

Une famille avait des jumeaux dont la seule ressemblance était leur apparence. Si l'un trouvait qu'il faisait trop chaud, l'autre trouvait qu'il faisait trop froid. Si l'un disait que le volume de la télévision était trop fort, l'autre prétendait qu'il fallait l'augmenter. Opposés en tout point, l'un était un éternel optimiste, l'autre un pessimiste invétéré.

Pour leur donner une leçon, leur père remplit à Noël la chambre du fils pessimiste de tous les jouets et jeux imaginables, tandis que celle du fils optimiste fut remplie d'un tas de fumier de cheval.

Ce soir-là, le père passa devant la chambre du pessimiste et le trouva assis au milieu de ses nouveaux cadeaux, en train de pleurer amèrement.

« Pourquoi pleures-tu ? » demanda le père.

« Parce que mes amis seront jaloux, je devrai lire toutes ces instructions avant de pouvoir utiliser quoi que ce soit, j'aurai constamment besoin de piles, et mes jouets finiront par se casser », répondit le jumeau pessimiste.

En passant devant la chambre du jumeau optimiste, le père le trouva en train de danser de joie dans le tas de fumier. « Qu'est-ce qui te rend si heureux ? » demanda-t-il.

Ce à quoi son jumeau optimiste a répondu : « Il doit bien y avoir un poney quelque part ici ! »

- Notre vision de la vie peut être en contradiction avec notre réalité.
  - Parfois, nous pouvons être tristes ou déprimés alors que tout va bien, et à d'autres moments, lorsque notre monde s'écroule, nous cherchons le poney.
    - Les chrétiens, en particulier, éprouvent des réactions paradoxales face aux épreuves de la vie, car Jésus nous a dit qu'il en serait ainsi.

[Luc 6:22](#) Heureux serez-vous, lorsque les hommes vous haïront, lorsqu'on vous chassera, vous outragera, et qu'on rejettéra votre nom comme infâme, à cause du Fils de l'homme!

[Luc 6:23](#) Réjouissez-vous en ce jour-là et tressaillez d'allégresse, parce que votre récompense sera grande dans le ciel; car c'est ainsi que leurs pères traitaient les prophètes.

[Luc 6:26](#) Malheur, lorsque tous les hommes diront du bien de vous, car c'est ainsi qu'agissaient leurs pères à l'égard des faux prophètes!

- Jésus a dit que nous devrions nous réjouir lorsque le monde nous attaque à cause de notre foi en Jésus.
  - À l'inverse, Jésus a dit : « Malheur à nous lorsque nous sommes aimés du monde ! »
  - C'est paradoxal, et pourtant cela s'explique facilement lorsqu'on considère les choses du point de vue de Jésus.

- Quel est Son point de vue ? Il se résume parfaitement par une simple phrase que j'aime utiliser : vivre avec les yeux tournés vers l'éternité.
  - Cela signifie adopter une perspective éternelle, reconnaître que nous ne faisons que passer dans cette vie... c'est la prochaine qui compte vraiment.
    - Nous voulons donc mettre tout ce qui existe dans ce monde au service de l'au-delà, y compris nos propres épreuves.
    - Tout ce qui nous arrive et ce qui nous entoure peut être utile à Dieu et à nous pour le bien du programme du Royaume.
    - Notre mission est donc de réagir aux aléas de la vie de manière à maximiser notre obéissance et la gloire de Dieu.
  - Et comme nous allons commencer aujourd'hui une étude verset par verset de l'épître aux Philippiens, vous m'entendrez utiliser cette expression de temps à autre.
    - Avoir les yeux tournés vers l'éternité est au cœur de la lettre de Paul aux Philippiens.
    - Voilà donc la perspective que nous devons acquérir si nous voulons la comprendre.
  - Pour commencer aujourd'hui, nous devons faire un peu de devoirs.
    - Étudier une épître, c'est comme lire le courrier de quelqu'un d'autre ; il nous faut donc nous renseigner sur le contexte et les informations générales relatives à la lettre.
    - Nous devons comprendre un peu mieux l'auteur et ses lecteurs.
    - Et nous trouvons cette introduction dans le premier verset.

**Phil. 1:1 Paul et Timothée, serviteurs de Jésus Christ, à tous les saints en Jésus Christ qui sont à Philippi, aux évêques et aux diacres:**

- L'auteur de cette lettre est, bien sûr, l'apôtre Paul.
  - Nous connaissons tous ce nom, et je suppose que beaucoup d'entre nous connaissent l'histoire de Paul.
    - Paul, également connu sous le nom de Saul, a commencé son ministère en tant que pharisién zélé et respectueux de la loi.
    - Dans les Actes 7, Luc nous dit que tandis que le premier martyr chrétien, Étienne, mourait pour sa foi, Paul observait et approuvait.
  - Le fait de voir Étienne mourir pour sa foi a déclenché quelque chose chez Paul, qui se croyait juste, et il est devenu obsédé par l'éradication du christianisme.
    - Pendant les années qui suivirent, Paul se lança donc dans une campagne impitoyable pour traquer et éliminer les croyants en Jésus.
    - Il a parcouru le monde, arrêtant des chrétiens pratiquants, et beaucoup ont été lapidés.

- Son nom était craint parmi les chrétiens de tout l'empire, mais les dirigeants juifs approuvaient sans réserve ses efforts.
- Puis, lors d'un de ces voyages pour arrêter des chrétiens à Damas, Jésus lui-même est apparu à Paul sur la route et l'a arrêté, pour ainsi dire.
  - À partir de ce jour, Jésus insista pour que Paul serve une cause différente
  - Paul est passé de la volonté d'anéantir le christianisme à un travail acharné pour faire progresser la diffusion de l'Évangile dans le monde.
  - La transition de Paul fut un changement si brutal que beaucoup, au sein de l'Église, se demandèrent si l'on pouvait vraiment lui faire confiance.
  - Des années plus tard, Paul défendait encore son apostolat auprès des croyants face à de fausses accusations et à des soupçons infondés.
- Mais avec le temps, Paul s'est révélé être, sans conteste, l'ambassadeur le plus important et le plus efficace du Christ que le monde ait jamais connu.
  - Paul a écrit la plupart des épîtres du Nouveau Testament, fondé la plupart des principales Églises du premier siècle et formé personnellement de nombreux de ses premiers dirigeants.
    - Paul a voyagé sans relâche lors de quatre voyages missionnaires, traversant la majeure partie de l'Empire romain pour prêcher l'Évangile aux Gentils.
    - Paul a établi la norme en matière de service, de sorte que peut-être plus que quiconque, il pouvait dire à juste titre : « Imitez-moi comme j'imiter le Christ ».
  - Mais Paul n'a évidemment pas accompli ces grandes choses par lui-même, et il ne les a pas faites seul.
    - En réalité, Paul était tout sauf un solitaire dans son ministère.
    - Il s'épanouissait grâce à la camaraderie dans le ministère et à la communion fraternelle entre les saints, et ses lettres en témoignent.
  - Remarquez qu'au début de cette lettre, Paul mentionne son compagnon de voyage de l'époque, un jeune homme nommé Timothée.
    - Timothée est l'un des hommes qui ont accompagné Paul lors de ses quatre voyages, avec Luc, Barnabé, Jean Marc et Silas.
    - Paul appréciait leur compagnie et leur soutien lors de ses déplacements de ville en ville pour exercer son ministère.
    - Paul s'épanouissait également grâce à la communion des croyants dans chaque ville qu'il visitait, et il mentionnait souvent son désir ardent d'y retourner.
    - Paul était un homme qui se faisait facilement des amis, qui chérissait les amitiés pour la vie et qui encourageait l'Église à faire de même.
- Ensuite, Paul parle de lui-même et de Timothée en utilisant un terme qu'il affectionne particulièrement : serviteur
  - L'esclavage était une forme particulière d'esclavage et la forme dominante à l'époque de Paul.
    - Dans l'Empire romain, l'esclavage était majoritairement volontaire : les individus se faisaient esclaves pour rembourser une dette contractée auprès

d'un maître.

- Avec le temps, un esclave pouvait rembourser sa dette par le travail, puis il était libre de quitter le service et de recouvrer sa liberté.
- Mais au cours de ce service, un esclave pouvait décider qu'une vie au service d'un maître bienveillant était préférable à une vie de liberté passée à peiner.
  - Si tel est le cas, alors, une fois sa dette payée, cet esclave pourrait se porter volontaire pour continuer à servir le maître comme esclave à vie.
  - L'esclave renoncerait à jamais à sa liberté en échange des soins et de la protection du maître.
  - L'esclave ne travaillait plus pour rembourser une dette ; il servait désormais son maître par dévotion.
- Dans cette nouvelle relation, l'esclave était appelé esclave sous contrat, signifiant qu'il servait son maître par amour plutôt que par obligation.
  - Paul se désignait fréquemment comme un serviteur asservis, car ce terme décrivait parfaitement sa manière de servir le Christ.
  - Tous les chrétiens sont appelés esclaves du Christ, car nous avons tous été rachetés par son sang.
  - Nous lui devons tous une dette de péché qu'il a payée pour nous par sa vie.
- Mais à mesure que nous mûrissons dans notre foi, nous apprenons à apprécier que le Christ est un Maître aimant, digne de notre dévotion et de notre service sacrificiel.
  - Et lorsque nous parvenons à cette compréhension, nous devenons des serviteurs dévoués, des esclaves servant leur Maître non par contrainte mais par dévotion.
  - C'est ainsi que Paul a décrit son service à Jésus, ce qui était approprié compte tenu de la manière dont Paul est entré dans ce service.
- Lorsque Paul rencontra Jésus sur le chemin de Damas, Jésus le rendit aveugle et le conduisit dans la ville pour l'attendre.
  - Jésus envoya alors un autre disciple, Ananias, auprès de Paul pour lui expliquer que Paul avait été choisi par Jésus pour prêcher aux païens.
    - Ananias expliqua également que Paul souffrirait beaucoup au cours de ce service.

**Actes 9:15 Mais le Seigneur lui dit: Va, car cet homme est un instrument que j'ai choisi, pour porter mon nom devant les nations, devant les rois, et devant les fils d'Israël;**

**Actes 9:16 et je lui montrerai tout ce qu'il doit souffrir pour mon nom.**

- Paul a commencé son service auprès de Jésus comme esclave... Jésus lui a fait une offre qu'il ne pouvait refuser, au sens propre du terme.
- Paul n'eut pas le choix... il fut fait apôtre par la volonté de Dieu et enrôlé de force

comme un esclave.

- Mais avec le temps, Paul apprit à connaître son nouveau Maître comme un Sauveur aimant et miséricordieux, et alors son désir de servir changea.
- Ce qui avait commencé comme un ministère de contrainte se transforma rapidement en une vie de dévotion, et Paul souhaitait que tous les croyants voient le Christ de la même manière.
- Notre entrée dans la foi est semblable à celle de Paul, théologiquement parlant... Dieu nous trouve, nous ne le trouvons pas.
  - Et durant nos premiers mois de disciple du Christ, Jésus est comparable à l'esclavage, en ce sens que nous sommes liés au Christ avant même de bien le connaître.
  - Nous sommes poussés par le Saint-Esprit à embrasser une nouvelle vie par la grâce de Dieu, au moyen de notre foi.
- Mais avec le temps, à mesure que nous apprenons à mieux connaître le Dieu que nous servons, nous découvrons que Jésus est bon, aimable, généreux et miséricordieux.
  - Son joug est facile, son fardeau léger, ainsi notre service envers le Christ passe de la contrainte à la dévotion.
  - En servant Jésus quotidiennement par amour pour lui, nous sommes des serviteurs de Jésus.
- Si servir Jésus de cette manière ne vous est pas familier, c'est peut-être le signe que vous n'avez pas suffisamment approfondi votre relation avec lui.
  - Peut-être essayez-vous d'intégrer votre service à Jésus à votre vie mondaine par ailleurs ordinaire, plutôt que l'inverse.
  - Après tout, ce n'est pas tant notre service à Jésus qu'il désire que notre dévotion envers lui.
  - Les esclaves ne mènent pas une vie ordinaire... notre vie consiste à servir notre Maître, et lorsque notre Maître est aussi bon que Jésus, c'est la meilleure vie possible.
- Voilà donc quelques informations sur l'auteur. Ensuite, Paul précise que son public est constitué des saints de Philippi, une ville importante de l'Empire romain.
  - Philippi était une ville très prospère de la province de Macédoine, nommée d'après le père d'Alexandre le Grand.
    - Les citoyens de Philippi bénéficiaient de nombreux priviléges au sein de la société romaine, notamment l'exemption d'impôts et l'autonomie.
    - Et comme elle se trouvait sur une importante voie romaine, elle était également un centre de commerce et, par conséquent, assez riche.
  - De par sa situation stratégique sur une route majeure reliant l'est et l'ouest, Paul a traversé Philippi à plusieurs reprises au cours de ses voyages.
    - Paul visita la ville pour la première fois en l'an 50 après J.-C., et c'est à cette époque qu'il fonda l'église.
    - Luc, Timothée et Silas accompagnaient Paul à cette époque.

- Dans les Actes 16, Luc raconte comment Paul et Silas furent un temps jetés en prison à Philippi.
  - Plus tard dans la nuit, Dieu provoque un grand tremblement de terre pour ouvrir la prison et briser leurs chaînes.
  - Le geôlier se réveille et découvre que la prison est ouverte. Sachant qu'il serait exécuté pour cette violation, il se prépare à se suicider.
  - Mais Paul crie pour sauver l'homme, lui disant que tous les prisonniers sont restés, probablement parce que Paul les avait persuadés de le faire.
- La volonté de Paul de renoncer à sa liberté pour avoir l'occasion de prêcher l'Évangile à ce geôlier a porté de grands fruits.
  - Sauvé d'une mort certaine par la bonté de Paul, le geôlier était impatient d'entendre la parole que Paul prêchait.
  - Par conséquent, cet homme le croyait, tout comme l'ensemble de sa famille.
  - À partir de ce moment, Paul fonda l'église, enseignant et exerçant son ministère pendant un certain temps avant de passer à autre chose.
- Paul retourna ensuite dans la ville lors de son troisième voyage missionnaire en 57 après J.-C., puis, trois ans plus tard, alors qu'il se trouvait à Rome, il écrivit cette lettre à l'Église.
  - En l'an 60, Paul était assigné à résidence à Rome, en attente d'une audience devant César.
    - Son assignation à résidence dura deux ans, période durant laquelle Paul écrivit plusieurs lettres du Nouveau Testament, dont celle-ci.
    - Pendant que Paul était assigné à résidence à Rome, les chefs de l'Église envoyèrent un homme, Épaphrodite, lui rendre visite.
    - Épaphrodite apporta à Paul un cadeau d'argent, ce qui dut être un grand encouragement et un grand soulagement pour lui.
  - Ainsi, lorsque Paul écrit cette lettre depuis sa résidence surveillée à Rome, il le fait d'un point de vue unique.
    - La première expérience de Paul à Philippi lui a appris à mieux appréhender sa situation actuelle à Rome.
    - Dieu a permis que Paul et Silas souffrent un temps dans la prison de Philippi afin qu'ils puissent annoncer l'Évangile au geôlier.
    - Et parce que Paul a réussi à convertir le geôlier et sa famille, il a pu fonder l'Église de Philippi.
    - Et parce que Paul avait fondé l'Église, ces saints étaient désormais en mesure de lui apporter soutien et encouragement à Rome.
  - Dieu s'est servi des épreuves et des souffrances dans la vie de Paul pour faire progresser la mission du Royaume, et cela n'a jamais été aussi bien illustré qu'à Philippi.
    - Comprendre le lien entre la détention de Paul à Philippi et son arrestation à Rome est essentiel pour suivre cette lettre.

- Ce qui nous amène à la supplication de Paul pour l'Église...

