And the guarding of our minds is dealing with our thoughts and decisions as it relates to what we are going through.
- Peace is not circumstantial it is an actualized positional reality.
 - The reason why the world doesn’t have this type of peace is because this peace is not of the world but is a fruit of the Spirit! (Gal. 5:22-23)
 - This further confirms for us Paul’s previous exhortations as to why believers should rejoice in the Lord. (Phil 4:4)
- So, when we find ourselves in difficult situations, we should come to those situations with a mindset already set on being victorious even if we don’t necessarily feel victorious.
 - Remember, our feelings don’t dictate our circumstances – truth does.
- And because we live in a world where truth has become relative, for someone who does not have the Spirit of God, there will be misalignment in understanding.
 - Therefore, we will see in verses 8-9 Paul outline some virtues and truth by which all

believers are to walk in. Check out verses 8-9.

Philippians 4:8 Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things.

Philippians 4:9 The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.

- Starting at verse 8 we see Paul unravel a list of six things in which the believer is to “think on”.
 - And along with this list, Paul begins with the word “Finally” suggesting that he is coming to his concluding points.
 - Notice what things Paul says should occupy the minds of the believer in every season of life.
 - He says the following – whatever is:
 - 1. True
 - 2. Honorable
 - 3. Right
 - 4. Pure
 - 5. Lovely
 - 6. Of good repute
 - You’ll notice that each of these virtues listed are preceded by the word “Whatever”.
 - The word “whatever” is in the plural form which suggests that these virtues are and can be applied in every situation the believer finds themselves in.
 - Let’s first begin by understanding these terms as Paul understood them.
- Paul begins with whatever is ‘true’ (*alethes*).
 - True or truth is dealing with what is trustworthy or valid – not in the sight of man but to God.
- He then mentions whatever is ‘honorable’ (*semnos*). This is something or someone worthy of respect, honor, or to revere.
 - In other words, how we think should be reflective of who Christ is.
 - That we are to hold up our thoughts to the rightful standard of who Christ is.
- Next, he mentions whatever is ‘right’ (*dikaios*). This is dealing with what is just or fair according to God’s standard.
 - We know that it is God who defines justice, and He alone sets the standard of what is right.
 - Therefore, how we are to approach our thought life and behaviors should correlate with doing right according to God’s word.
- Next is whatever is ‘pure’ (*hagnos*). This is dealing with the innocence of something.
 - In other words, what is undefiled and clean as it relates to what we do and how we think.
 - Is my thought-life reflective of representing Christ even in my heart, where no one can see or knows its inner workings?

- Next is whatever is ‘lovely’ (*pros-philes*). This is dealing with being agreeable or pleasing towards one another.
 - As Paul had mentioned the issue between Euodia and Syntyche, the issue was not only centered on them honoring one another in word and deed, but also being agreeable with one another because there is to be in unity in the body.
- Lastly, whatever is of ‘good repute’ or commendable (*euphemos*).
 - Simply put, relating to what is positive or praise-worthy because of how it measures up to what is truthful and trustworthy.
- In all these virtues, the Apostle Paul mentions that these are the things in which the believer should think upon.
 - Now one might ask: “How am I to think upon these things as I am being inundated with the chaos of life?”
 - As Ironside mentions in his notes on the Epistle of Philippians, all of these virtues were fully exemplified in the Person of Jesus Christ.
 - In other words, as you are thinking about these things, keep in mind the Savior of your soul who lived these things out practically.
 - As you dwell on these things, dwell on the life and work of Christ!
 - And as you find yourself facing the issues of life head on, consider how Christ saw these issues as He too faced them.
 - Because at the end of the day, we must first think well which allows us to see well and thereby resulting in us doing well!
 - What I mean by that is, there is to be an example of One who has done these things well so that they may be imitated well. (I do, you do, we do)
 - And as we have previously seen through Paul’s address to the Philippians, the ultimate example provided is Christ Himself.
 - These virtues are impossible to achieve in an ethical/moral standpoint by mere pursuit of human strength.
 - These virtues are fully realized when they are seen, meditated upon, and followed out! (Ezra 7:10)
 - This is why Paul says, if there be any excellence and anything worthy of praise, to dwell on these things.
 - That word ‘dwell’ means to consider, to ponder, or to remember these things.
 - Why? Because when life knocks us around, we have the tendency to forget these foundational realities and virtues of our faith.
 - But if our minds remain steadily on the Lord, we can shift our thought life to eternal things not temporal things.
 - I love what Psalm 1:1-2 says. Check out the text:

Psalm 1:1 How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, Nor stand in the path of sinners, Nor sit in the seat of scoffers!

Psalm 1:2 But his delight is in the law of the Lord, And in His law he meditates day and night.

- This past week, my wife and I had to talk to our son about the potential influence of others versus the influence of biblical truth.
 - Children tend to allow the words of others to dictate how they see themselves or what

they know to be true.