**[Philippiens 1:2](#) que la grâce et la paix vous soient données de la part de Dieu notre Père et du Seigneur Jésus Christ!**

- Presque toutes les lettres de Paul commencent par une prière pour ses lecteurs, comme on le voit ici au verset 2 où Paul adresse grâce et paix à l'Église
  - Venant de Paul, ces paroles avaient une véritable puissance, car elles étaient inspirées, c'est-à-dire qu'elles venaient de Dieu.
    - Chaque fois qu'une église recevait une lettre de Paul, c'était un motif de grande joie, car elle savait que ses lettres faisaient partie des Écritures.
    - En fait, à peu près au même moment où Paul écrivait cette lettre, Pierre, un autre apôtre, écrivait ceci à propos de l'écriture de Paul.

**[2 Pierre 3:14](#) C'est pourquoi, bien-aimés, en attendant ces choses, appliquez-vous à être trouvés par lui sans tache et irrépréhensibles dans la paix.**

**[2 Pierre 3:15](#) Croyez que la patience de notre Seigneur est votre salut, comme notre bien-aimé frère Paul vous l'a aussi écrit, selon la sagesse qui lui a été donnée.**

**[2 Pierre 3:16](#) C'est ce qu'il fait dans toutes les lettres, où il parle de ces choses, dans lesquelles il y a des points difficiles à comprendre, dont les personnes ignorantes et mal affermies tordent le sens, comme celui des autres Écritures, pour leur propre ruine.**

- Pierre affirme que certains, à cette époque, essayaient de déformer les écrits de Paul, tout comme ils le font avec « le reste des Écritures ».
  - Pierre considérait les écrits de Paul comme faisant partie des Écritures alors même que les deux hommes étaient encore vivants et écrivaient des lettres.
  - Cela confirme que les lettres de Paul étaient considérées comme des Écritures par l'Église primitive dès l'instant où Paul les a écrites.
- C'est pourquoi, lorsque Paul a dit à une Église que Dieu le Père et le Seigneur Jésus-Christ leur envoyait grâce et paix, c'était une réalité.
  - Ainsi, la promesse de grâce ou de paix que Paul tenait dans ses lettres n'était pas simplement une parole aimable destinée à s'attirer les faveurs de ses lecteurs.
  - Paul promettait à ses lecteurs qu'à la réception de sa lettre, Dieu lui-même était à l'œuvre pour leur accorder grâce et paix.
- En se penchant sur la lettre de Paul, en la lisant et en y prêtant attention, les membres de cette église constateraient davantage la faveur de Dieu et connaîtraient une plus grande paix.
  - Cette promesse se poursuit aujourd'hui... en étudiant la parole de Dieu, et en particulier les lettres de Paul, nous acquérons bien plus que des connaissances.

- Nous recevons davantage de la grâce de Dieu, de sa faveur, et cela se manifestera de diverses manières, notamment par une plus grande paix intérieure.
- Puis, à partir du verset 3, Paul entame sa lettre proprement dite, et, au fur et à mesure de notre lecture, je souhaite vous proposer un aperçu de sa structure.
  - Cette lettre comporte quatre chapitres, tels que nous les divisons aujourd'hui, et chacun a un point principal ou un thème.
    - Ces quatre points convergent pour étayer une idée centrale qui résume l'ensemble de la lettre.
    - L'idée centrale de la lettre est simplement « Christ est tout ».
  - Tout ce qui nous pousse à vivre, à lutter, à souffrir et à exceller, a pour but Jésus-Christ et son Évangile... Christ est tout dans la vie
    - En dehors de notre mission au service du Royaume, nos vies n'ont ni sens ni but.
    - Sans le Christ au centre de notre vie, rien de ce que nous accomplissons ou devenons ne durera ni n'aura de sens à la fin.
    - Lorsque nous faisons de notre vie un instrument entre les mains de Dieu pour amener de nombreux fils et filles à la gloire, alors nous trouvons un sens à notre existence, la joie et la paix.
  - L'idée principale de la lettre est donc que le Christ est tout dans la vie, et Paul décompose cette vérité en quatre parties :
    - Chapitre 1 : Notre but est de vivre pour le Christ
    - Chapitre 2 : notre attitude consiste à penser comme le Christ
    - Chapitre 3 : nos récompenses viennent du Christ
    - Chapitre 4 : notre satisfaction réside dans le service du Christ
- Pour conclure notre leçon d'aujourd'hui, explorons quelques pistes pour comprendre le but de tout chrétien : vivre pour le Christ, ce que Paul aborde très simplement.

**Phil. 1:3 Je rends grâces à mon Dieu de tout le souvenir que je garde de vous,**  
**Phil. 1:4 ne cessant, dans toutes mes prières pour vous tous,**  
**Phil. 1:5 de manifester ma joie au sujet de la part que vous prenez à l'Évangile,**  
**depuis le premier jour jusqu'à maintenant.**

- Paul a dit à l'église qu'il remerciait toujours le Seigneur pour cette église et qu'il priait avec joie pour elle à chaque occasion.
  - Certains érudits ont suggéré que l'église de Philippi était la préférée de Paul, et cette lettre donne certainement cette impression.
  - Mais les éloges de Paul à l'égard de cette église n'étaient pas fondés sur du favoritisme, mais plutôt sur quelque chose de très spécifique.
  - Paul dit au verset 5 que sa joie était due à leur participation à l'Évangile depuis le tout premier jour jusqu'à maintenant.

- C'est un bel éloge, certes, mais il est important de comprendre ce que Paul disait à propos de cette église.
  - En termes simples, participer à l'Évangile, c'est s'associer à l'œuvre de diffusion de la Bonne Nouvelle de Jésus-Christ et de sa crucifixion.
  - Comme nous l'avons appris dans notre leçon sur la Grande Mission, il existe de nombreuses façons de participer à cette mission.
  - Et assurément, cette église a dû jouer un rôle actif dans l'évangélisation et le soutien de Paul et d'autres qui ont ouvert la voie.
- Mais de nombreuses églises ont fait des choses similaires, donc ce fait à lui seul n'explique pas pourquoi Paul a particulièrement loué cette église dans ce domaine.
  - La différence semble être que cette église a fait de la participation à l'Évangile un mode de vie.
  - Le mot grec traduit par « participation » est *koinonia*, qui se traduit généralement par camaraderie, signifiant une expérience partagée
- Paul disait qu'il remerciait Dieu avec joie que cette Église partageât sa vision des besoins de l'Évangile.
  - Comme Paul, ils avaient fait de l'Évangile un choix de vie
  - De plus, ils ont fait ce choix dès le premier jour, au tout début de leur marche, et ils vivent encore ainsi aujourd'hui.
- Quand on entend dire que quelqu'un a fait de l'Évangile un mode de vie, on pense généralement à un ministère à plein temps.
  - Par exemple, un pasteur à plein temps a fait de l'Évangile un mode de vie, ou un missionnaire sur le terrain vit selon le mode de vie de l'Évangile.
    - Ces exemples sont vrais, mais voici le problème : ils ne représentent que la partie émergée de l'iceberg.
    - Les pasteurs et missionnaires à plein temps ne sont que deux exemples de la manière de faire de l'Évangile un mode de vie, mais il en existe bien d'autres.
    - En fait, il existe une infinité de façons de faire de l'Évangile un mode de vie, autant de façons qu'il y a de croyants dans l'Église.
  - Rappelez-vous, Paul a dit que toute l'Église de Philippiques avait communiqué avec lui dans l'Évangile depuis le début.
    - Certes, tous les croyants de Philippiques n'étaient pas des pasteurs ou des missionnaires à plein temps.
    - Alors, que faisaient les autres croyants pour faire de l'Évangile un mode de vie ?
    - Ils allaient travailler au marché ou dans les champs, s'occuper de la maison, élever les enfants, aller à l'école, faire leur service militaire.
  - C'étaient des gens ordinaires menant une vie normale, à ceci près que leur vie était consacrée à la cause de l'Évangile.
    - Chaque matin, en se réveillant, le forgeron ne pensait pas : « Mon travail est d'être le meilleur forgeron aujourd'hui. »

- Il a plutôt déclaré : « Comment puis-je servir l'Évangile aujourd'hui dans mon métier de forgeron ? »
- Lorsque la mère a commencé sa journée, elle ne pensait pas : « C'est juste une journée comme une autre à tenir la maison et à élever les enfants... »
- Elle a déclaré : « Aujourd'hui, je ferai progresser le Royaume en tenant la maison et en élevant les enfants. »
- L'Église de Philippi avait compris que sa vie même était consacrée à l'Évangile... c'est la seule raison pour laquelle Jésus n'est pas encore revenu.
  - Réfléchissez un instant... qu'attend Jésus ? En fait, posez-vous cette question...
    - Pourquoi les chrétiens ne meurent-ils pas pour aller au Ciel dès qu'ils sont sauvés ? Pour échapper à la douleur, à la souffrance, aux larmes, à la maladie, etc. ?
    - Cela ne serait-il pas plus logique ? C'est là que nous allons tous finir par aller... pourquoi Jésus ne nous ramène-t-il pas immédiatement à la maison ?
  - La réponse évidente est que cette vie sur terre a un but dans le plan de Dieu, et ce but est l'Évangile.
    - C'est pourquoi, dès sa conversion, chaque croyant devrait consacrer chaque jour de sa vie à servir l'Évangile.
    - Servir l'Évangile est la seule raison pour laquelle nous sommes encore en vie aujourd'hui... et Paul était si reconnaissant que l'Église de Philippi l'a compris.
  - C'est là l'objectif de cette étude, et plus particulièrement de ce premier chapitre : apprendre comment adopter un mode de vie inspiré par l'Évangile.
    - Et nous n'avons pas tous besoin de nous consacrer au ministère à plein temps... mais nous devons tous vivre en ayant les yeux tournés vers l'éternité.
    - Une étude approfondie de cette lettre a le potentiel de transformer votre relation avec Jésus.
    - Pour donner un nouveau sens et un nouvel objectif à votre vie, et avec elle, une paix et une joie que vous n'avez peut-être jamais connues.

- Ce soir, nous reprenons là où nous nous étions arrêtés dans notre passionnant voyage à travers l'épître aux Philippiens.
  - Je dis « reprendre » car le fondateur de VBVMI, le pasteur Stephen Armstrong, a commencé cet enseignement il y a près de 3 ans.
    - En fait, son enseignement introductif sur l'épître aux Philippiens fut son tout dernier message avant son décès.
    - Et nous comprenions que beaucoup de ceux qui avaient écouté Steve pendant des années partageaient notre deuil.
    - Afin de permettre au corps de faire son deuil, nous avons reporté cet enseignement pendant un certain temps.
  - Après trois ans, nous avons senti que le Seigneur nous ramenait à ce livre pour le terminer.
    - Par obéissance au Seigneur, nous reprendrons donc là où Steve s'est arrêté.
    - En attendant, je vous encourage à écouter l'introduction de Steve à l'épître aux Philippiens, disponible dans la section dédiée aux enseignements sur notre site web. (Cette introduction constitue également la leçon 1A de cette série.)
  - C'est là que nous avons conservé le sermon intitulé « Pourquoi sommes-nous encore ici ? », ainsi que toute la vaste bibliothèque d'enseignements bibliques de Stephen qui subsiste.
    - C'est dans l'enseignement intitulé « Pourquoi sommes-nous encore là ? » que Steve a abordé les versets 1 à 5.
    - Ce soir, nous reprendrons donc au verset 5, mais je souhaite aborder quelques points clés de l'enseignement introductif.
  - On nous a fourni un aperçu de ce que nous apprendrions dans chaque chapitre de la lettre de Paul. Ce découpage en chapitres est le suivant : (Diapositive 1)
    - Chapitre 1 : Notre but est de vivre pour le Christ
    - Chapitre 2 : Notre objectif est de penser comme le Christ
    - Chapitre 3 : Notre récompense viendra du Christ
    - Chapitre 4 : Notre satisfaction est de servir le Christ
  - De plus, je souhaite commencer cet enseignement en abordant la question fondamentale que Steve nous a laissée : « *Pourquoi n'êtes-vous pas encore mort ?* »
    - Et surtout, « *Que devez-vous faire concrètement pour le Christ avec la vie qui vous a été donnée ?* »
  - Je prie pour que nous puissions voir, ce soir, les prémisses d'une réponse à cette question.
    - Si je devais donner un titre à notre texte de ce soir, ce serait : « Participants de sa grâce : Impact de l'Évangile »
  - Ceci étant dit, je vous invite à me retrouver dans les versets 3 à 5 du chapitre 1 de l'épître aux Philippiens pour un bref aperçu.

[Philippiens 1:3](#) Je rends grâces à mon Dieu de tout le souvenir que je garde de vous,  
[Philippiens 1:4](#) ne cessant, dans toutes mes prières pour vous tous,  
[Philippiens 1:5](#) de manifester ma joie au sujet de la part que vous prenez à l'Évangile, depuis le premier jour jusqu'à maintenant.

- En relisant les premières lignes des écrits de Paul, il est difficile d'imaginer qu'il écrive avec autant d'amour dans des circonstances aussi difficiles.
  - Il écrit cette lettre d'amour et de remerciement tout en souffrant pour le Christ et la propagation de l'Évangile.
    - Et pendant tout ce temps, dans son état actuel, Paul remercie Dieu pour tous les souvenirs qu'il a de cette église.
    - *Vous remarquerez que tout au long de cet enseignement, Paul utilisera assez souvent le mot « tous ».*
  - Cela signifie que Paul ne s'adresse pas seulement aux membres de l'église qui n'ont causé aucun problème ni à ses personnes préférées au sein de celle-ci.
    - Il s'adresse plutôt à tous, même à ceux qui étaient en conflit les uns avec les autres. ([Philippiens 4:2](#) évoque un problème d'unité entre Évodie et Syntyche.)
  - N'oubliez pas que les souvenirs, la gratitude et les prières de joie de Paul pour cette église étaient dus à sa proximité avec elle.
    - C'est comme un père avec son enfant, qu'il voit grandir au fil des années.
    - Environ dix ans avant la rédaction de cette lettre, Paul avait constaté de visu la progression de l'Évangile dans le cœur des habitants de cette région.
  - Nous voyons donc que même au cœur de sa grande détresse, confiné en prison, Paul éprouve encore de la joie.
    - Et la manière dont il vit cette joie n'est pas circonstancielle, mais plutôt vécue de façon expérientielle à travers le Christ, en partageant la grâce avec ceux de Philippines.
    - Cette joie vécue est pleinement connue car, de par leur position, toutes ces choses sont conservées et préservées en Christ.
  - Comme nous le verrons dans l'enseignement de l'épître aux Philippiens, la véritable joie chrétienne ne se définit pas par les circonstances présentes, mais se trouve plutôt en Christ.
    - Et c'est au verset 5 que nous trouvons la réponse à la joie immense que Paul éprouve concernant l'Église de Philippines.
      - Il mentionne que cela est dû à leur « participation à l'Évangile » depuis le premier jour jusqu'à maintenant.
  - Le mot « participation » en grec est *koinonia*, qui signifie fraternité.
    - Cependant, si l'on considère le contexte du mot, cela va au-delà d'une simple association de nom à un groupe.
    - Il s'agit d'une bourse de participation, ce qui signifie qu'il existe un sentiment de partage actif dans le travail du groupe –

- Autrement dit, vous êtes activement impliqué d'une manière ou d'une autre, et non pas simplement associé à la personne parce que vous vous trouvez à proximité.
- Alors, que veut dire Paul lorsqu'il parle de leur participation à l'Évangile ?
  - Eh bien, il développe son explication de cette affirmation complexe dans les versets 6 à 8.
- Remarquez que Paul mentionne leur participation à l'Évangile depuis le premier jour jusqu'à maintenant.
  - Cela signifie que leur communion avec Paul a commencé lorsqu'ils ont été sauvés par le message de l'Évangile par la foi que Paul leur a prêché pour la première fois.
  - Il se peut que ce dont il est question ici renvoie aux événements de leur première interaction avec l'apôtre Paul.
  - De plus, cela soulève la question : « Quand l'Église de Philippi a-t-elle vu le jour ? Ou à quel moment a-t-elle commencé ? »
  - Eh bien, nous en trouvons la preuve dans les Actes 16.
- Dans les Actes 16, nous découvrons que le Seigneur avait donné à Paul une vision l'invitant à se rendre en Macédoine où Il avait appelé Paul et ses compagnons à prêcher l'Évangile.
  - Paul, Timothée et Luc se rendent donc en Macédoine, dans une région appelée Philippi.
    - Et Philippi était une colonie romaine qui constituait un district important, traversé par de nombreux échanges commerciaux.
  - Et c'est dans [Actes 16:13](#) que, le jour du sabbat, Paul, Timothée et Luc sortirent de la porte de Philippi et se rendirent au bord d'une rivière. (Versets commençant par « nous » dans les Actes)
    - Ils se rendaient hors de la ville car celle-ci ne comptait pas suffisamment de Juifs pour qu'elle puisse avoir une synagogue régulière.
    - Cependant, des personnes pouvaient se rassembler au bord de cette rivière, considérée comme un « lieu de prière ». (Diapositive 2)
    - Dans notre contexte actuel, un bâtiment ne définit pas l'assemblée du peuple de Dieu comme étant l'Église – le peuple est l'Église. ([2 Corinthiens 6:16](#) ; [1 Pierre 2:9](#))
  - C'est donc au bord de cette rivière, hors des portes, que Paul et ses collaborateurs commencèrent à prêcher l'Évangile de Jésus-Christ.
    - Et dans ce « lieu de prière », une femme nommée Lydie voit son cœur s'ouvrir et, avec sa famille, elle répond au message de l'Évangile.
    - À partir de ce moment, les Actes des Apôtres nous apprennent que Lydie et sa famille sont baptisées et invitent Paul et ses collaborateurs à séjourner chez eux.
  - Plus tard, Paul prêche l'Évangile au geôlier romain avant que celui-ci ne se jette sur son épée, croyant que Paul et Silas se sont échappés, et attire ainsi son attention.

- Et lorsque le geôlier vit que Paul et Silas étaient toujours là, il tomba à genoux et demanda : « Que dois-je faire pour être sauvé ? »
- Ainsi, dans les Actes 16, nous constatons que l'Église de Philippiens a commencé avec Lydie et sa famille, ainsi que le geôlier et sa famille.
  - C'est ainsi que naquit l'Église de Philippiens, et c'est là que commencèrent le ministère de Paul et la participation des Philippiens.
  - Remarquez cependant que le texte dit « jusqu'à présent ». Cela signifie donc que leur participation a commencé avec leur conversion au christianisme.
  - Et que leur participation au ministère de Paul s'est poursuivie d'une manière ou d'une autre même après le départ de Paul de Philippiens. Alors, que faisaient-ils exactement ?
  - Nous verrons ce qu'ils faisaient au verset 7.
- Cependant, avant de voir ce qu'ils faisaient, observons la confiance que Paul dégage en voyant leur vie et leur participation à l'Évangile au verset 6.

**[Philippiens 1:6](#) Je suis persuadé que celui qui a commencé en vous cette bonne œuvre la rendra parfaite pour le jour de Jésus Christ.**

- Ainsi, la confiance de Paul repose sur la réalité que la « bonne œuvre » commencée aux Philippiens se poursuivrait jusqu'au « jour de Jésus-Christ ».
  - Il y a quelques points que nous devrions aborder.
    - La première question est : « Qui est celui qui a commencé cette bonne œuvre ? »
    - La réponse est claire : c'est Dieu qui a commencé cette œuvre de salut dans la vie de chaque croyant, et pas seulement dans l'Église de Philippiens.
  - C'est Dieu, en Christ, qui a accompli l'œuvre de paix entre Dieu et les hommes.
    - Et savoir que le salut est le moyen par lequel les Philippiens peuvent y participer montre que la bonne œuvre est le salut lui-même.
  - Comprenez que toute appartenance à un groupe de personnes exige une unité d'esprit quant aux croyances ou aux comportements partagés.
    - Par exemple, à quand remonte la dernière fois que vous avez fraternisé avec un ennemi ?
    - Il y a de fortes chances que non ! Pourquoi ? Parce que la camaraderie exige l'unité et la familiarité autour d'un intérêt commun en matière de croyances et de comportements.
  - Mes amis, il en va de même pour notre salut en Christ !
    - La raison pour laquelle nous pouvons communier et adorer ensemble est que nous servons le même Seigneur qui nous a tous conduits à la vie spirituelle.
- Ainsi, Paul explique aux Philippiens que le même Dieu qui vous a sauvés est le même Dieu qui vous « rendra parfaits ».
  - Il convient de s'attarder sur le mot « parfait ». Il s'agit du mot grec *epiteleo*, qui

signifie être mené à terme ou achever.

- Ce mot se trouve également être au futur, actif, indicatif.
- Cela signifie que ce processus de salut qui a commencé en vous est constamment à l'œuvre en vous par Dieu et sera pleinement accompli.
- Autrement dit, le salut est une œuvre active et continue chez le croyant.
- Paul commence par affirmer que c'est Dieu qui a initié cette œuvre au sein du croyant. (Diapositive 4)
  - C'est ce que nous appelons « le premier temps du salut », c'est-à-dire la justification.
    - En d'autres termes, grâce à l'œuvre accomplie par le Christ sur la croix, lorsque vous avez cru au Seigneur, c'est la justice du Christ qui a été imputée à vous.
    - Il s'agit d'une œuvre qui s'accomplit au moment précis où une personne place sa foi en Christ.
    - La seule chose qui justifie cela, c'est le sacrifice parfait d'un sauveur parfait : Jésus-Christ.
    - Et la justification signifie simplement que vous êtes sauvé de la peine du péché.
  - Une fois justifié, on entre dans ce que Paul exprime ici comme l'état de perfectionnement « continu ».
    - Cette seconde phase du salut est connue sous le nom de sanctification.
    - La sanctification est un processus qui se déroule dans le temps et n'est pas un événement ponctuel.
  - La sanctification est un acte qui exige de marcher par la foi, par la puissance de l'Esprit de Dieu.
    - Ainsi, ce temps du salut concerne le dépassement du pouvoir du péché dans votre vie.
    - Nous verrons Paul aborder plus en détail cette réalité dans [Philippiens 2:12-13](#) où il dit ceci :

**[Philippiens 2:12](#) Ainsi, mes bien-aimés, comme vous avez toujours obéi, travaillez à votre salut avec crainte et tremblement, non seulement comme en ma présence, mais bien plus encore maintenant que je suis absent;**  
**[Philippiens 2:13](#) car c'est Dieu qui produit en vous le vouloir et le faire, selon son bon plaisir.**

- Enfin, notez en 6b la durée de cette œuvre de perfectionnement. Il est dit : « *jusqu'au jour de Jésus-Christ* ».
  - En d'autres termes, il semble y avoir une ligne d'arrivée ou un événement final concernant l'accomplissement de cette œuvre dans la vie du croyant.
    - Remarquez ce que le texte ne dit pas : il ne dit pas « jusqu'au jour du Seigneur ».
    - Il est plutôt dit « jusqu'au jour de Jésus-Christ ».

- Pourquoi ai-je fait cette distinction ? Parce que les termes ont leur importance, surtout lorsque l'auteur les utilise d'une manière spécifique.
  - Il ne faut pas confondre cet événement dont parle Paul avec le Jour du Seigneur, qui correspond à la période de tribulation.
  - Paul appelle cet événement particulier « le jour du Christ ».
- Autrement dit, la joie de Paul réside dans la certitude que l'œuvre que le Seigneur a commencée en eux sera pleinement accomplie et réalisée lorsque les croyants en Christ verront Jésus.
  - Que veut dire Paul ici ? Paul utilise l'expression « jour de Jésus-Christ » pour désigner l'événement connu sous le nom d'Enlèvement.
- Bien que Paul n'ait pas fixé de date précise pour cet événement, celui-ci devient la joie intense que tous les croyants attendent avec impatience et pour laquelle ils œuvrent.
  - Voir Jésus, face à face, dans nos corps ressuscités lors de l'enlèvement ou à notre mort dans cette vie, est en soi une récompense d'une grande joie.
- C'est donc lors de l'Enlèvement que chaque croyant sera glorifié, et sachant que ce jour approche, Paul nous dit de bien vivre en vue de cela.
  - Ce troisième temps du salut est connu sous le nom de Glorification.
- Ainsi, lorsque nous examinons la déclaration de Paul au verset 6, Paul indique que nous avons été sauvés, que nous sommes en train d'être sauvés et que nous serons sauvés.
  - Et nous examinerons chaque temps du salut au fur et à mesure que nous parcourrons ce livre.
  - Mais n'allons pas trop vite loin, car souvenons-nous que Paul a dit que les Philippiens participaient avec lui à l'Évangile.
- Là encore, nous savons que cette participation a commencé avec le ministère de l'apôtre Paul, envoyé par Dieu.
  - Mais au verset 5b, Paul mentionne qu'ils ont participé avec lui à son ministère jusqu'à présent.
  - Cela signifie que ces croyants participaient d'une manière ou d'une autre activement aux côtés de Paul à l'œuvre d'évangélisation. Comment, telle est la question ?
  - Nous arrivons maintenant à la réponse du verset 7, consultez le texte.

[\*\*Philippiens 1:7\*\*](#) **Il est juste que je pense ainsi de vous tous, parce que je vous porte dans mon cœur, soit dans mes liens, soit dans la défense et la confirmation de l'Évangile, vous qui tous participez à la même grâce que moi.**

[\*\*Philippiens 1:8\*\*](#) **Car Dieu m'est témoin que je vous chéris tous avec la tendresse de Jésus Christ.**

- Paul poursuit en mentionnant que ses sentiments envers les Philippiens étaient

empreints d'un grand amour, en ce sens qu'ils étaient constamment présents dans ses pensées.

- C'est un endroit idéal pour se faire des amis ! En raison de leur dévouement constant au Seigneur et de leur engagement dans l'Évangile, Paul avait tissé des liens particuliers avec eux.
  - C'est comme élever un enfant et le voir grandir de son enfance à l'âge adulte – cela procure une grande joie aux parents.
- Si vous avez déjà filmé ou observé les premiers pas de votre enfant, ces instants initiaux suscitent une plus grande anticipation de ce qui va suivre.
  - Et c'est ce même attachement que les pasteurs devraient éprouver avec leurs fidèles.
  - Cette joie et cette allégresse se manifestent par la croissance fulgurante des brebis qu'ils gardent.
- Paul exprime cet amour profond en soulignant que les membres de cette église participent à l'œuvre de l'Évangile.
  - Ce qui devrait toutefois nous frapper, c'est que tous ces membres de Philippi n'ont pas accompagné physiquement Paul lors de ses voyages missionnaires.
  - Ils ne sont pas allés physiquement partager l'Évangile aux côtés de Paul.
  - Comment Paul peut-il donc affirmer que, tant pendant son emprisonnement que lors de la défense de l'Évangile, ils y avaient participé ?
- Le mot grec « *partakers* » est très similaire au mot « *koinonia* ». Il s'agit du mot « *syncoinonos* ».
  - Le préfixe « *syn* » renvoie à cette idée de synchronisation ou de lien conjoint.
  - En d'autres termes, Paul dit que, comme j'ai souffert dans mon emprisonnement et défendu l'Évangile, vous avez fait de même.
  - Étant donné que nous avons établi que les Philippiens n'étaient pas physiquement présents, cela signifie qu'il devait exister un autre moyen de leur collaboration.
  - Nous trouvons leurs moyens de participation dans [Philippiens 4:14-17](#). Consultez le texte :

[Philippiens 4:14](#) Cependant vous avez bien fait de prendre part à ma détresse.

[Philippiens 4:15](#) Vous le savez vous-mêmes, Philippiens, au commencement de la prédication de l'Évangile, lorsque je partis de la Macédoine, aucune Église n'entra en compte avec moi pour ce qu'elle donnait et recevait;

[Philippiens 4:16](#) vous fûtes les seuls à le faire, car vous m'envoyâtes déjà à Thessalonique, et à deux reprises, de quoi pourvoir à mes besoins.

[Philippiens 4:17](#) Ce n'est pas que je recherche les dons; mais je recherche le fruit qui abonde pour votre compte.

- Ainsi, c'est par leurs dons financiers que l'Église de Philippi a pu participer à la grâce

avec Paul.

- Leur participation à l'Évangile a commencé par le partage d'un salut commun, au point qu'elle s'est maintenant étendue à leur participation financière.
- Autrement dit, là où les pieds des Philippiens ne pouvaient aller, leurs finances ont ouvert la voie.
- Voilà une conception biblique du don ! Même si je ne peux pas partir en mission dans des régions reculées, je peux prier ou donner financièrement à ceux qui le peuvent.
  - Car c'est par mon don sacrificiel que je peux participer à l'œuvre de l'Évangile.
- Nos comptes bancaires et nos plans 401K, etc., ne valent rien sans contribution du Royaume !
  - Nous serons vite au courant des dernières technologies ou des mouvements actuels à Wall Street, mais ce système mondial a une fin.
- Cependant, lorsque nous consacrons notre énergie, nos ressources et nos efforts aux choses éternelles, l'impact de la croissance de l'Évangile et de l'évangélisation auprès des perdus a un impact éternel.
  - Comme vous le verrez plus loin dans cette étude, il semble que Philippiens ait été la principale source de financement de Paul pour diffuser l'Évangile lors de ses voyages.
  - C'est là que réside la manière dont Paul et l'Église de Philippiens ont collaboré.
- Et même lorsque les Philippi ne pouvaient pas donner autant que nécessaire en raison de leurs circonstances difficiles, ils ont donné ce qu'ils pouvaient.
  - Et en parcourant l'épître aux Philippiens, vous verrez que Paul se donnera lui-même en exemple pour montrer comment imiter le Christ même dans des conditions difficiles.
- Paul considérait donc ces hommes et ces femmes comme ses partenaires dans le ministère.
  - Plus important encore, Paul a reconnu que s'il avait pu accomplir l'œuvre d'évangélisation qu'il a réalisée, c'était grâce aux dons des autres.
  - Si l'Évangile a pu atteindre d'autres groupes ethniques à cette époque, c'est grâce à la participation des Philippiens.
- Et puis-je ajouter que si VBVMI est en mesure de fournir un enseignement verset par verset gratuitement, c'est grâce à la participation de chacun d'entre vous à l'Évangile.
  - Certains diront peut-être « Je n'ai pas grand-chose à donner », mais puis-je affirmer que, que ce soit par la prière ou par des dons financiers, l'Évangile se répand et des vies sont transformées à la gloire de Dieu ?
- Ainsi, nous voyons dans les versets 7-8 que la profonde compassion que Paul avait pour cette église était enracinée dans leur salut commun et leur progression dans l'Évangile.
  - À partir de là, Paul passe à une prière plus élaborée pour les saints.

- Cette prière témoigne d'un profond amour et d'une grande affection pour chaque membre de l'Église de Philippiens. Voir les versets 9 à 11.