- The reality is peer pressure can sometimes influence them more than the foundational truths they are taught at home.
- Therefore, they must be constantly reminded of who Christ has called them to be and what truth is.
- So as my wife and I were talking with our son, we reminded him of who he is in Christ, that he is fearfully and wonderfully made, and that he is made in the image of Christ.
 - Friends, may I encourage you that when we dwell on the Lord Jesus and how He overcame sin and the grave, it gives us great insight on our eternal future.
- I love how Paul wraps up verse 9, he says:
 - “The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.”
- One might ask the question: What are “the things” Paul is talking about here in verse 9a?
 - Well, he starts by saying, the things you have learned.
 - The learning requires teaching to be had. And from Chapter 1 to Chapter 4, Paul has been doing just that.
 - From justification to sanctification, to glorification, and how the believer should walk out the middle tense of their salvation amid suffering – and how to do it well.
 - That the believer is able to walk in a manner worthy of Christ because we have been enabled by the Holy Spirit to do so.
 - And along with the enabling power of the Spirit comes spiritual resources given to the believer to live well, think well, and walk well.
 - He then mentions about the things we have received. We have received this glorious salvation by grace and are to live in such a way that reflects this reality!
 - He continues by saying the things in which we have heard and seen in him.
 - These are in reference to the practicality of our faith as it relates to imitating the examples in which Paul laid on in Philippians 2.
 - In other words, there are examples of biblical men, and women for that matter, who are examples of Christ-like modeling. (Titus 2:1-12)
 - And what Paul is saying is that these aren’t things that should just look good from a distance yet not be adamantly pursued.
 - That because you have been bought with a price, you should live as such.
 - Because the grace of God is sufficient and the blood of Christ is sustaining, pursue God with all your heart, mind, and strength.
 - That because you have been justified, there is no need to look back as to where you have come from – pursue your new life in Christ to the fullest.
 - Because you have been sanctified and enabled with the indwelt power of the Holy Spirit, walk in a manner worthy of the Gospel.
 - And because your future is glorification, know that there is no power in hell that can keep you from being with Jesus in the end.
 - Friends, Paul’s point is simple: If you are looking for peace and joy in this life, know that the Creator is in it with you.
 - If you are feeling as if life is too overwhelming and up is not down or right is not

left, look up to the hills from which cometh your help!

- For when you set your mind on Christ, by practicing what has been taught, he says the God of peace will be with you!
- In other words, the believer's ability to put into practice the word of God along with putting on the mind of Christ will experience a fellowship with Christ.
 - When we rightly walk in fellowship with the Lord, not only are our minds guarded, but our peace is guarded, because we are in Him.
- This is why the church mothers in the Baptist church would say: "You can't make me doubt Him cause I know too much about Him."
 - What they meant was, we have walked with the Lord and trusted in His word and have seen Him move, every time.
 - Therefore, there is no way that life can veer me from not trusting Him.
- This type of fellowship is one that has been tried and true. It doesn't mean it's been easy, but it does mean that the God of peace has been with them through it!
 - What a joy it is to know that our hope and stay is in the Lord?!
 - As one of my favorite theologians puts it: We are not fighting for a position of victory. We are fighting from a position of victory.
- Friends, may we walk, think, and live in a manner that is reflective of the life we have been freely and graciously given in Christ.
 - Let's Pray.

- Last week, we discussed that through our reliance upon the faithfulness of the Lord through prayer, that it eases the necessity of worry and anxiety.
 - If worry is indicative of our teetering of trust with the Lord, then prayer is a posture of great dependence in the Lord.
 - And we saw that through our dependence on the Lord flows a peace that cannot be comprehended.
 - We ultimately saw that when our thought-life is set on eternal, transcendental truth that the God of peace will be most evident in our circumstance.
 - In other words, our perspective through life shouldn't be dictated by what we are going through, but rather who we are going through it with.
 - If I were to outline our time tonight, covering verses 10-19, we will see the following things:
 - 1. The Secret of Contentment (vv.10-13)
 - 2. His Provision, Our Participation (vv.14-18)
 - 3. The Savior's Sustaining Supply (v.19)
 - If I were to put a tag on tonight's text, it would simply be: The Provision of God.
 - With that being said, I invite you to meet me in Philippians 4:10-13 for the reading of the word of the Lord.

Philippians 4:10 **But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at last you have revived your concern for me; indeed, you were concerned before, but you lacked opportunity.**

Philippians 4:11 **Not that I speak from want, for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am.**

Philippians 4:12 **I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need.**

Philippians 4:13 **I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.**

- The Apostle Paul transitions the focus of the letter from an instructional exhortation, to an appreciative yet practical application with introspection.
 - We see his transitioning point because of the use of the word “But”.
 - Notice what Paul is addressing here from verses 10-13.
 - He mentions how he rejoiced in the Lord greatly because of the Philippians' ‘gospel participation’ as a service to Paul.
 - He says that their concern for him had been “revived”.
 - The Greek word for ‘revive’ here means to grow up again or to bloom again.
 - I find Paul's use of this word quite interesting because it suggests that there must have been a point in which their support was withered.

- However, the withered season of their giving is not connected to their lack of love for Paul.
- Notice, in verse 10b that Paul mentions, “indeed, you were concerned before...”.
 - In other words, your inability to provide financially was not based upon your view of me or my circumstances.
 - Rather, there was a season in which you came across that hindered you from contributing or participating as you once have.
 - So there is no guilt trip or “peer pressure” to give if you can’t!
- What becomes so encouraging in this section of the text is that Paul is not offended by their lack of financial giving.
 - Rather, even in his previous distress of their inability to give, it did not deter Paul from his gospel mission.
- Often, folks are guilt-tripped into thinking that if they can’t give financially to a ministry that somehow, they’ve lost their fire for the Lord or in trouble with God.
 - But the reality is for many people, their inability to give has little to do with the ministry and mostly due to their circumstance.
 - There are days and seasons where you will see an increase in giving and a decrease in giving for ministries and churches alike.
 - However, it’s often not due to the ministry’s ability to do what the Lord has called them to, but rather the hardship that the people are facing.
 - So, Paul recognizes the hardship in which the Philippian believers have experienced in the past where they “lacked opportunity”.
 - In a way, what this shows is Paul’s sympathy and concern for his brothers and sisters who are participants in this gospel work.
 - Paul’s hope while doing ministerial work, doesn’t rest upon the financial giving or lack thereof of others.
 - For as we will see in verse 13, Paul will make the statement, “I can do all things through Him who strengthens me!”
 - And what this shows us as recipients of this letter is Paul’s heavenly perspective regarding the circumstances he constantly faced.
 - And the primary example Paul uses to express this perspective is what he began with at the start of this letter – the Philippians’ financial giving.
- What I appreciated about Pastor Steve and VBVMI before coming onto the team, and even when he pastored the Church, is Steve’s emphasis on ministry and not money.
 - Although we understand that it takes money to do the production and maintenance of the website for upkeep, that ultimately, God is in control.
 - We would always keep a small wooden box at the back of the church and never made mention of it.
 - But if people felt led to give, that opportunity was always available for them to do so.