**[Philippiens 1:9](#) Et ce que je demande dans mes prières, c'est que votre amour augmente de plus en plus en connaissance et en pleine intelligence**  
**[Philippiens 1:10](#) pour le discernement des choses les meilleures, afin que vous soyez purs et irréprochables pour le jour de Christ,**  
**[Philippiens 1:11](#) remplis du fruit de justice qui est par Jésus Christ, à la gloire et à la louange de Dieu.**

- Alors que nous arrivons à la fin de la déclaration liminaire de Paul, nous constatons que le contenu de sa prière englobe son point précédent concernant leur marche et leur travail en tant que participants.
  - N'oubliez pas que leur marche avec le Christ a commencé par leur première conversion au Christ comme Sauveur pour le salut éternel. (v.5)
    - Et de l'œuvre que Dieu avait commencée dans leurs cœurs, il la poursuivrait fidèlement jusqu'à l'enlèvement ou leur mort (selon ce qui arriverait en premier). (v.6)
  - Ainsi, d'un certain point de vue, nous voyons la souveraineté de Dieu à l'œuvre concernant le salut dans la vie de ses enfants.
    - Mais comme nous le verrons dans le contenu de la prière de Paul, il y a aussi une composante de responsabilité humaine en partenariat avec le Saint-Esprit.
    - Autrement dit, même si Dieu a accompli tout le travail difficile pour nous sauver et nous garder, cela ne nous dispense pas de faire l'effort de progresser.
    - Cela signifie que nous devons nous soumettre au poids de la parole de Dieu si nous voulons voir notre croissance en Christ se réaliser.
    - Et tout cela s'accomplit pleinement dans les limites de la souveraineté de Dieu.
  - La prière de Paul comprend plusieurs éléments que l'on retrouve au verset 9 : il prie pour que les Philippiens :
    - 1. Accroissement de l'amour
    - 2. Accroissement des connaissances « réelles »
    - 3. Accroissement du discernement
      - Nous prendrons le temps d'analyser chacun de ces points.
  - Le mot « amour » ici est *agapè*, qui désigne l'amour sacrificiel et l'affection profonde.
    - Autrement dit, Paul souhaitait que cette Église voie son amour mutuel abonder de manière extraordinaire.
    - C'est ce genre d'amour qui dépasse le confort de ses propres limites pour prendre soin de ceux qui l'entourent.
  - Comprenez bien, Paul ne parle pas d'un amour émotionnel qui repose sur des

conditions et des circonstances.

- Cet amour est plutôt façonné par ce que Paul appelle la « vraie connaissance » et le « discernement ».
- Examinons ces deux mots dans leur langue originale pour comprendre ce que Paul veut dire ici.
- Le mot grec pour « connaissance véritable » est \* *epignosis*\*. Sa racine est \**ginosko*\*, d'où provient le mot \*connaissance\*.
  - *L'épignose* est un savoir appliqu .
  - Autrement dit, ce type de compr hension s'acquiert en vivant et en mettant en pratique ce que dit la Parole.
  - De plus, le mot grec pour discernement est *aesthesia* .
    - Cela concerne la prise de d cision et la compr hension d'une personne fond es sur les connaissances acquises par l'exp rience.
    - En d'autres termes,   mesure que votre amour pour le Seigneur grandit et que vous suivez ses voies, en vous soumettant au poids de sa Parole, vous obtenez la clart  n cessaire sur la mani re dont vous devez vivre.
- Si vous avez d j  poss d  une radio   l'ancienne, vous savez que les stations FM et AM peuvent  tre difficiles   capter.
  - Il faut tourner le bouton pour filtrer les ondes et trouver la bonne fr quence.
    - Vous pourriez  tre sur la bonne station, mais cela n cessite quelques ajustements en cours de route – tourner le bouton pour obtenir la fr quence id ale.
    - Mais en effectuant les r glages n cessaires   gauche et   droite, on perçoit des sons familiers.
    - Vous r alisez soudain qu'en faisant abstraction du bruit des autres ondes et fr quences et en vous concentrant sur le son familier de la station, vous avez obtenu les r sultats escompt s.
  - Mes amis, de la m me mani re, nous devons faire abstraction du bruit des fr quences ext rieures et circonstancielles afin d'entendre et de conna tre la parole de Dieu.
    - Et cela ne s'acquiert qu'en ayant une connaissance « r elle » (tourner le bouton) et du discernement (conna tre Sa Parole), qui sont fondamentalement enracin s dans l'amour.
    - Et comme Paul le mentionne dans sa pri re, cet amour les uns pour les autres nous fait m rir !
    - Autrement dit, plus notre amour pour le Seigneur grandit, plus nos affections et nos attitudes envers le Seigneur et les autres grandissent.
  - Cependant, l'inverse est  g alement vrai. Le manque de connaissance exp rientielle de Dieu chez le croyant se refl te dans ses relations avec autrui et dans sa soumission   Dieu.
    - Les personnes les plus p nibles au monde sont les chr tiens qui connaissent

Dieu mais qui ne parviennent pas à se soumettre au poids de sa parole !

- Comprenez que grandir en Christ n'est pas un exercice ou une quête intellectuelle.
  - Oui, grandir en Christ implique de connaître sa parole – c'est irréfutable !
  - Mais c'est la connaissance appliquée qui développe et nourrit l'intimité avec le Seigneur.
  - Voici ce que Kenneth Wuest, spécialiste du grec du Nouveau Testament, a déclaré à propos de cette « connaissance expérientielle » :

**« Un chrétien peut avoir une connaissance « intelligible » de la Parole, c'est-à-dire être capable d'en expliquer le sens à autrui, sans pour autant en avoir une expérience vécue. Mais lorsque ce chrétien a mis la Parole de Dieu en pratique dans sa vie, alors il possède ce dont Paul parle ici. »**

- La différence entre connaître son conjoint et « le connaître » réside dans le niveau d'intimité que l'on entretient avec l'autre.
  - C'est grâce à l'amour que je porte à ma femme que je parviens à l'aimer encore davantage, car nous passons du temps ensemble.
  - De la même manière, notre intimité avec le Seigneur produit une croissance dans notre marche et notre travail pour le Christ !
    - L'Église de Philippiques le démontrait par le fait que sa marche et ses œuvres produisaient quelque chose : la progression de l'Évangile à travers le ministère de Paul.
    - Et cette progression a non seulement aidé Paul dans ses efforts pour atteindre les autres, mais elle se retrouve aussi dans le récit des saints de Philippiques.
    - Comment le savons-nous ? Parce que c'est au verset 10 que Paul nous explique ce que produit cette croissance.
  - La prière de Paul pour qu'ils grandissent dans la connaissance réelle et l'amour discernant (v.9) est que cela permettra au croyant de discerner correctement les situations qui porteront du fruit.
    - En d'autres termes, quelles que soient les circonstances, une réponse appropriée lors d'un procès compte et est récompensée en conséquence, selon les règles de la vie !
    - Vos réactions envers votre entourage favoriseront soit la propagation de l'Évangile, soit nuiront à votre témoignage.
    - En clair, votre réaction en toute circonstance reflète votre relation avec le Seigneur et influence vos œuvres pour lui.
  - Il s'agit donc ici d'un moyen d'évaluation de notre réponse actuelle (vie et travail) en vue de notre récompense éternelle.
    - N'oubliez pas que l'expression « le jour du Christ » fait référence à l'Enlèvement.
    - Chaque croyant comparaîtra devant le tribunal du Christ (Bema) où il sera jugé sur sa vie et ses actions pour le Christ. ([Romains 14:10](#) , 12)

- En mentionnant ce qui est excellent, sincère et irréprochable, Paul veut nous montrer ce que cette intimité devrait produire en nous.
  - Cependant, si nous n'obéissons pas à la parole de Dieu et ne nous soumettons pas à son poids, nous nous exposons à une vie dépourvue de croissance spirituelle.
- Le mot « approuver » au verset 10 est le mot grec *dokimazo* qui signifie examiner ou approuver.
  - Ce terme était utilisé pour désigner les tests effectués sur les métaux et les pièces de monnaie afin de déterminer s'ils répondaient à une certaine norme de qualité.
  - En d'autres termes, nous devons examiner nos motivations, nos actions et notre mode de vie comme si nous atteignions une norme établie.
  - C'est pourquoi Paul utilise l'expression « le jour du Christ », car lors de cet événement, nous serons évalués sur la manière dont nous aurons marché et œuvré pour le Christ.
  - Par conséquent, nos motivations, nos ambitions et nos perspectives devraient être tournées vers l'éternité et non vers le monde terrestre !
- Mes amis, lorsque nous avons une vision claire et une compréhension de l'importance de l'Enlèvement, cela influence complètement la façon dont nous devrions vivre, quel que soit l'endroit où nous vivons actuellement !
  - Si nous apprenions à avoir un regard vers l'éternité, notre façon de vivre, d'aimer, de travailler et de diriger dans cette vie s'en trouverait complètement transformée.
  - De plus, cette réalité nous montre que le croyant a une responsabilité personnelle dans le processus de sanctification.
- Ne croyez pas que grandir en Christ soit quelque chose qui se fasse simplement par osmose ou par échange intellectuel !
  - Vous devez vous en remettre au Seigneur pour la croissance dont nous avons tous besoin, ainsi que pour le travail que nous devons accomplir.
- La réalité est que tout le monde ne peut pas se consacrer à un ministère à plein temps, mais votre vie doit être un ministère à plein temps auprès de ceux qui vous entourent.
  - Être père, mère, employé, leader communautaire, patron, etc., est un ministère si on le voit sous cet angle.
  - Et le Seigneur nous a donné la capacité de bien faire ce travail !
- Et cela est possible en utilisant les ressources spirituelles à notre disposition, comme la prière.
  - [Jacques 1:5](#) nous dit ceci concernant la capacité du croyant à prier là où il y a manque :

[Jacques 1:5](#) Si quelqu'un d'entre vous manque de sagesse, qu'il l'a demande à

**Dieu, qui donne à tous simplement et sans reproche, et elle lui sera donnée.**

- Enfin, Paul affirme que les choses mentionnées au verset 10 peuvent être ainsi parce que nous avons été remplis du fruit de la justice.
  - Remarquez qu'il n'est pas question des fruits de la justice.
  - Elle est unique car les divers fruits de la droiture produits en nous proviennent d'une seule Source.
    - C'est comme une graine de pomme qu'on plante en terre. Cette graine germera avec le temps et donnera des fruits – et pas n'importe lesquels.
    - Un pépin de pomme ne produit pas d'oranges. Il ne produit que des pommes.
  - Et puisque chaque croyant a été justifié et déclaré juste par Dieu, il y aura forcément des fruits d'une sorte ou d'une autre.
    - Pour certains, la croissance sera ralentie faute d'avoir été soumis au poids de la parole de Dieu.
    - Pour d'autres, il y aura beaucoup de fruits car ces personnes ont été soumises au poids de la parole de Dieu.
  - Cependant, ce qui reste identique pour les deux, indépendamment de la production de fruits, c'est que les deux sont sauvés !
    - Mais comprenez bien que l'espérance est que, de cette semence de l'Évangile semée et nourrie par la Parole, elle porte du fruit (le résultat de ce qui est en eux).
    - Vous vous demandez peut-être de quel fruit il s'agit ? Eh bien, c'est ce que Paul a décrit à l'Église de Galatie comme le fruit de l'Esprit !
    - Consultez [Galates 5:22-23](#) :

**[Galates 5:22](#) Mais le fruit de l'Esprit, c'est l'amour, la joie, la paix, la patience, la bonté, la bénignité, la fidélité, la douceur, la tempérance;**  
**[Galates 5:23](#) la loi n'est pas contre ces choses.**

- Le contexte ici est celui de Paul s'adressant aux Galates sur la manière de marcher par l'Esprit et non par la chair.
  - Quelques versets auparavant, Paul expliquait aux Galates comment ils devaient se comporter, au lieu de suivre la voie qu'ils empruntaient auparavant.
    - Pourtant, ici à Philippi, Paul leur dit qu'ils doivent continuer à progresser dans leur participation à l'œuvre de l'Évangile.
    - Qu'en continuant à servir le Seigneur et à contribuer aux besoins du ministère, ils augmentent leur compte avec Paul.
    - Et le souhait de Paul pour eux est qu'ils continuent à faire fructifier leur compte non seulement par leurs aumônes, mais aussi par leur vie quotidienne !
  - Et comme le mentionne Paul, notre marche et notre travail rendent gloire et

louange à Dieu, car à la fin du jour, celui qui a commencé l'œuvre l'achèvera !

- Et ce que vous verrez à la fin sera le résultat de ce que vous aurez fait de la vie qui vous a été donnée en Christ.
- Cela vous sera soit extrêmement bénéfique, soit vous fera manquer l'occasion d'une grande récompense éternelle.
- Prions.

- La semaine dernière, nous avons révisé quelques points introductifs de la lettre de Paul aux Philippiens.
  - Ce faisant, nous avons abordé le fil conducteur du discours de Paul tout au long de cette lettre, et plus précisément la réalité du point de vue du croyant face à la souffrance.
    - Ce soir, en abordant le texte, nous allons voir Paul développer un peu plus cette idée de la souffrance pour le croyant.
  - Et ce faisant, nous verrons comment Paul se servira de son propre exemple pour encourager le croyant.
    - Tout au long de ce parcours, Paul nous désignera celui qui a donné le modèle de sa souffrance, le Seigneur Jésus-Christ lui-même.
  - Si je devais résumer notre programme de ce soir, voici ce que nous verrons :
    - 1. Les circonstances comme opportunités (vv.12-14)
    - 2. Bon message, mauvaise intention (vv.15-18)
    - 3. Christ est exalté (vv.19-26)
    - 4. Une réponse digne (vv.27-30)
  - Et j'ai intitulé l'enseignement de ce soir : « *Comment le verrez-vous ?* ».
    - Cela étant dit, je vous invite à me retrouver dans [Philippiens 1:12-14](#).

**[Philippiens 1:12](#) Je veux que vous sachiez, frères, que ce qui m'est arrivé a plutôt contribué aux progrès de l'Évangile.**

**[Philippiens 1:13](#) En effet, dans tout le prétoire et partout ailleurs, nul n'ignore que c'est pour Christ que je suis dans les liens,**

**[Philippiens 1:14](#) et la plupart des frères dans le Seigneur, encouragés par mes liens, ont plus d'assurance pour annoncer sans crainte la parole.**

- Après avoir exposé les points introductifs de sa lettre, l'apôtre Paul aborde ensuite des exemples pratiques sur la façon dont le croyant doit considérer la souffrance.
  - Il commence par démontrer, à travers une expérience réelle, comment sa situation actuelle est devenue une occasion de partager l'Évangile.
    - Cependant, pour que les autres comprennent cette réalité, ils doivent d'abord avoir une perspective adéquate.
  - Remarquez que Paul commence par cette phrase, au verset 12 : « Maintenant, je veux que vous sachiez, frères ».
    - Le choix des mots presuppose que l'auteur savait que les destinataires de cette lettre auraient une vision différente de sa situation actuelle.
    - Au lieu de voir cette situation comme une opportunité, les Philippiens auraient supposé le contraire (un obstacle quelconque).
  - Cependant, Paul leur fait savoir que sa situation a en réalité servi de tremplin à la propagation de l'Évangile.