- And I am proud to say that this method of ministry focus remains foundational to VBVMI today.
 - Providing free bible resources at no cost to those who desire to utilize it because the word cost us nothing yet costed Jesus everything.
- And in the same way, the Apostle Paul utilizes this section of this letter to not only express his thanks to the Philippians, but to encourage them as well.
 - And his encouragement, although not rooted in financial giving, utilizes what it means to have little or abundance as a maturation moment.
- Verse 11, he starts by saying, “Not that I speak from want...” meaning, my concerns are not financial or even physical for that matter.
 - Because he says, he has learned “to be content in whatever circumstances I am.”
 - Notice that Paul says he has “learned” how to be content.
 - This goes back to what the Apostle Paul had mentioned earlier regarding “perfection in Christ”.
 - Remember the connotation here is that of growing in maturity in Christ as we apply the word of God to our lives.
 - So Paul is expressing this gospel growth within his very life as someone in whom the Philippians look up to.
 - Paul’s very ministry was considered a ministry of suffering, yet Paul never allowed the sufferings of his life to dictate his joy.
 - Rather, Paul observing the life of Christ, saw that because Christ suffered well, so should he.
 - And in Christ being the example for Paul, and every believer for that matter, Paul always found himself growing in wisdom.
 - Furthermore, Paul says that he has learned to be “content”.
 - That word in Greek means to be self-sufficient.
 - Paul is not speaking about contentment in the sense of his own personal self-reliance in a matter.
 - Rather, Paul is talking about the divine reliance he has on the Lord to supply his very needs, regardless of what he goes through.
 - It was in Philippians 3:7-16 that Paul made mention of his prior abandonment of meritorious works and how those accomplishments were ‘rubbish’.
 - Instead, Paul desired to pursue Christ in “knowing him more and the power of His resurrection.” (Phil. 3:10)
 - In other words, there was nothing that Paul could do that provided adequate contentment and joy in His circumstances.
- Our degrees, and life accomplishments, although great, contribute nothing to sustaining joy.
 - The reality is within our human nature, our desire for wanting more or achieving more always seems to increase.

- And with the increase of our desires comes the unsettled feeling of, what I just accomplished is not enough.
- However, when we recognize what it is that Christ has accomplished and that it is a complete and finished work, it changes how we see things.
- The subtle issue that one faces is the danger of legalism and humanism versus trusting and resting in Christ alone.
 - Notice how this learning for Paul came about and the pressures in which he faced became ‘lessons learned’. We see this in verse 12.
- Paul mentions that he has learned how to get along with “humble” means as well as “how to live in prosperity”.
 - In other words, Paul has learned how to have little and how to deal with much.
 - Money nor merit becomes the motivator for his joy or contentment in life – Christ is!
 - Whether he has little or much, these physical material things do not sway how he sees Christ nor how his needs are met.
 - According to 1 Corinthians, Paul’s ministerial journeys and missions were not viewed in the convenience that many experience on missions trips today.
 - For instance, check out 1 Corinthians 4:11:

1 Corinthians 4:11 To this present hour we are both hungry and thirsty, and are

poorly clothed, and are roughly treated, and are homeless;

1 Corinthians 4:12 and we toil, working with our own hands; when we are reviled, we bless; when we are persecuted, we endure;

- Paul continues in the difficulties he has endured for the sake of ministry in this way: Check out 2 Corinthians 11:27.

2 Corinthians 11:27 I have been in labor and hardship, through many sleepless nights, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure.

- In every instance of hardship, Paul’s priority is for the people to not be burdened but to be served.
 - This is a beautiful example of service and sacrifice! – That Paul would put himself in harm’s way for the betterment of others.
 - The question becomes: “Where did the Apostle Paul learn these virtues of service and selflessness from?”
 - Well, we saw this reality in Paul speaking about the doctrine of Kenosis in Philippians 2:7 where Paul mentions that Christ emptied Himself.
 - This emptying required one to be ever dependent upon the Lord and His provision and less focused on self and individual needs.