- Là où les circonstances de Paul auraient pu être perçues comme un obstacle à son ministère, elles se sont transformées en une occasion d'évangélisation.
- Autrement dit, Paul demande aux Philippiens de changer de perspective sur le déroulement de ces événements.
  - Car lorsque nous changeons notre perspective sur les épreuves et les tribulations actuelles, cela nous offre l'occasion de voir Dieu à l'œuvre dans nos vies.
  - Et, dans une perspective appropriée, il peut devenir à la fois un témoignage pour les autres, par lequel l'Évangile peut être partagé et proclamé.
  - Et cela nous encourage dans cette épreuve.
- Paul mentionne que son emprisonnement actuel, à cause de l'Évangile, a permis à Christ de se faire connaître parmi les gardes prétoiriens et de tous les autres.
  - Autrement dit, c'est sa relation avec le Christ et son service pour lui qui l'ont conduit à cette situation difficile.
    - Pourtant, au sein de ces épreuves partagées, l'Évangile du Christ progresse.
    - Il faut admirer la vision spirituelle de Paul face à diverses situations. Il nous livre la perspective suivante dans [2 Timothée 2:8-9](#) :

**[2 Timothée 2:8](#) Souviens-toi de Jésus Christ, issu de la postérité de David, ressuscité des morts, selon mon Évangile, [2 Timothée 2:9](#) pour lequel je souffre jusqu'à être lié comme un malfaiteur. Mais la parole de Dieu n'est pas liée.**

- En d'autres termes, Paul dit que même si vous essayez d'emprisonner et d'enchaîner le messager de l'Évangile, le message de l'Évangile ne peut pas être enchaîné !
  - En clair, les circonstances auxquelles Paul a été confronté n'ont pas altéré sa vision du Christ ni entravé sa capacité à promouvoir ce dernier.
  - Pour certains, dès que l'épreuve survient dans leur vie, la pression provoque un effondrement ou une rupture dans leur relation avec le Seigneur.
    - Cependant, Paul dit en quelques mots : puisse-t-il ne jamais arriver !
    - Que nos souffrances nous unissent au Christ et que son message soit proclamé à travers nous ! (Notre témoignage).
  - De plus, nous constatons que, grâce à l'emprisonnement de Paul, le Christ a été révélé à plusieurs témoins : 1) toute la garde prétoiriennne et 2) « tous les autres ».
- La garde prétoiriennne était un groupe d'environ 10 000 soldats d'élite chargés de protéger les membres de haut rang du gouvernement romain.
  - En plus de leur rôle, ils étaient chargés de garder les prisonniers qui cherchaient à faire appel d'une affaire devant César – en l'occurrence, des hommes comme Paul.
    - L'entraînement et les compétences de ces hommes étaient exceptionnels ! Un peu comme ceux des Marines ou des agents des services secrets.

- Et nous constatons ici, dans notre texte, que Paul était enchaîné à l'un de ces hommes dans sa maison louée à Rome.
  - Cela signifie que jour après jour, heure après heure, ces hommes se relayaient sans cesse enchaînés à Paul tout en écoutant l'Évangile.
- Durant sa détention à domicile, Paul n'a pas perdu de temps. Il a profité de chaque occasion pour faire connaître le Christ dans toutes les situations où il se trouvait.
  - À présent, si nous devions faire un bilan honnête de nos vies, aurions-nous été capables de considérer ces moments d'épreuve comme des occasions de grâce ?
  - Je suis sûr qu'au cours du séjour de Paul à Rome, plutôt que d'être considéré comme un prisonnier, Paul a vu la rotation des gardes comme une opportunité de prêcher à une nouvelle personne.
- De plus, le texte mentionne qu'avec la garde prétorienne, cette cause du Christ a atteint « tous les autres ».
  - Qui pourraient être « tous les autres » ?
- Tous les autres incluaient aussi bien les Juifs non sauvés de la communauté romaine que les Gentils et même les autres croyants de Rome.
  - Il est facile de constater qu'avec l'emprisonnement de Paul pour sa cause en Christ, la nouvelle s'est répandue rapidement.
  - Si les réseaux sociaux avaient existé à cette époque, Paul aurait été présent sur toutes les stories Facebook et YouTube pour parler de Jésus.
- Et ce qui est devenu si profond, c'est que, malgré ces circonstances difficiles, un moyen a été trouvé pour que l'Évangile se répande dans toute la région.
  - Elle se répandit si rapidement que [les Actes 28:23](#) nous disent que les gens venaient même trouver Paul, en prison, pour entendre parler du Royaume de Dieu prêché.
  - Consultez le texte :

**[Actes 28:23](#) Ils lui fixèrent un jour, et plusieurs vinrent le trouver dans son logis.**

**Paul leur annonça le royaume de Dieu, en rendant témoignage, et en cherchant, par la loi de Moïse et par les prophètes, à les persuader de ce qui concerne Jésus. L'entretien dura depuis le matin jusqu'au soir.**

- ○ Ce que le texte semble nous montrer, c'est que la situation de Paul a permis à l'Évangile d'aller dans des endroits où il ne pouvait pas aller, étant enchaîné !
- Autrement dit, les circonstances ont créé les conditions qui ont permis à l'Évangile de se répandre.
  - Voici une question à se poser : « Comment utilisez-vous votre situation actuelle comme autant d'occasions de partager l'Évangile avec les autres ? »
  - Nos circonstances sont-elles davantage orientées vers une gloire minimale pour le Seigneur (centrage sur soi) ou vers une gloire maximale pour le Seigneur

(centrage sur le Christ) ?

- De toute évidence, Paul voyait bien qu'en toutes choses et en toute saison, le Christ peut et doit être glorifié !
- C'est au verset 14 que nous voyons les résultats de la vision que Paul a de sa situation, car il mentionne que sa situation a accru le courage chez beaucoup !
  - Le mot grec pour courage est *tolmao*, qui évoque l'audace.
    - Cette audace repose sur la capacité d'endurer ou de surmonter le danger sans crainte.
  - Il faut savoir que, pour beaucoup, la situation de Paul signifiait que la prochaine étape possible pour lui aurait effectivement pu être la mort.
    - Et c'est peut-être ce que Paul avait à l'esprit lorsqu'il a dit ceci au verset 20 : « Christ sera exalté dès maintenant dans mon corps, soit par ma vie, soit par ma mort. »
    - Nous verrons comment l'utilisation du mot « mort » par Paul au verset 20 entre en jeu lorsque nous arriverons aux versets 19 et 20.
  - Paul savait parfaitement ce que signifiait pour lui proclamer le Christ : c'était une question de vie ou de mort.
    - C'est comme si, lorsque la cocotte-minute de la vie est en marche, la question devient : « Qu'est-ce que cela va produire au final ? »
    - Par la prière, elle engendre la constance et la dépendance envers le Seigneur, tout en se conformant davantage à l'image du Christ.
  - Et parce que les croyants entendirent parler de la situation de Paul, ils furent eux aussi encouragés par l'Esprit à tenir bon !
    - Là où cette situation aurait pu être l'occasion de prendre la fuite, elle est devenue le moyen de les propulser vers une plus grande proclamation de l'Évangile.
- Je me souviens qu'après le décès de Steve en 2021, je me suis retrouvée à me débattre avec cette question : et maintenant ?
  - Que vais-je faire ? L'homme qui m'a formé et qui était pour moi un père spirituel est parti. Que vais-je devenir ?
    - Dois-je retourner enseigner au lycée et quitter le ministère, ou dois-je aller de l'avant ?
  - Et je me souviens, lorsque j'ai appris son décès, que j'ai senti le Saint-Esprit me donner le courage d'agir d'une manière que je n'aurais jamais pu imaginer !
    - C'est à ce moment-là que je me suis souvenu des paroles que Steve m'avait adressées lors de ma première semaine au sein du groupe. Il avait dit : « Il n'y a pas de retour en arrière ! »
  - Mes amis, nos circonstances ont la fâcheuse tendance à être un véhicule par lequel la volonté :
    - 1. Fais-nous grandir dans la maturité pour le Christ
    - 2. Accroître notre témoignage pour le Christ

- 3. Donne-nous des yeux spirituels pour voir comme le Christ
- Et je prie pour que chacun de nous fasse en sorte que nos épreuves favorisent précisément ces choses !
- Nous passons maintenant à l'exemple personnel suivant donné par Paul concernant les circonstances dans les versets 15 à 18, sauf que cette fois-ci elles proviennent de l'intérieur du corps des croyants.

**Philippiens 1:15 Quelques-uns, il est vrai, prêchent Christ par envie et par esprit de dispute; mais d'autres le prêchent avec des dispositions bienveillantes.**

**Philippiens 1:16 Ceux-ci agissent par amour, sachant que je suis établi pour la défense de l'Évangile,**

**Philippiens 1:17 tandis que ceux-là, animés d'un esprit de dispute, annoncent Christ par des motifs qui ne sont pas purs et avec la pensée de me susciter quelque tribulation dans mes liens.**

**Philippiens 1:18 Qu'importe? De toute manière, que ce soit pour l'apparence, que ce soit sincèrement, Christ n'est pas moins annoncé: je m'en réjouis, et je m'en réjouirai encore.**

- Nous constatons que Paul poursuit le même raisonnement que celui présenté dans les versets 12 à 14 concernant la situation actuelle.
  - Et dans ce cas, Paul parle de la parole prêchée par deux types de personnes : 1) ceux qui prêchent par envie et 2) ceux qui prêchent par bienveillance.
    - De plus, Paul mentionne que la différence entre ces individus réside dans leurs motivations à prêcher.
    - Cependant, avant d'aller trop vite, remarquez de qui Paul parle ? Il utilise le mot « certains ».
    - La question qui se pose est : « Qui sont ces individus qui proclament le Christ ? »
  - Ces individus qui proclament le Christ avec de mauvaises intentions ne sont pas de faux enseignants, mais plutôt des enseignants orthodoxes de la parole de Dieu.
    - Pourtant, ces ministres et prédicateurs locaux de l'Évangile cherchent à tirer profit de la situation de Paul pour accroître leur nombre de fidèles.
  - Autrement dit, pour ces prédicateurs, l'emprisonnement de Paul est une occasion de faire avancer leurs propres intérêts.
    - Pendant ce temps, les autres ministres qui proclament l'Évangile le font de bonne volonté.
    - Autrement dit, en apprenant l'emprisonnement de Paul, ils s'unissent à lui pour faire progresser l'Évangile à travers la souffrance.
- Dans de nombreux milieux chrétiens, l'un des plus grands écueils réside dans la laideur du cœur humain qui s'immisce dans le travail du ministère.
  - L'une de mes citations préférées de Steve était : « Le ministère serait tellement plus facile s'il n'avait pas à s'occuper des gens. »

- Et ce qu'il voulait dire par là, c'était que, concernant les personnes et le ministère, nous sommes tous des êtres imparfaits qui essayons de désigner un Sauveur parfait.
- Et en réalité, cela ne passe pas toujours bien.
- De nombreux ministères ont été créés dans le seul but d'accroître leur nombre d'adeptes, car leur objectif principal est d'obtenir plus de vues et de visites sur leur site.
  - D'autres ministères et églises prêcheront l'Évangile, mais leur véritable objectif sera d'attirer les foules et de construire des bâtiments plus grands.
  - Il existe même des ministères qui cherchent à capter l'attention du public par désir de diffuser leur message ou leurs enseignements, motivés par l'envie.
- Quoi qu'il en soit, il faut saluer la position de Paul sur tout cela, telle qu'elle est exposée au verset 18a.
  - Paul demande : « Et ensuite ? »
  - On pourrait aussi dire : « Et si c'est ce qu'ils désirent, et alors ?! »
- Paul dit que, quelles que soient leurs motivations, s'ils ont un message juste, alors louons Dieu !
  - Car, au final, le Seigneur juge les intentions ! ( [Proverbes 16:2](#) , [1 Corinthiens 16:14](#) , [Jacques 4:3](#) , [1 Corinthiens 4:5](#) )

**[1 Corinthiens 4:5](#) C'est pourquoi ne jugez de rien avant le temps, jusqu'à ce que vienne le Seigneur, qui mettra en lumière ce qui est caché dans les ténèbres, et qui manifestera les desseins des coeurs. Alors chacun recevra de Dieu la louange qui lui sera due.**

- ○ Le point de vue de Paul diffère radicalement de la réaction du commun des mortels sur ce sujet.
- Pour certains pasteurs et ministères, la création d'un autre ministère ou d'une autre église dans leur région susciterait une vive opposition en raison d'un « conflit d'intérêts ».
  - Au contraire, Paul dit : « Si mes circonstances contribuent à ce que la diffusion d'un Évangile exact se répande, gloire à Dieu ! »
- Malheureusement, il nous arrive parfois de rencontrer ce que j'appelle des « chrétiens territoriaux » qui recherchent leur propre intérêt égoïste plutôt que de voir la situation dans son ensemble.
  - Et, dans son ensemble, le tableau est celui du Christ glorifié et dont la gloire est partagée à travers un monde perdu.
  - Plutôt que de nous préoccuper des « taux de clics » et des « j'aime » sur les réseaux sociaux, nous devrions nous soucier davantage de la proclamation sans compromis et exacte de la vérité !
- Ainsi, Paul nous donne à tous le ton quant à la manière dont nous devons aborder

notre cheminement avec le Christ.

- Nous devons marcher dans l'humilité et l'unité avec nos affections et nous concentrer sur le Christ et son message, et non sur nos ambitions personnelles.
- Dès l'instant où nous perdons cela de vue, nous commençons à tout centrer sur nous-mêmes.
- De ce fait, notre vision du monde se déforme et notre perspective se tourne vers l'intérieur plutôt que vers le Christ.
- Dans tout cela, Paul voit ce qui aurait pu être une situation chaotique comme une situation joyeuse !
  - En réalité, Paul est tellement sûr de sa relation personnelle avec le Christ et du ministère qui lui a été confié qu'il se réjouit doublement.
  - Remarquez qu'au verset 18b, il dit : « Oui, et je me réjouirai ! »
- Comment Paul peut-il avoir une perspective aussi éternelle ?
  - Car Paul comprend que le résultat final de la transformation par l'Évangile dans cette vie conduit à la fois à sa sanctification et à sa glorification en Christ.
  - Mais surtout, le Christ est révélé !
- Autrement dit, ces circonstances produisent quelque chose en moi, à la fois pour et à la gloire du Christ !
  - Paul va maintenant expliquer comment cette progression à travers les circonstances se réalisera aux versets 19 et 20. Consultez le texte :

**Philippiens 1:19 Car je sais que cela tournera à mon salut, grâce à vos prières et à l'assistance de l'Esprit de Jésus Christ,**  
**Philippiens 1:20 selon ma ferme attente et mon espérance que je n'aurai honte de rien, mais que, maintenant comme toujours, Christ sera glorifié dans mon corps avec une pleine assurance, soit par ma vie, soit par ma mort;**

- Paul reconnaît que sa situation présente a servi de moyen de propagation de l'Évangile, quelles que soient les difficultés rencontrées.
  - Et c'est grâce aux prières des saints et à la présence du Saint-Esprit en lui que le Christ accomplirait son œuvre dans la vie de Paul.
    - Paul était convaincu que ces différentes circonstances contribueraient à sa délivrance.
    - Le mot pour « délivrance » est *soteria*, qui est la traduction habituelle du mot salut.
    - Cela peut signifier délivrance, sauvetage d'un danger ou mise en sécurité.
  - À la lumière de ce mot, on peut écarter l'hypothèse que Paul parle de son salut au premier temps – il a déjà été justifié.
    - Dès lors, la question se pose : « À quel temps du salut Paul fait-il référence ? »

- Il en résulte que Paul parle soit de sa sanctification (état de vie actuel/maturité), soit de sa glorification (enlèvement/présence du Seigneur).
- Nous constatons que Paul comprend que ce qu'il traverse fait partie intégrante du plan de Dieu pour lui, dans le but d'achever l'œuvre que Dieu a commencée en lui.
  - Rappelez-vous, c'est Jésus, dans [Actes 9:15-16](#), qui a parlé à Ananias du ministère que Paul entreprendrait sur le chemin de Damas.
  - Et voyez comment le Seigneur décrit le ministère à venir de Paul pour lui.