- This is why Paul writes in verse 13, that “he can do all things through Him who strengthens him.”
- Herein lies the secret that Paul was talking about in verse 12.
 - The secret of contentment is the experiential knowledge of walking with the Lord daily and resting in Him. (Practice and Live)
- In every circumstance that Paul came across, whether he was hungry or poor, in abundance or with little – the Lord was meeting his needs.
- I’m reminded of the Lord Jesus’ interaction with the disciples before he sent them out, two by two.
 - And in sending them out, he sends them out with power and authority over all demons and to heal disease.
 - And the content in which they carried was the news of the Kingdom of God.
 - However, in His sending of them, Jesus tells them to bring nothing on their journey.
 - No staff, bag, bread, or money, and not even two tunics.
 - The very things that these men would have needed for sustaining themselves, protection on the journey, and sustenance for their bodies was forbidden to go.
 - The question you might ask is: “Why would the Lord Jesus not require these men to have these things on their journey?”
 - Simply put, the Lord wanted the disciples to depend upon the Father for all that they needed, because this would be the case in Jesus’ absence.
 - Therefore, doing ministry work and living for Christ requires dependency in God’s daily provision.
 - This is Paul’s point in verses 10-13 – contentment is not something that can be pursued in a “physical” sense.
 - This is first something realized in a spiritual sense because it recognizes that the only way that one can experience peace is in Christ and His work.
 - When your efforts are heavenward, your rest is fully realized.
 - But when your efforts are inwardly motivated, it leads to greater stress, worry, and anxiety, which is rooted in legalism.
 - And as a source of encouragement within Paul’s contentment and gratitude of the Philippians’ giving, Paul encourages the Philippians in their gospel participation.
 - Check out verses 14-19.

Philippians 4:14 Nevertheless, you have done well to share with me in my affliction.

Philippians 4:15 You yourselves also know, Philippians, that at the first preaching of the gospel, after I left Macedonia, no church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving but you alone;

Philippians 4:16 for even in Thessalonica you sent a gift more than once for my needs.

Philippians 4:17 Not that I seek the gift itself, but I seek for the profit which

increases to your account.

Philippians 4:18 **But I have received everything in full and have an abundance; I am amply supplied, having received from Epaphroditus what you have sent, a fragrant aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well-pleasing to God.**

Philippians 4:19 **And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.**

- With careful observation, leading into verse 14, we see that Paul is not rejecting the Philippians' giving, but rather encouraging their participation.
 - Although Paul spoke about his contentment in the Lord, Paul understood that the Lord will use individuals to provide that need when necessary.
 - And in this case, being that Paul was in need during many ministerial missions throughout the world, the Philippians were considered a strong supporting church.
 - As Pastor Steve used to say: The Lord will sustain what He desires to keep going!
 - So, even if economic troubles rise or fall, if the Lord wants to sustain it, He will sustain it!
 - And here we find that Paul applauds the Philippians for sharing in his affliction.
 - The word 'share' in Greek is *synkoinoneo* which means have joint share or to be in partnership with.
 - In other words, where Paul was struggling for physical needs, the Philippians were willing to sacrificially give for Paul's ministry needs.
 - We see an example of this in 2 Corinthians 11:8-9. Check out what Paul writes.

2 Corinthians 11:8 **I robbed other churches by taking wages from them to serve you; 2 Corinthians 11:9 and when I was present with you and was in need, I was not a burden to anyone; for when the brethren came from Macedonia they fully supplied my need, and in everything I kept myself from being a burden to you, and will continue to do so.**

- Paul's use of the word, "robbed" in 2 Corinthians 11:8 is not speaking about him 'stealing from a church' to meet the Corinthians' needs.
 - Rather, Paul is using sarcasm to make a point.
 - Paul's ministry service to the Corinthians was done for free because he did not want to stop the opposition of the false apostles in that day.
- During that time, itinerant preachers would travel from town to town and their motives were rooted in profiting from the people.
 - So with Paul knowing how these men were dealing illegitimately, he desired to inconvenience himself for the sake of not even being seen in a negative light.
 - Therefore, Paul refused the financial gifts of the Corinthians even if it meant

putting him at a disadvantage.

- And knowing that he wanted to provide the best care for the Corinthians, the Macedonian churches, hearing of this, gave sacrificially to Paul.
- So, through Paul stating that the Philippians shared in his affliction, it served as an opportunity for them to see themselves walking in a manner that reflects Christ.
 - The reality was, the giving of the Macedonian churches were more of a sacrifice than convenience.
 - This type of financial sacrifice would have taken from their personal needs to provide for others.
- This was Paul's point when he mentioned in Philippians 3:17 about "joining in following his example and the pattern he has set before them."
 - Paul was not teaching or instructing them on something he hadn't yet done!
 - And Paul is simply following the example of Christ who inconvenienced Himself for the sake of benefiting others!
- So, Paul in verses 15-18 begins to express his gratitude by documenting how these believers have indeed partnered with him.
- Paul starts by saying at the start of his ministry to the Philippians, there was no church that gave beyond what the Philippians gave.
 - To emphasize the lack of giving from other churches, Paul says, "no church shared with him".
 - Now, given our understanding of Paul's missionary journeys up to this point, there has been ample opportunity for others to give.
 - And Paul provides an example of how the Philippians' giving aids in his ministry elsewhere.
 - Notice, in verse 16 he mentions, "for even in Thessalonica you sent a gift more than once for my needs."
 - So, Thessalonica, being a part of Paul's second missionary journey, was gifted a financial gift by the Philippians, not once but twice.
 - We should understand here that the Philippians' financial giving to Paul was not motivated by anything else but the furtherance of the gospel.
 - In other words, the Philippians wanted others to experience this life-transforming gospel just as much as they did with their time with Paul.
 - Therefore, Paul's ministry becomes a tool by which God both uses and resources to send the Gospel out to the world.
- This brings about another important topic that is often never mentioned because of its abuse throughout the culture and society today. And that is the topic of money.
 - As we all know, money is a tool in which the Lord uses in order to accomplish necessary things for gospel work in the world.
 - And at the same time, if not used in the right manner can be used as a tool to promote self and to line the pockets of others.

- As I mentioned in the use of the 2 Corinthian text, the Apostle Paul becomes very sensitive to the reality of the perception of money and its benefits.
 - And he is so sensitive about it that he puts himself at risk for the sake of building a confidence with the Corinthians so that they may see his heart.
 - Paul's focus is not to gain money for the sake of his own personal benefit.
 - Instead, Paul's focus is to provide the Gospel for free to men and women who have not had the opportunity.
- This is why Paul says, "Not that I seek the gift itself..."
 - His focus is both on those who will receive the gospel and those who sacrificed for it.
- Paul is speaking about Sacrificial giving!
 - In providing the needs of others, even if it cost you something, there is fruit to be seen in the end.
- As a matter of fact, the word for 'profit' in verse 17b isn't referring to a monetary gain in the least bit.
 - That word in Greek is *karpos* which means "fruit". It is the result or efforts of a particular action.
 - And in this sense there are spiritual rewards that come from it.
- So, Paul is saying, where your loss has cost you 'something' in the temporal sense, it renders spiritual rewards in eternity.
- If you were to think about this in terms of investments and financial structures today, it would be like this.
 - When you give to your 401K or retirement account, the money you give is usually pre-taxed and goes straight to that account.
 - In other words, you do not see that money in your take home pay.
 - So what may seem right now as a momentary loss from your paycheck, is really a beneficial gain in your future.
 - I believe it was Dave Ramsey who said, "Live like no one else today so that you can live like no one else tomorrow."
 - In a similar way, Paul is encouraging and thanking the believers for their temporary monetary sacrifice.
 - That because of their sacrifice and constant giving to Paul in the ministry work, lives that respond to the Gospel will accumulate as interest to their account.
 - So, where Paul accumulates the principal on those coming to faith because of the Philippians' giving, the interest goes to their account at the Bema Seat.
 - In it all, Paul's use of business vernacular speaks to the third tense of the salvation of the believer.
 - That when we are raptured and meet Jesus in the clouds, after that moment comes our evaluation before Christ.
 - How did we live for Christ? How well did we serve Him? How well did we

represent Him? How much did we sacrifice for Him?

- It is from this evaluation that the Lord takes all of these matters into account and from what we bring, it will be set ablaze.
 - And whatever remains, is what we will have as a reward.
- This point is so key, because it helps us to evaluate the why in what we do for Christ especially in the area of giving and sacrifice.
 - Motive/Motivation becomes of great importance as well as the heart's condition in doing it.
 - And we see this played out in Paul's expression of the Macedonian church in 2 Corinthians 8:1-6. Check out the text:

2 Corinthians 8:1 Now, brethren, we wish to make known to you the grace of God which has been given in the churches of Macedonia,

2 Corinthians 8:2 that in a great ordeal of affliction their abundance of joy and their deep poverty overflowed in the wealth of their liberality.

2 Corinthians 8:3 For I testify that according to their ability, and beyond their ability, they gave of their own accord,

2 Corinthians 8:4 begging us with much urging for the favor of participation in the support of the saints,

2 Corinthians 8:5 and this, not as we had expected, but they first gave themselves to the Lord and to us by the will of God.

2 Corinthians 8:6 So we urged Titus that as he had previously made a beginning, so he would also complete in you this gracious work as well.

- Do you see Paul's language here?! He tells the Corinthians that the Macedonian church's giving was not out of compulsion but compassion.
 - The motive behind the Macedonian church was the very grace and mercy that they received from Christ by way of Paul's ministry!
 - In other words, they didn't just talk about what the ministry of Paul provided for them personally, but they expressed it in their giving.
- When we consider the places or things in which we invest our time in, it is often given to things we expect returns from.
 - If anything, we know that when we put our money towards a good investment and have done our due diligence, we know that the ROI (return on the investment) is worth it.
 - If you haven't noticed by now, Paul is using business lingo to convey the eternal reality of our temporal sacrifices.
 - Our sacrificial giving with our time, talent, and treasure should be a reflection of the great price that Jesus paid on Calvary's cross.
 - Paul expresses Christ's great loss in this way in 2 Corinthians 8:9:

2 Corinthians 8:9 For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, so that you through His poverty might become rich.

- So, although our temporary loss may be the gain for another, we know that the results of that eternal matter go to our account in interest.
 - However, when we fail to meet the needs of those around us, we shouldn't expect to see fruit from inactivity?
 - Paul says these words in Titus 3:14.

Titus 3:14 Our people must also learn to engage in good deeds to meet pressing needs, so that they will not be unfruitful.

- When I think about this sense of sacrificial giving, I think about the ways in which our ministry supporters actively participate with VBVMI daily.
 - As a matter of fact, it is because of your giving that we can reach people world wide with the Gospel.
 - One example, there has been a huge desire to reach men and women who are incarcerated with the Gospel.
 - By God's grace, an opportunity was presented to us by a supporter to partner with a prison ministry known as 'God behind bars'.
 - And this ministry provides tablets and teaching from various ministries to provide bible teaching to men and women behind bars.
 - However, the cost to provide this content is not cheap due to the logistics and processes to get into these facilities.
 - However, a financial supporter who has a relative in prison saw the need for this to happen and decided to meet the need given the opportunity.
 - Their giving sparked growth for others to contribute to this opportunity because they saw the need!
 - And I am delighted to say that because of their and your giving, close to thousands of people in this program have downloaded the VBVMI teachings.
 - And along with that, there have been over 165,000 full viewings of teachings, from our End Times study to the Creation study.
 - But this effort couldn't be possible if men and women like you didn't see the need and meet it.
 - This is the giving that Paul is talking about!
 - Lastly, in verses 18-19 Paul says that the giving of the Philippians has met his very needs and request!
 - He says that he has received "everything in full" and "has abundance"!
 - Meaning that what the Philippians sent him by way of Epaphroditus, even with

Epaphroditus close to death, has been well received.