[Actes 9:15](#) Mais le Seigneur lui dit : « Va, car il est un instrument que j'ai choisi, pour porter mon nom devant les nations, les rois et les fils d'Israël ;

[Actes 9:16](#) « Car je lui montrerai tout ce qu'il doit souffrir pour mon nom. »

- Il n'est donc pas surprenant que, tout au long du ministère de Paul, la souffrance ait été une indication de l'œuvre du Christ à travers lui, pour la gloire de Dieu.
  - De plus, c'est dans [Actes 20:1-6](#) que l'on découvre qu'une tentative d'assassinat a été perpétrée contre Paul, ce qui l'a contraint à fuir.
  - Voyez ce que Luc rapporte dans [Actes 20:1-6](#) :

[Actes 20:1](#) Lorsque le tumulte eut cessé, Paul réunit les disciples, et, après les avoir exhortés, prit congé d'eux, et partit pour aller en Macédoine.

[Actes 20:2](#) Il parcourut cette contrée, en adressant aux disciples de nombreuses exhortations.

[Actes 20:3](#) Puis il se rendit en Grèce, où il séjourna trois mois. Il était sur le point de s'embarquer pour la Syrie, quand les Juifs lui dressèrent des embûches. Alors il se décida à reprendre la route de la Macédoine.

[Actes 20:4](#) Il avait pour l'accompagner jusqu'en Asie: Sopater de Bérée, fils de Pyrrhus, Aristarque et Second de Thessalonique, Gaïus de Derbe, Timothée, ainsi que Tychique et Trophime, originaires d'Asie..

[Actes 20:5](#) Ceux-ci prirent les devants, et nous attendirent à Troas.

[Actes 20:6](#) Pour nous, après les jours des pains sans levain, nous nous embarquâmes à Philippi, et, au bout de cinq jours, nous les rejoignîmes à Troas, où nous passâmes sept jours.

- Rappelons-nous que le chapitre 20 des Actes relate le troisième voyage missionnaire de Paul et, comme nous le lisons, nous constatons qu'il s'est de nouveau rendu à Philippi.
  - Et cette visite à Philippi a eu lieu suite à une précédente tentative d'assassinat contre lui.
- Paul, une fois de plus, reconnaît quelque chose concernant son emprisonnement : cette prison est le moyen par lequel la grâce de Dieu le maintient en vie.
  - Et pendant ce temps, ce lieu censé maintenir les individus enfermés et opprimés est devenu une plateforme de diffusion de l'Évangile dans toute la région.

- Paul explique donc aux Philippiens que leurs prières incessantes et l'Esprit du Christ lui donnent la force de persévirer.
- Et dans tout cela, Paul dit que dans chaque situation, qu'il s'agisse d'une menace contre ma vie, d'une agression en public ou d'un emprisonnement injuste, le Christ est épuisé !
  - Tant dans la vie que dans la mort, je suis en sécurité en Christ, c'est pourquoi il devient le centre de tout !
  - Mes amis, cela change radicalement notre façon de percevoir notre situation dans cette vie !
- Cette perspective éternelle nous donne l'assurance que, quoi qu'il arrive, mon âme est en paix !
  - En clair, la vie même de Paul est à la disposition du Seigneur, quelle que soit la manière dont le Seigneur désire utiliser Paul (et nous) !
  - Paul va maintenant aborder un moment de louange et d'exaltation personnelles quant à la manière dont cette réalité se manifeste dans sa vie. Veuillez les versets 21 à 26.

**Philippiens 1:21 car Christ est ma vie, et la mort m'est un gain.**

**Philippiens 1:22 Mais s'il est utile pour mon oeuvre que je vive dans la chair, je ne saurais dire ce que je dois préférer.**

**Philippiens 1:23 Je suis pressé des deux côtés: j'ai le désir de m'en aller et d'être avec Christ, ce qui de beaucoup est le meilleur;**

**Philippiens 1:24 mais à cause de vous il est plus nécessaire que je demeure dans la chair.**

**Philippiens 1:25 Et je suis persuadé, je sais que je demeurerai et que je resterai avec vous tous, pour votre avancement et pour votre joie dans la foi,**

**Philippiens 1:26 afin que, par mon retour auprès de vous, vous ayez en moi un abondant sujet de vous glorifier en Jésus Christ.**

- Paul se prend lui-même en exemple pour montrer aux saints de Philippi que nous devons vivre pour le Christ et avoir le regard tourné vers l'éternité en toutes choses.
  - Ce faisant, Paul relate cette joie vécue en Christ, tant dans la vie que dans la mort.
    - Pour ceux qui ne connaissent pas le Seigneur, entendre dire que la mort peut être quelque chose à anticiper avec joie n'a aucun sens.
  - En réalité, la plupart des publicités télévisées diffusées aujourd'hui font la promotion de produits et de médicaments manufacturés qui vantent des solutions anti-âge.
    - D'autres produits et programmes d'entraînement cherchent d'une manière ou d'une autre à retarder l'inévitable : la mort !
    - Un article paru sur Pharmaceutical-technology.com en 2021 rapportait que le fondateur d'Amazon, Jeff Bezos, avait investi dans une start-up spécialisée dans

les traitements anti-âge.

- L'objectif de cette entreprise est de développer des médicaments qui prolongeraient la vie humaine.
- Ce qui est certain, c'est que les gens ont peur de la mort parce que beaucoup ignorent ce qui les attend !
  - Cependant, pour le croyant, nous savons où nous serons à la fin.
  - Paul donne cet encouragement joyeux concernant les croyants qui sont morts dans [1 Thessaloniciens 4:13-14](#).

**[1 Thessaloniciens 4:13](#) Nous ne voulons pas, frères, que vous soyez dans l'ignorance au sujet de ceux qui dorment, afin que vous ne vous affligiez pas comme les autres qui n'ont point d'espérance.**

**[1 Thessaloniciens 4:14](#) Car, si nous croyons que Jésus est mort et qu'il est ressuscité, croyons aussi que Dieu ramènera par Jésus et avec lui ceux qui sont morts.**

- Paul veut dire par là que la mort n'est pas la fin pour le croyant. Il y a une vie après la mort.
  - Et cette espérance, dit Paul, est certaine ! Pourquoi ? À cause de ce qui a été vu lors de la résurrection du Christ d'entre les morts.
  - Et parce que Christ est ressuscité des morts, tous ceux qui sont en Christ (ayant été justifiés) ressusciteront comme lui !
  - Par conséquent, Paul n'éprouve aucune angoisse ni inquiétude quant à une éventuelle mort, comme la tentative d'assassinat dont il a été victime dans [Actes 20:1-6](#).
    - Paul dit en quelques mots que, que je continue à vivre et à œuvrer pour le Christ durant ma vie ou que ma vie soit interrompue par la mort, le Christ est exalté dans les deux cas !
    - Pour Paul, vivre signifiait un travail fructueux qui contribuerait à ses récompenses dans la vie à venir. (v.22)
      - Et en même temps, la mort signifiait être avec Jésus en sa présence, face à face, pour recevoir ses récompenses !
      - Par conséquent, les deux circonstances procuraient une joie d'être soit en Christ, soit avec Christ !
- Malheureusement, aujourd'hui, même dans les milieux chrétiens, beaucoup se sont tellement contentés de cette vie que penser à la mort leur fait peur.
  - Et cela arrive parce que nous nous attachons trop souvent aux paillettes, au glamour et aux choses de ce monde.
    - Nous commençons à développer des liens affectifs avec des choses temporaires plutôt que d'ancrer notre affection dans des choses éternelles.
  - Paul dit donc : « Je ne suis pas tellement attaché à ce monde que je veuille y rester ! »

- C'est pourquoi nous proclamons souvent : Maranatha ! Viens, Seigneur Jésus, viens !
- Comme le dit une des paroles d'une chanson que ma femme et moi adorons chanter : « La Terre est un ghetto, je veux la quitter ! »
- C'est donc à ce stade que Paul se trouve confronté à un dilemme concernant ce qu'il souhaite voir par lui-même.
  - Il mentionne au verset 23 qu'il est « pressé » des deux côtés concernant la vie ou la mort et ce qu'il préférerait avoir.
  - Il ne s'agit en aucun cas d'une approbation ou d'une promotion du suicide par Paul, car la mort ne serait pas de son fait personnel .
  - Paul s'interroge plutôt sur les conséquences bénéfiques des deux situations pour ceux qu'il a amenés à Christ.
- Paul perçoit la mort davantage comme un avantage pour lui-même, tandis que la vie est davantage un avantage pour les Philippiens eux-mêmes.
  - Et en y réfléchissant, Steve m'est venu à l'esprit. Seigneur, « Pourquoi as-tu pris Steve à ce moment-là ? »
  - Car, selon moi, sa présence ici serait un avantage pour nous tous, nous permettant de continuer à progresser dans la parole de Dieu.
  - Pourtant, Dieu avait d'autres projets pour Steve et savait que le Seigneur pourvoirait à tous ceux dont Il aurait besoin pour poursuivre l'œuvre que Steve avait commencée.
  - Ainsi, bien que nous pleurions la perte du fondateur de ce ministère, sachez que Steve se réjouit car il est avec celui en qui il a enseigné.
- Paul reconnut donc que l'œuvre que le Seigneur lui avait confiée n'était pas encore terminée !
  - Il fallait écrire à Philippi et aux autres églises, les encourager, les développer, etc.
  - C'est pourquoi, par la grâce et la providence de Dieu, le Seigneur a poursuivi le ministère de souffrance de Paul, ce qui a donné confiance à beaucoup d'autres.
  - Et nous constatons cette réalité encore aujourd'hui, alors que nous étudions ce livre même écrit par Paul.
  - Alors, je vous pose cette question : « Pourquoi n'êtes-vous pas encore mort ?! » Réponse : Parce que le Seigneur a encore du travail pour vous !
- Enfin, nous constatons que la présence de Paul auprès d'eux a contribué au développement de leur confiance, qui était enracinée en Christ et modelée par Paul.
  - Ce que je veux dire, c'est que, en observant la vie de Paul et en étant témoins de son œuvre pour le Christ, ces Philippiens allaient à leur tour imiter Paul.
- C'est pourquoi, dans [Philippiens 3:17](#), Paul dit ceci :

**[Philippiens 3:17](#) Soyez tous mes imitateurs, frères, et portez les regards sur ceux qui marchent selon le modèle que vous avez en nous.**

- ○ Paul aborde maintenant un moyen pratique par lequel les croyants de Philippiens, et nous aussi aujourd'hui, devons nous comporter, en accord avec notre position en Christ.
  - Consultez les versets 27 à 30.

[Philippiens 1:27](#) **Seulement, conduisez-vous d'une manière digne de l'Évangile de Christ, afin que, soit que je vienne vous voir, soit que je reste absent, j'entende dire de vous que vous demeurez fermes dans un même esprit, combattant d'une même âme pour la foi de l'Évangile,**

[Philippiens 1:28](#) **sans vous laisser aucunement effrayer par les adversaires, ce qui est pour eux une preuve de perdition, mais pour vous de salut;**

[Philippiens 1:29](#) **et cela de la part de Dieu, car il vous a été fait la grâce, par rapport à Christ, non seulement de croire en lui, mais encore de souffrir pour lui,**

[Philippiens 1:30](#) **en soutenant le même combat que vous m'avez vu soutenir, et que vous apprenez maintenant que je soutiens.**

- Nous constatons que Paul passe maintenant des récits d'expériences personnelles aux exhortations plus personnelles adressées aux Philippiens.
  - Une meilleure lecture du début du verset 27 se trouve dans la NIV où il est traduit par [« Quoi qu'il arrive »] plutôt que par « seulement ».
    - En d'autres termes, que les circonstances me permettent de venir vous voir ou que mon absence m'en empêche, conduisez-vous d'une manière digne !
    - Quel message encourageant de Paul aux Philippiens !
  - En d'autres termes, Paul fait savoir aux Philippiens qu'ils doivent se comporter d'une manière qui reflète, par leur position, qui ils sont, peu importe qui les observe.
    - Nous constatons cette réalité dans le fait que Paul dit qu'ils doivent « se conduire d'une manière digne ».
  - Cette expression grecque désigne un terme politique et était particulièrement connue des citoyens romains.
    - Cela signifie « vivre en citoyen » et les citoyens romains bénéficiaient de nombreux priviléges.
  - L'un de leurs priviléges était qu'ils n'auraient pas à subir les mauvais traitements que les non-Romains subissaient normalement.
    - Je mentionne cet exemple car il explique pourquoi Paul a exigé des excuses publiques de la part des Romains dans [Actes 16:35-39](#). Voici le texte :

[Actes 16:35](#) **Quand il fit jour, les préteurs envoyèrent les licteurs pour dire au geôlier: Relâche ces hommes.**

[Actes 16:36](#) **Et le geôlier annonça la chose à Paul: Les préteurs ont envoyé dire qu'on vous relâchât; maintenant donc sortez, et allez en paix.**

[Actes 16:37](#) **Mais Paul dit aux licteurs: Après nous avoir battus de verges**

**publiquement et sans jugement, nous qui sommes Romains, ils nous ont jetés en prison, et maintenant ils nous font sortir secrètement! Il n'en sera pas ainsi. Qu'ils viennent eux-mêmes nous mettre en liberté.**

**[Actes 16:38](#) Les licteurs rapportèrent ces paroles aux préteurs, qui furent effrayés en apprenant qu'ils étaient Romains.**

**[Actes 16:39](#) Ils vinrent les apaiser, et ils les mirent en liberté, en les priant de quitter la ville.**

- Puisque Paul comprenait l'importance de la citoyenneté à Rome, il en amplifie l'usage.
  - Et ce faisant, il fait savoir aux Philippiens : « Comprenez que vous faites partie d'un autre Royaume, plus grand que celui où vous résidez actuellement. »
  - Être citoyen du Royaume à venir signifie donc que cette réalité future s'accompagne d'un nouveau mode de vie propre à ses citoyens.
    - Connaître ses droits en tant que citoyen est une chose, mais vivre en deçà des normes qui nous ont été gracieusement accordées en est une autre !
  - Ainsi, Paul dit : « Que je sois avec vous ou loin de vous, vivez comme il se doit, d'une manière digne du Christ. » (Votre témoignage)
- Paul expose ce que je considère comme quatre points concernant ce qui devrait ressortir de notre vie d'une manière qui reflète « positionnellement » qui nous sommes en Christ malgré l'opposition !
  - Il dit que ce mode de vie ressemble à ceci : (vv.27-28)
    - 1. Demeurer fermes dans un seul esprit (Comme un seul corps)
    - 2. D'un seul cœur (Marcher dans la sérénité)
    - 3. S'efforcer ensemble dans l'unité de l'Évangile (Persévéérer ensemble)
    - 4. Et résilient face à l'opposition (sans crainte de l'homme)
  - Lorsque le corps du Christ à Rome a manqué à ces principes, cela a non seulement remis en question qui il représentait –
    - Mais cela constituerait un obstacle à leur témoignage pour le Christ.
  - En d'autres termes, « Je sais que, sur le plan positionnel, tu as été justifié, mais pourquoi ne vis-tu pas comme si tu étais sauvé ?! »
- Le fait que nous ayons été justifiés est une œuvre que Dieu seul a accomplie, ce qui signifie que sa justice seule nous a rendus purs et justes devant Dieu.
  - Et cela signifie maintenant que vous avez en Christ le pouvoir de vivre, d'agir et de vous comporter d'une manière qui reflète la grâce que nous avons pleinement reçue.
    - La vie du croyant doit devenir un rappel constant que Dieu a accompli quelque chose de magnifique en vous, alors mettez-vous à sa place et vivez en conséquence !
  - De plus, au verset 28, Paul souligne que lorsque nous vivons notre mission, même la crainte des hommes ne nous ébranlera pas, car nous savons qui tient notre destin

entre ses mains ! (Verset 28)

- Lorsque le croyant demeure ferme et inébranlable dans l'opposition, cela devient un signe de la destruction imminente du non-croyant !
- On peut aussi l'interpréter ainsi : si les justes qui souffrent souffrent injustement de la main des injustes, à combien plus forte raison le Seigneur jugera-t-il ceux qui ont causé la souffrance à ceux qu'il a jugés justes.
  - C'est ce que l'on trouve dans l'Exode concernant la loi du talion (œil pour œil, dent pour dent).
  - La réalité est que le jugement est inévitable et que chacun devra rendre compte de son refus d'accueillir l'Évangile. (Noé et le Déluge)
  - Imaginez un peu : avoir vécu une vie pleine, sans croire en Dieu, et devoir ensuite vous présenter devant un Dieu Saint pour expliquer pourquoi vous n'avez pas fait confiance au Christ !
  - Espérons que cela nous inspire une profonde tristesse pour ceux qui ne connaissent pas le Christ.
- Enfin, c'est dans les versets 29-30 que Paul dit qu'il a été « accordé » au croyant non seulement de croire avec Christ pour le salut, mais aussi de souffrir avec Christ.
  - Il y a ce sentiment de partager à la fois les joies et les souffrances du Christ.
    - Et Paul précise, en utilisant le mot « accordé », qu'il s'agit d'une grâce en soi.
  - Que Dieu puisse se servir des souffrances de cette vie pour nous façonner et nous perfectionner à l'image même du Christ.
    - Et malheureusement pour certains, nous avons tendance à considérer la souffrance comme un effet secondaire négatif de la vie chrétienne.
    - Cependant, Paul nous rassure en affirmant que la souffrance est en réalité un élément clé pour vivre d'une manière digne du Christ.
  - Car si tout était facile et que rien ne valait la peine de faire des efforts, y a-t-il vraiment un coût à prendre en compte ?
    - Comme ma femme et moi aimons le dire, notre cheminement avec le Christ est à la fois un projet individuel et collectif.
    - Marchons-nous bien les uns avec les autres, nous encourageons-nous mutuellement, nous corrigéons-nous les uns les autres, prions-nous les uns pour les autres ?!
  - Car lorsque nous abordons notre marche avec le Christ comme un champ de bataille dans ce monde, nous reconnaissons que nous ne sommes pas seuls !
    - Plus important encore, nous savons que nous sommes capables de surmonter l'adversité à laquelle nous sommes confrontés, car le Christ a vaincu et son Esprit demeure en nous.
  - Jusqu'à présent, Paul veut dire que lorsque nous avons une perspective juste sur ce que le Christ a fait, notre vision des circonstances commence à changer.
    - Car c'est en traversant de telles épreuves que nous apprenons à connaître la grâce de souffrir avec le Christ.