- Paul speaks to this type of giving as “a fragrant aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well-pleasing to God.”
 - Paul’s use of a fragrant aroma pulls from the Old Testament use of a pleasing sacrifice that is offered to God and pleases Him.
 - It is a sacrifice that was quite costly and, in that day, offerings in Israel were done as a means of sacrifice for worship.
- As we discussed before in Romans 12:1-2 our very lives are to be seen as living sacrifices which is our spiritual service to God.
 - We see in Hebrews 13:16 that our very service to others is a form of sacrifice to the Lord that pleases Him.
 - We also find in Hebrews 13:15 that our praise to the Lord and thanksgiving to Him is also a means of sacrifice.
- Ultimately, everything that we give to the Lord, at some point or another, will cost us something!
 - For how can sacrifice be a sacrifice if it didn’t cost you anything?!
- When we understand that the Lord God is our provider and sustainer in every sense imaginable, it gives us perspective as to how we see life.
 - That because He is our provider – why worry?
 - That because He is our sustainer – why be afraid?
 - That because He is our Way Maker – why be concerned about tomorrow?
- The believer’s contentment in the Lord comes from knowing what Christ has done for us, is doing in us, and will complete in us!
 - This is why Paul says in verse 19, “And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.”
- Paul knew that in his weakest most vulnerable state, that the Lord would make a way.
 - That if God has called him to something, He will make the way for him to get to it and through it!
 - David in our previous study through 2 Samuel came to understand that Yahweh was indeed his Shepherd.
 - And that because He was his Shepherd, he had no need or want.
 - So, Paul now tells the Philippians towards the close of the letter that because you have met my needs, rest assured that the Lord will meet your needs!
 - Notice the Lord will meet your needs not your greeds!
 - Far too long have false teachers used texts like this to coerce people to give more for the sake of them gaining more.
 - When passages like tonight’s teaching come across the lips of a false teacher it promotes this sugar coated – prosperity gospel.
 - However, if you read the whole letter, you come to understand that Paul

endured much suffering and loss.

- The Macedonians at large, most especially the Philippians, suffered much financial loss.
- However there will be much interest for them at the Bema Seat!
- Your sacrificial giving is simply a reflection of your understanding of what Christ has done graciously for you!
 - Do you give open-handedly, or do you give with a closed fist?
 - I leave us with Paul's words in 2 Corinthians 9:7-8 where he says:

2 Corinthians 9:7 **Each one must do just as he has purposed in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.**

2 Corinthians 9:8 **And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that always having all sufficiency in everything, you may have an abundance for every good deed;**

- When we understand positionally Who's we are and remain content in the joy of the Lord, no amount of sacrifice is too much.
 - Why? Because when we understand the weight of what Christ took upon Himself, knowing that He is our sustainer, it allows our perspective on giving, sacrifice, and service to be that much easier.
 - Let's Pray.

- Tonight, we come to the last three verses of the book of Philippians.
 - Although these remaining verses are few, they contain worthy information which is to be mined from the text.
 - These three verses are off the heels of what Paul shared as a secret to how one lives well in this life.
 - And that secret was remaining content in the Lord.
 - Last week we saw Paul share his own personal testimony of contentment.
 - It was through his intimate relationship with Christ, that he came to realize being in Christ, was all that he needed.
 - Meaning that where Paul lacked in physical need, the Lord by His grace, met those needs.
 - And it would often be through the resourcing of people in Paul's life that those needs were met.
 - From there, Paul continued in thanking the Philippians for their sacrificial provision.
 - He expressed that their abundant giving, in the most difficult of times, was seen by God.
 - The Philippians' motivation of giving was based upon the very grace they had received as recipients of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
 - So, Paul explains to them that the measure in which they had graciously given would be the very means by which the Lord would meet their needs.
 - We were able to see in verses 10-19 that no matter what we go through in this life, that because we are in Christ, we can have joy and be content in any circumstance.
 - For joy is not circumstantially motivated but is positionally realized and actualized.
 - In other words, Paul is getting the Philippians to align their thought-life and Christian practice with their knowledge of Christ and what He has accomplished.
 - So as the Apostle Paul comes to these remaining three verses, we will see that this shared experience of trial is met with great hope and encouragement.
 - We will come to find that no believer in Christ is alone on this journey!
 - That because we are in Christ (positionally), we have a Heavenly Father who *has, is, and will continue to* richly supply our every need.
 - Because these very promises are wrapped up in the very Person and accomplished works of Jesus Christ.
 - If I were to outline our time through the text tonight, we will see the following things:
 - 1. Common Foundation and Purpose (v.20)
 - 2. Communal Encouragement (vv.21-22)
 - 3. Sustaining Grace (v.23)

- If I were to put a tag on our text tonight it would simply be: Grace to Endure.
 - With that being said, I invite you to meet me in Philippians 4:20 for the reading of the word of the Lord.