- Prions.

- Au cours du chapitre 1, nous avons compris que notre but est de vivre pour le Christ.
  - Et en comprenant cet objectif, nous pouvons mieux comprendre comment nous devons l'atteindre/le concrétiser.
    - Que la manière de vivre comme le Christ est de voir les choses comme le Christ les voit.
    - Et nous pouvons voir les choses comme Il les voit parce qu'Il nous a donné la possibilité de le faire dans un sens «positionnel».
    - Autrement dit, parce qu'il nous a sauvés et réconciliés avec le Père, nous avons été rendus capables, par l'Esprit, de marcher, de vivre et de réagir comme lui.
    - Et cette réalité se réalise à travers ce que Lui seul a accompli par sa mort, sa résurrection, son ascension et sa glorification.
  - Ce soir, nous abordons le chapitre 2 où nous apprendrons à penser comme le Christ.
    - Être en Lui, c'est une chose, mais penser comme Lui, c'en est une autre.
    - Et cet objectif est atteint lorsque nous apprenons à revêtir la pensée du Christ et à abandonner la mentalité de notre « vieil homme » (nature pécheresse).
  - Si je devais résumer notre programme de ce soir, nous verrons les choses suivantes :
    - 1. Vivez comme le Christ (vv.1-5)
    - 2. Christ, l'exemple ultime d'humilité (vv.6-8)
    - 3. L'exaltation du Christ à titre de démonstration (vv.9-11)
  - Si je devais donner un titre à notre texte de ce soir, ce serait : *La voie de l'humilité: la christologie en pratique*.
    - Ceci étant dit, je vous invite à me rejoindre dans Philippiens 2 et nous commencerons par lire ensemble les versets 1 à 4.

**Philippiens 2:1** C'est pourquoi, s'il y a quelque encouragement en Christ, s'il y a quelque consolation dans l'amour, s'il y a quelque communion de l'Esprit, s'il y a quelque tendresse et compassion,

**Philippiens 2:2** Rendez ma joie parfaite en ayant les mêmes sentiments, le même amour, une même âme, un même esprit, un même but.

**Philippiens 2:3** Ne faites rien par égoïsme ou par vaine gloire, mais, dans l'humilité, considérez les autres comme plus importants que vous-mêmes;

**Philippiens 2:4** Ne veillez pas seulement à vos propres intérêts, mais aussi à ceux des autres.

- Paul commence cette section du texte par le mot de transition : « C'est pourquoi ».
  - Et pour tout étudiant de la Bible, il faut toujours se poser la question : à quoi sert ce « donc » ?
    - Ce faisant, nous constatons que Paul relie ses déclarations précédentes à ces propositions subordonnées « si » du verset 1, poursuivant ainsi sa pensée unique.

- Et cette idée commence dans les versets 27 à 30 du chapitre 1 de l'épître aux Philippiens.
- C'est dans les versets précédents que Paul a résumé comment la vie du croyant devait refléter la grâce manifestée envers lui.
  - Autrement dit, puisque le Christ nous a offert cette vie par son service, par grâce, nous devons vivre de manière à mettre en lumière cette grande grâce qui lui rend gloire.
  - C'est donc sa grâce qui donne au croyant la capacité de vivre « d'une manière digne du Christ », car nous avons été justifiés par son œuvre !
- Vous vous souviendrez peut-être que l'expression « se comporter dignement » est un mot grec qui signifie « vivre comme un citoyen ».
  - Et cette citoyenneté nous a fait passer de la mort à la vie et nous offre une perspective et un esprit nouveaux, pleinement réalisés en Christ.
- Cependant, comme le révèle la lettre de Paul, il semble qu'il y ait eu certains problèmes au sein de l'Église de Philippi qui nécessitaient une correction.
  - Et l'une des questions qui a été soulevée est celle de l'humilité et de l'unité au sein du corps.
  - Et ce schisme interne est abordé personnellement par Paul dans [Philippiens 4:2](#) . (Euodia et Syntyche)
  - En attendant, Paul va leur rappeler que, puisque nous sommes en Christ, nos motivations et notre état d'esprit doivent être centrés sur Christ et non sur nous-mêmes.
- Par conséquent, Paul passe de la déclaration précédente des versets 27 à 30 au verset 1 avec la « réalité positionnelle » des croyants en Christ.
- Il dit aux Philippiens au verset 1 que, parce que vous êtes en Christ et que vous avez reçu ce don gracieux par lequel vous êtes une nouvelle création, vivez selon ce que vous avez reçu !
  - Et Paul illustre ce point en utilisant ces propositions subordonnées « si ».
    - Remarquez que Paul utilise le mot « si » quatre fois rien que dans le verset 1.
  - Cette proposition subordonnée « si » se trouve dans ce qu'on appelle une condition de première classe, ce qui signifie simplement que l'utilisation de ce mot par Paul presuppose que chaque affirmation est vraie.
    - En clair, toutes ces choses mentionnées au verset 1 vous appartiennent pleinement et sont possibles, parce que vous êtes en Christ.
  - Une autre façon d'interpréter le verset 1 serait donc :
    - « *C'est pourquoi, [parce que vous avez] de l'encouragement dans l'unité du Christ, [parce que vous avez] du réconfort dans son amour, [parce que vous avez] la communion de l'Esprit, et [parce que vous avez] de l'affection et de la compassion en Christ... rendez ma joie parfaite... »*
  - Tout cela est pleinement exprimé par Paul car, comme il le mentionne au verset 29 du chapitre 1, cette vie nous a été « accordée » ou gracieusement donnée.

- Autrement dit, la grâce par laquelle le Seigneur a fait de nous de nouvelles créatures en Christ est une œuvre que Christ seul a accomplie.
- Son œuvre seule a suffi à nous réconcilier avec Dieu, et non aucun de nos propres efforts méritoires.
- Par conséquent, Paul affirme qu'il n'y a pas lieu pour le croyant de répondre avec arrogance, orgueil, dissension ou manque d'humilité les uns envers les autres.
- Ainsi, puisque vous êtes sauvés, vous devriez vivre en harmonie les uns avec les autres et vous soumettre au Christ dans votre comportement.
  - En réalité, ces choses seraient impossibles à accomplir si nous n'étions pas sauvés, car nous étions morts dans notre péché.
- Avant de venir au Christ, nous n'avions aucun désir de vivre de cette façon !
  - C'est cette réalité axée sur la grâce qui permet au croyant d'être enraciné dans l'unité chrétienne, la joie, l'humilité et la soumission.
- Ainsi, Paul dit au verset 2 : « Rendez ma joie parfaite ». en faisant, c'est-à-dire « marcher de cette façon ».
  - En clair, votre bonne vie en Christ me procurera (à moi, Paul) une grande joie.
  - C'est comme un parent qui a élevé son enfant de l'enfance à l'âge adulte et qui l'a vu devenir un individu productif et pieux.
  - Ce parent ou grand-parent rayonnera de fierté – et ce sont là les sentiments de Paul !
- Paul mentionne que sa joie serait complète lorsque les Philippiens s'efforcerait d'atteindre les qualités suivantes, qu'ils possédaient de par leur position :
  - 1. Être d'un même esprit (être un seul homme dans ses intentions et ses dispositions – faire preuve d'une détermination sans faille)
  - 2. Conservez ce même amour (l'amour agapè, l'amour sacrificiel que le Christ a manifesté).
  - 3. Unis dans l'esprit (littéralement, une seule âme)
  - 4. Se concentrer sur un seul but (orienter sa vie vers un objectif unique)
- Être en phase avec ses idées, c'est bien plus que simplement penser en général ; c'est plutôt orienter son esprit vers une pensée similaire.
  - Dans la langue originale, l'expression « être du même esprit » est *autos phroneo*.
    - *Autos* signifiant « même », *Phroneo* signifiant « se fixer comme objectif ».
  - Paul nous dit donc que nos pensées doivent être pleinement alignées sur celles du Christ et non sur celles de notre nature charnelle.
    - Nous verrons Paul exprimer cette juxtaposition dans les versets 3 et 4 concernant la manière de ne pas vivre, un peu plus tard.
    - Mais sachez que Paul exprime ici comment nous devons choisir de laisser notre Esprit dominer nos affections plutôt que notre chair.
  - Et la question à laquelle le croyant devra faire face dans tous les domaines de sa vie

est la suivante : « *Vais-je choisir de réagir selon ma chair ou selon l'Esprit ?* »

- Autrement dit, ma réaction sera-t-elle celle d'une personne spirituellement mature ou spirituellement immature ? (1 Corinthiens 3) (Diapositive)
- Voyez ce que Paul dit à propos de cette distinction entre l'esprit et le comportement dans [Romains 8:5](#) .

**[Romains 8:5](#) Car ceux qui vivent selon la chair ont leurs pensées tournées vers les choses de la chair, tandis que ceux qui vivent selon l'Esprit ont leurs pensées tournées vers les choses de l'Esprit.**

- Comme le pasteur Steve l'a mentionné dans son enseignement sur les Romains : « Quel chien dans ce combat allez-vous nourrir ? »
  - « Sera-ce la chair, qui produit des réactions charnelles, ou sera-ce l'Esprit, qui produit des réactions à l'image du Christ ? »
  - Votre réponse compte et glorifiera Dieu ou ternira votre témoignage du Christ !
  - Paul s'intéresse à la réaction du croyant en toutes choses, face aux pressions extérieures et surtout aux pressions internes croissantes venant de l'intérieur du corps.
  - Pourtant, en toutes choses, Paul exhorte les Philippiens à agir selon la grâce qu'ils possèdent abondamment en Christ !
- Quand j'étais enfant, avant que ma sœur et moi entrions dans un magasin vendant beaucoup d'articles délicats, ma mère nous faisait toujours « la discussion ».
  - Et elle nous disait : « Quand on entre dans ce magasin, ne touchez à rien, ne respirez pas mal et ne faites pas un faux pas. »
    - « Fais comme si tu savais qui est ta mère ! »
  - Ce moment décisif, c'est ce que Paul fait pour l'Église de Philippi. En quelques mots, il dit : « Comportez-vous comme si vous étiez conscients de la grâce qui vous a été accordée ! »
    - Et c'est cette réalité qui amène Paul à mettre en garde les croyants de Philippi dans les versets 3 et 4.
  - Il dit au verset 3 : « Ne faites rien par égoïsme ou par vaine gloire, mais, dans l'humilité, considérez les autres comme supérieurs à vous-mêmes ; »
    - Remarquez que Paul exprime la vertu chrétienne d'humilité à la fois dans son sens démonstratif et dans son sens opposé (l'égoïsme).
  - Il montre aux Philippiens à quoi ressemble une réaction du croyant qui manque de l'influence de l'Esprit.
    - Là où le Seigneur désire que les besoins des autres soient plus importants que les nôtres, nous recherchons notre propre intérêt et nos propres projets.
    - Au lieu de répondre aux besoins de ceux qui nous entourent, nous percevons leurs besoins comme un obstacle.

- De plus, Paul nous a donné un exemple de ce à quoi cela ressemblait chez ceux qui prêchaient l'Évangile avec de mauvaises intentions, dans le chapitre précédent.
  - Pour ces personnes, les souffrances de Paul sont devenues plus avantageuses pour leurs objectifs et leurs projets ministériels personnels.
  - Il faut bien comprendre que la motivation de ces ministres n'était pas de faire connaître le Christ.
  - En réalité, leur démarche reposait avant tout sur une autopromotion alimentée par l'envie.
  - En réalité, dans notre état naturel d'êtres humains, il nous est facile de nous concentrer davantage sur nous-mêmes que sur les besoins des autres.
- Cependant, Paul affirme que les efforts des croyants devraient être davantage tournés vers les besoins des autres que vers les leurs.
  - Comme l'a dit quelqu'un un jour : « L'amour repère un besoin et y répond. »
- C'est ce type d'amour que l'on vit en Christ et, en tant que croyants en Christ, nous avons reçu la grâce de servir les autres, en lui.
  - Paul dit ce qui suit dans [Romains 12:10](#) concernant notre service spirituel d'adoration qui démontre la volonté de Dieu !

**[Romains 12:10](#) Ayez de l'affection les uns pour les autres d'un amour fraternel ; honorez-vous les uns les autres ;**

- Ce type d'amour dévoué dont parle Paul est l'amour familial.
  - Parce que nous sommes un en Christ, nous devons nous aimer les uns les autres de telle sorte que nous désirions le meilleur pour chacun d'entre nous.
  - C'est ce sens de la « bienveillance » envers les intérêts d'autrui, manifesté par un service empreint d'amour.
  - Tout ce qui sort de là recherche notre propre intérêt et reflète notre nature pécheresse. (v.4)
  - Et cette nature même provient de Satan lui-même ! ([Ésaïe 14:13-14](#))

**[Ésaïe 14:13](#) « Mais tu disais en ton cœur : Je monterai au ciel ; j'élèverai mon trône au-dessus des étoiles de Dieu, et je m'assiérai sur la montagne de l'assemblée, dans les profondeurs du nord.**

**[Ésaïe 14:14](#) « Je monterai au-dessus des hauteurs des nuages ; je me rendrai semblable au Très-Haut. »**

**[Isaïe 14:15](#) « Néanmoins, vous serez précipités au Shéol, dans les profondeurs de la fosse.**

- Ainsi, la conception paulinienne de l'humilité s'enracine dans le service mutuel, ce qui confirme leur unité en Christ.