Philippians 4:20 Now to our God and Father be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

- Paul, in verse 20 closes this letter with a doxology.
 - A doxology is simply an expression of praise to the glory of God.
 - This glory is reserved for God alone.
 - It speaks to His very nature, attributes, plan, and works accomplished from age to age.
 - So, with Paul, having just discussed the secret of contentment, the power of God's provision, and the comfort of His grace, this doxology becomes fitting.
 - Paul is reflecting upon not only what the Lord has done in and through his life personally, but he considers the Lord's sovereign work in all believers.
 - Notice, Paul's language at the start of this verse. He says, Now to "our" God and Father.
 - The word "our" in Greek is in the first person and is a personal pronoun.
 - This means that the God and Father in whom Paul is speaking about is not some far off distant being.
 - The God in whom Paul is speaking about is not an un-involved Creator.
 - Rather, this is a personal, transcendental Creator God who is intimately interwoven and connected with His creation. (Creator/creature distinction)
 - Paul understands his role as 'creature' under the Sovereign God of the universe.
 - Not only does Paul make this statement in the personal sense but he talks about this intimate relationship in a common communal sense.
 - In other words, this common faith that we share in Christ, places us on a common foundation of unity therefore making us one in Christ (Family)!
 - No other religion in the world shares this type of intimacy with their god like the Christian faith.
 - The type of love that our Heavenly Father has shown us was demonstrated in the most powerful yet painful way.
 - John 3:16-19 paints a picture of God's love towards His creation.

John 3:16 "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.

John 3:17 "For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him.

John 3:18 "He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has

been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

John 3:19 “**This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil.**

- This love that the Father made known by sending His Son and having Him die in our place was a sacrifice He deemed necessary.
 - For we, in and of ourselves, could not satisfy the wrath of God.
 - We could bring nothing to the table – not our merit, our “changed behaviors”, or frivolous pursuits, etc.
 - The only thing that satisfied God’s wrath was the Perfect submission and sacrifice of His Son.
 - So to know that this work of Christ makes one righteous before a Holy God, is an unexplainable grace!
 - This is why Paul begins this concluding statement in a praiseworthy manner, because the God of the Universe saw fit to make us right with Him.
 - Paul continues by saying, to our God and Father “be the glory”.
- The word ‘glory’ in Greek is *doxa* which is where the name doxology comes from .
 - This simply means that in all things the Lord has done, is doing, and will do, may it bring Him praise or make much of Him.
 - One question that might be raised is: “Is Salvation the only means in which brings Glory to God?”
 - The quick answer to that is no.
 - God’s glory is not solely centered around the salvation of man.
 - Rather His consuming glory (splendor and honor) deals with Him being exalted in all things.
 - The best way to understand God’s glory is, all things pointing to Him, all praise brought to Him, and all things done for Him.
 - As one Pastor puts it: “God is for God!”
- We often think that God’s primary role is dealing with saving humanity, but that is only a part of His Sovereign plan.
 - To simply see the church as the focus neglects God’s glory in His dealings with His chosen people – Israel
 - God’s all-encompassing plan for Creation, Nations, Israel and the Church is for Him to be glorified in it all.
 - And that reality of God’s all-encompassing glory is wrapped up in the Person of Jesus Christ.
 - Check out what Paul says regarding Christ and how Christ’s work and power speak of the Glory of God:

Colossians 1:16 For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him.

- God shares His glory with no man!
 - Check out what the Lord says in Isaiah 42:8.

Isaiah 42:8 “I am the Lord, that is My name; I will not give My glory to another, Nor My praise to graven images.

- This reality is often a hard pill to swallow for the unbeliever, and at times, even for believers.
 - In some Christian circles, salvation is paraded to be the sole focus as if the church is God’s primary focus and plan.
 - However, when we understand the full weight of what the cross of Christ means, it allows us to see things in a whole new light!
 - It is not that God exists to please us and make things good for us.
 - Rather we exist to bring God glory for He is the Creator and we are the created!
- One thing I love about catechisms is that they are short reminders for the believers as to what we stand on doctrinally.
 - And in this case, the Westminster Shorter Catechism opens with one of the most foundational and fundamental questions for all men.
 - And that question is: “What is the chief end of man?”
 - To which the answer is: “Man’s chief end is to glorify and enjoy God forever.”
 - Our sole purpose in this life is not to live our best life now or achieve great things for the praise of ourselves.
 - Rather, our lives communally, familiarly, vocationally, financially, individually, and maritally are to glorify and point to God!
 - As Christians, when we place “other things” above the pursuit of God, we begin to make idols out of things rather than making much of God!
 - This same pattern of pride and idolatry originates from Satan himself, a created being.
 - Perhaps this is why Peter says the following in 1 Peter 1:12-16 regarding the angels confounded by the mystery of salvation:

1 Peter 1:12 It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves, but you, in these things which now have been announced to you through those who preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—things into

which angels long to look.

1 Peter 1:13 Therefore, prepare your minds for action, keep sober in spirit, fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

1 Peter 1:14 As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance,

1 Peter 1:15 but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior;

1 Peter 1:16 because it is written, “You shall be holy, for I am holy.”

- Friends, our very existence is to live for God, to serve Him, and to make much of Him.
 - And the beauty of this reality is we get to make much of God for all eternity.
 - Notice, Paul says, “our God and Father be the Glory forever and ever. Amen”
 - Paul says in few short words, “God’s glory does not end. From age to age, His name will be made known.
 - Paul expresses the very vastness of the glory and wisdom and power of God in this way:

Romans 11:33 Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways!

Romans 11:34 For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who became His counselor?

Romans 11:35 Or who has first given to Him that it might be paid back to him again?

Romans 11:36 For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen.

- Paul ends verse 1 with, “Amen” which simply means, “so be it” or “it is so”.
 - Therefore, “Amen” affirms these foundational truths regarding who God is, what He has done, is doing and will do.
 - From here, Paul moves on to what I consider communal encouragement amongst the believing body.
 - Check out verses 21-22.

Philippians 4:21 Greet every saint in Christ Jesus. The brethren who are with me greet you.

Philippians 4:22 All the saints greet you, especially those of Caesar’s household.

- Paul now moves to the greeting section of his closing address where Paul tells the Philippians to greet every saint in Christ Jesus.

- He addresses believers in Philippi and all believers for that matter as “saints”.
 - The word “saints” simply means, holy ones.
 - These are individuals who have professed faith in Christ and are among believing communities. (Set apart ones)
- Paul’s concluding statements here are that the Philippians are to send Paul’s greetings and love to believers both in Philippi and surrounding cities.
 - This type of message would have been encouraging for other brothers and sisters to both see and hear.
 - Reason being is because of what they’ve been informed about through this letter.
 - The very content of this letter would be a means of edification and encouragement for others.
- The reality is, there is something unique about the gathering and the greeting of the saints in Christ.
 - Not only are we commonly connected in community by our shared faith in Christ.
 - But our unity in Christ brings about a sense of togetherness and in that community comes encouragement, accountability, and authenticity.
- Paul then mentions that the brothers who are currently with him at that time greet them.
 - More than likely, those in the company of Paul were Epaphroditus and potentially young Timothy, who was Paul’s understudy.
- The greetings of the saints don’t just stop there but we see that the greetings even from those in whom Paul was able to convert from Caesar’s servicemen.
 - What we see here is that there is a sense of communal grace experienced by all these people greeting one another.
- In other words, “Look at what the Lord has done by and through the power of Christ!”
 - The fact that we can all be at different places, from different cities, with different circumstances, yet we are all united in Christ!
 - What a grace this is!
- There seems to be a key thread between the sound doctrine Paul taught and the necessity of community living out this doctrinal reality!
 - As believers, in one body, we all share together, we all hurt together, we all mourn together, and we all fight the good fight of faith, together.
 - Romans 16:1-16 provides us with an amazing list of greetings that Paul gives many men and women in whom his ministry touched.
- What Paul presents to us here is that no matter where we come from, we are one in Christ.
 - And like a family unit, may we all care for one another like family should.

- Finally, Paul ends the letter with verse 23. Check out the text.

Philippians 4:23 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.

- Indeed, Paul's letter to the Philippians regarding their positional reality in Christ reflects the immense grace that God has shown all believers.
 - Paul began this letter in a reflective state from a place of imprisonment as he wrote to a believing body who have forged through difficult times with him.
 - Paul reflects on how the Philippian church has participated with him in the work of Gospel ministry.
 - And in him reflecting on his past time with them, he reminds them that although circumstances may be at hand, they are to be of good heart.
 - The reason being is because they are in Christ and because Christ has set the example of true service and servant hood, they should follow suit!
 - Paul reminds the Philippians that their joy in the Lord should not be impacted by their circumstances.
 - Rather they are to understand that their joy is to be experienced because of what Christ has done.
 - In other words, when you come to a growing knowledge of what Christ's death, burial, and resurrection means, and the promises therein, your perspective on life begins to change!
 - How you approach trials changes when you have put on the mind of Christ.
 - When you look at how Christ dealt with difficult people, it gives you a proper perspective on how you ought to deal with difficult people.
 - Time and again, the Apostle Paul uses imitation, military terms, etc. to speak to the required pursuit the believers are to take in following Jesus.
 - This letter was written for the purposes of the second tense of Salvation- Progressive Sanctification!
- As we end of our study through the book of Philippians, I want to leave us with the question that Pastor Steve started us with.
 - And that is: "If once you got saved, why didn't the Lord just take you to heaven at that very moment?"
 - Friends, I pray we have come to the answer: There is still work to be done and service that is to be rendered unto the Lord for His good pleasure.
 - There are still gospel opportunities to be had, that others may experience the grace that you have freely received.
 - The opportunities have not gone away, the question is: What will you do with the grace you have been given?
 - Will you squander it because you lack the eternal mindset to see as Jesus sees?
 - Or will you lean into the grace that He has given and pursue God in every

possible manner?

- The reality is, given the society we live in today, we could make every excuse in the world to not fully pursue God...
 - ...Times are hard...Life is difficult...people are mean... the list goes on and on.
- However, when we choose to set our eyes on things eternal, the reward in the end is greater than the loss that we face temporarily.
 - When we learn to embrace the grace for the race, not only is their reward to be had, but as Paul writes, God's grace in Christ will carry our inner man through it. (v.23)
- We oftentimes look at the Christian life and think that it's a sprint, but really, it's a marathon.
 - Day by day, moment by moment, minute by minute, we are progressively growing in some way, shape or form.
 - And it is often through the trial that the Lord expresses these "growth opportunities."
 - But if we look at it as inconveniences and not opportunities to look more like Christ, we become victims and not victors in Christ.
- The question to ask is: "Are we living out the grace that God has provided us so that in His timing we can mature into all that He desires for us to be or not?"
 - Because at the end of the day, God's grace is sufficient for the race ahead!
 - Let's Pray.

Citations:

- "God is for God!" is a quote by Pastor Matt Chandler in a guest teaching event outside of The Village Church.
- Dr. Mike Stallard has an incredible graphic of the focus of the glory of God in dispensationalism.