- De fait, ce sens même du service et de l'humilité est évoqué par le Christ lorsque les fils de Zébédée poursuivaient leurs propres objectifs personnels.
- Découvrez ce que Jésus dit à ses disciples dans [Marc 10:45](#) pour aborder leur incompréhension de la grandeur dans le Royaume.

**[Marc 10:42](#) Les appelant à lui, Jésus leur dit : « Vous savez que ceux qui sont reconnus comme chefs des nations les dominent ; et que leurs grands exercent leur autorité sur eux.**

**[Marc 10:43](#) « Mais il n'en est pas ainsi parmi vous ; mais quiconque veut devenir grand parmi vous sera votre serviteur ;**

**[Marc 10:44](#) et quiconque veut être le premier parmi vous sera l'esclave de tous.**

**[Marc 10:45](#) « Car le Fils de l'homme n'est pas venu pour être servi, mais pour servir et donner sa vie en rançon pour beaucoup. »**

- Alors, Jésus a fait éclater leurs illusions et leur a expliqué que le chemin de la grandeur passe par l'humilité et la soumission.
  - Pour progresser, il faut parfois descendre. Et cette réalité n'était pas la norme dans la société de l'époque, ni même aujourd'hui !
- Pour les Romains du Ier siècle, le mot humilité était un mot problématique, même avant l'époque du Nouveau Testament.
  - En réalité, l'humilité était une vertu très méprisée.
    - Le mot humilité était souvent associé à celui de la mentalité d'un esclave.
    - Cela signifiait souvent que quelqu'un était inapte ou sans valeur.
  - Ainsi, lorsque Paul utilisait ce mot pour décrire la position nécessaire du croyant dans une société qui se surestimait, cela allait à contre-courant.
    - Comprenez ce que Paul ne disait PAS.
    - Il ne suggérait pas aux croyants de se dévaloriser ou de considérer tout le monde comme supérieur à eux.
  - Paul nous dit plutôt de prendre en compte les besoins des autres plutôt que de simplement veiller à nos propres intérêts. ( [Lévitique 19:17](#) )
    - Paul développera son propos en prenant pour exemple l'humilité parfaite incarnée par Jésus-Christ. Voir les versets 5 à 8.

**[Philippiens 2:5](#) Ayez en vous cette attitude qui était aussi en Jésus-Christ,**

**[Philippiens 2:6](#) qui, existant en forme de Dieu, ne considérait pas l'égalité avec Dieu comme une chose à retenir jalousement,**

**[Philippiens 2:7](#) mais il s'est dépouillé lui-même, prenant la forme d'un serviteur, et devenant semblable aux hommes.**

**[Philippiens 2:8](#) Reconnu comme un homme à l'apparence humaine, il s'est humilié lui-même en devenant obéissant jusqu'à la mort, même à la mort sur une croix.**

- Paul affirme ici que nous devons avoir les mêmes sentiments (*phroneo*) d'humilité, de service et d'unité d'intention entre nous que le Christ lors de sa première venue. (Condescension et humiliation)
  - Paul nous livre une christologie très claire concernant à la fois la personne de Jésus et son dessein !
    - Paul explique ensuite comment le Christ, par son œuvre et sa mission, par sa propre humilité, a accompli le plan du Père.
  - Paul affirme que le Christ, qui a toujours existé avec le Père, a ajouté à sa divinité l'humanité à un certain moment de l'histoire humaine.
- Le mot « forme » en grec est *morphe*, qui signifie simplement nature ou être de même essence.
  - Autrement dit, le Christ, qui est pleinement divin, lorsqu'il a pris chair humaine, n'a ni renoncé ni perdu ses attributs ou sa nature divine.
    - Il a simplement ajouté l'humanité à sa divinité pour devenir humain ; par conséquent, le Dieu-Homme est à la fois 100 % Dieu et 100 % Homme.
  - Jean a correctement identifié cette glorieuse réalité, incarnée dans la personne de Jésus-Christ, lorsqu'il a écrit les mots suivants dans [Jean 1:14](#) .

[Jean 1:14](#) **Et la Parole est devenue chair, et elle a habité parmi nous, pleine de grâce et de vérité ; et nous avons contemplé sa gloire, une gloire comme celle du Fils unique venu du Père.**

- Jean affirme que la Gloire même de Dieu a « habité » ou « résidé » parmi le peuple parce que le deuxième membre de la Trinité s'est incarné.
  - Autrement dit, le Fils de Dieu est entré dans sa propre création afin de pouvoir faire la paix entre nous et le Père !
  - Quelle humilité de la part de Jésus, qui est de la nature même (*morphe*) du Père, de s'abaisser à mourir ?!
  - Ce moyen d'humilité, ajoute Paul, a été accompli parce que le Christ « s'est dépouillé lui-même ».
    - Le mot grec pour « s'est vidé de tout » est *kenoo*, de quoi dérive le mot kénose.
  - Il s'agit de l'idée que le Christ n'a pas renoncé à ses attributs divins en tant que Dieu, mais qu'il en a volontairement restreint l'usage indépendant.
    - Cela signifie que le Seigneur Jésus a choisi de ne pas utiliser sa toute-puissance pour restreindre sa mission et le but de sa venue : devenir une rançon.
  - John Walvoord, dans son livre *intitulé Jésus-Christ Notre Seigneur*, a fait cette déclaration concernant la doctrine de la kénose en relation avec Philippiens 2 :

**« L'acte de kénose tel qu'il est mentionné dans Philippiens 2 peut donc être correctement compris comme signifiant que le Christ n'a renoncé à aucun attribut de la Divinité, mais qu'il a volontairement restreint leur usage**

**indépendant conformément à son dessein de vivre parmi les hommes et leurs limites. »**

- Remarquez qu'aux versets 6 et 7, Paul utilise le mot « forme » (*morphème*). Et dans les deux cas, il s'adresse à Jésus à la fois comme Dieu et comme homme.
  - Car nier l'un ou l'autre, c'est se tromper dans la saine doctrine !
  - Par conséquent, Jésus n'était pas seulement un bon enseignant, ou seulement un homme bon, ou simplement Dieu, mais Jésus est à la fois pleinement Dieu et pleinement homme.
- On observe tout au long des Évangiles la présence de ces deux natures à l'œuvre. Par exemple, Jésus marchant sur l'eau de la mer de Galilée.
  - Cela n'a pas été possible simplement parce qu'il était habité par le Saint-Esprit – cela a été possible parce qu'il est Dieu Créateur !
    - Nous avons également vu Jésus pardonner au paralytique ses péchés et le faire marcher. (Le plus grand au plus petit)
    - La raison pour laquelle cela posait un tel problème aux chefs religieux est que nul homme ne pouvait pardonner les péchés, sauf Dieu !
    - Or, nous voyons ici Jésus capable de faire les deux. Cela tient à sa nature divine.
  - Et en même temps, nous avons vu Jésus avoir faim, se fatiguer, être tenté, mais sans pécher.
    - L'une des meilleures illustrations à voir est celle de Jésus qui, après son baptême, est conduit dans le désert pour y être tenté par Satan.
  - Et, tenté par la convoitise de la chair, la convoitise des yeux et l'orgueil de la vie, il les vainc tous par la puissance de sa parole !
    - Ce que nous voyons à l'œuvre dans l'exemple du Christ, c'est que, par son humiliation, sa soumission et son renoncement volontaire à utiliser ses attributs divins, il a démontré une véritable humilité jusqu'à la mort !
  - Ce type de mort que Jésus a subi n'était pas une mort simple, mais c'était le pire type de mort qu'on puisse endurer.
    - Mourir par crucifixion était atrocement douloureux, humiliant et parfois extrêmement défigurant.
    - Il était transpercé, battu au point d'être méconnaissable, avec une couronne d'épines pressée contre son front.
    - Crachés dessus, insultés, moqués et maltraités.
  - Tout cela, le Fils de Dieu l'a pris sur lui afin que nous vivions éternellement et soyons réconciliés avec Dieu !
    - Il est intéressant de noter que l'auteur de l'Épître aux Hébreux rapporte que Jésus avait l'esprit tourné vers la récompense finale, plus grande encore.
    - C'est pourquoi il pouvait éprouver de la joie en endurant le supplice de la croix.
    - Ouvrons ensemble [Hébreux 12:2-3](#) :

**Hébreux 12:2** fixant les yeux sur Jésus, qui est l'auteur de la foi et qui la mène à la perfection. Pour la joie qui lui était réservée, il a enduré la croix, méprisant la honte, et il s'est assis à la droite du trône de Dieu.

**Hébreux 12:3** Considérez en effet celui qui a enduré une telle hostilité de la part des pécheurs, afin que vous ne vous lassiez pas et que vous ne perdiez pas courage.

- Paul et l'auteur de l'épître aux Hébreux semblent tous deux s'accorder sur le fait que l'exaltation est venue de l'humiliation du Christ.
  - Lorsque nous examinons la vie du Christ, son but et son dessein étaient clairs : il est venu accomplir la volonté du Père.
    - Et c'est à travers l'horreur de la croix que s'apporterait à l'avenir une plus grande récompense et un plus grand honneur.
  - C'est cet exemple de communion des sentiments que Paul dit aux Philippiens de revêtir et d'adopter !
    - C'est en prenant pour modèle l'humilité du Christ, en reconnaissant que notre seule joie et notre seul objectif devraient être le service les uns des autres !
    - Ce n'est pas un hasard si, après avoir dit que Jésus s'est dépouillé de tout, Paul assimile cela au fait que le Christ était un serviteur (un esclave).
    - Que tout ce que le Père désire, je le ferai !
  - Ainsi, la seule façon de vivre véritablement pour le Christ et d'éprouver de la joie en toute circonstance, quoi qu'il arrive, est de revêtir la pensée et l'humilité du Christ.
    - Deuxièmement, notre capacité à orienter notre vie vers le service aux autres nous apporte une plus grande joie dans notre mission de vie.
- Lorsque nous prenons conscience que nos dons spirituels doivent servir à édifier et à servir le corps du Christ, notre vision du service change.
  - Lorsque nous comprenons que nos dons ne servent pas à notre propre gloire, mais plutôt à encourager nos frères et sœurs en Christ !
    - Une des choses dont je me souviens de mon expérience en tant que pasteur adjoint sous les ordres du pasteur Steve, c'est sa protection et son attention bienveillante envers la chaire.
    - Il m'a notamment dit : « Wesley, tu dois veiller à protéger le pupitre sacré et ne permettre à personne de prêcher simplement parce qu'il a une belle élocution. »
  - Car souvent, ce que les gens recherchent dans le ministère, c'est une opportunité d'avoir une tribune !
    - Et ils utiliseront leur don de la parole ou leurs compétences administratives pour rechercher des opportunités d'atteindre leur objectif.
    - Cependant, lorsqu'il s'agit de questions relatives à l'Évangile, il n'y a pas de place pour les ambitions personnelles et l'autopromotion – seulement le Christ, et lui seul !
  - Je me souviens d'avoir 13 ans et d'avoir senti que le Seigneur m'appelait au ministère.

- Un jour, j'ai rencontré mon pasteur de jeunesse de l'époque et je lui ai fait part de cet appel que je ressentais.
  - Mon pasteur de jeunesse me dit alors : « Gloire à Dieu, le Seigneur t'a appelé – commençons par ceci », et il me tend un balai.
- Il a fait cela pour me faire comprendre que l'appel au ministère n'est jamais une question de micro ou de tribune, mais qu'il s'agit d'un service rendu au Seigneur pour enseigner au corps du Christ qui est notre Grand Dieu !
  - C'est ce que Jésus a dû expliquer à Jacques et Jean dans les Évangiles : la véritable grandeur ne réside pas dans la reconnaissance, mais dans le service d'autrui !
  - Car lorsque nous servons le Seigneur avec humilité, avec un état d'esprit semblable à celui du Christ, nous constatons que Dieu seul récompense !
  - Et au final, c'est gratifiant de constater les progrès !
  - Consultez les versets 9 à 11.

**[Philippiens 2:9](#) C'est pourquoi aussi Dieu l'a souverainement élevé et lui a donné le nom qui est au-dessus de tout nom.**

**[Philippiens 2:10](#) afin qu'au nom de Jésus tout genou fléchisse, dans les cieux, sur la terre et sous la terre,**

**[Philippiens 2:11](#) et que toute langue confesse que Jésus-Christ est Seigneur, à la gloire de Dieu le Père.**

- C'est par l'incarnation, l'humiliation et la mort du Christ, grâce à son obéissance parfaite, que Dieu le Père l'« exalterait suprêmement ».
  - L'expression « hautement exalté » signifie accorder un honneur exceptionnel, au-delà de l'ordinaire, et placer quelqu'un à une position élevée.
    - Ainsi, Paul explique que c'est par l'humilité du Christ et sa soumission au plan du Père que cette position glorieuse a pu être atteinte.
  - L'exaltation de Jésus (résurrection, ascension et glorification) était une réponse à sa prière et à son obéissance au Père lors de sa prière de grand prêtre dans [Jean 17:4-5](#)
    - Voici ce que Jésus a prié :

**[Jean 17:4](#) « Je t'ai glorifié sur la terre, ayant achevé l'œuvre que tu m'as donnée à faire. »**

**[Jean 17:5](#) « Maintenant, Père, glorifie-moi auprès de toi-même de la gloire que j'avais auprès de toi avant que le monde fût. »**

- Ainsi, en raison de son obéissance, depuis son incarnation jusqu'à sa mort, en pleine obéissance au Seigneur, le Christ a demandé auprès du Père son état pré-glorifié.

- En d'autres termes : « Papa, j'ai fait ce que tu m'as demandé... Je suis prêt à rentrer à la maison. »
- Et dans la réponse du Père au Fils, Paul nous révèle la récompense accordée au Christ.
  - Non seulement le Christ reçoit un nom qui est au-dessus de tout nom, mais il reçoit également une position exaltée qui fait que tous lui seront soumis.
- Non seulement tous les croyants répondront à ce nom majestueux, à cette autorité et à cette puissance du Christ, mais même ceux qui l'ont rejeté DOIVENT le reconnaître.
  - Toutes les créatures plieront le genou devant le Roi qui viendra bientôt !
- Cela ne signifie pas que chaque personne dans le monde deviendra croyante !
  - Cela atteste simplement du fait que, même dans l'état où se trouve celui qui rejette la demande, il n'a d'autre choix que de reconnaître sa position.
  - Là où, à un moment donné, ils ont délibérément rejeté Jésus, sa grâce et son sacrifice, ils devront maintenant, contraints et forcés, admettre qui Jésus a toujours été et sera toujours.
- Cette réalité, à travers l'exemple du Christ et sa glorification, devrait devenir une source de joie et de réconfort pour tous les croyants en Christ !
  - Même si cela peut paraître une gratification différée, dans l'immédiat, tout cela en vaudra la peine au final.
    - En servant humblement, sans attendre d'applaudissements ni de reconnaissance, mais en servant comme pour le Seigneur, notre récompense nous attendra aussi dans l'avenir.
    - Et quelle récompense glorieuse ce sera !
  - Nous pouvons être tentés de céder et parfois de choisir la facilité, mais comme le Christ l'a montré par l'exemple, il a obéi jusqu'au bout et nous devrions en faire autant.
    - Lorsque nous nous tournons vers Jésus, nous constatons qu'il nous montre le chemin.
    - Lorsque vous passez du temps avec Jésus et que vous vous imprégnez de la pensée du Christ, vous constaterez une progression dans votre relation avec lui.
  - Plus vous marcherez près de Lui, plus vous Lui ressemblerez dans votre apparence, vos pensées, vos actions et vos réactions.
    - Puis-je nous encourager tous avec ce célèbre hymne :

**Tournez vos yeux vers Jésus  
Regardez son magnifique visage  
Et les choses de la terre deviendront étrangement sombres  
À la lumière de sa gloire et de sa grâce**

- ○ Prions.

- 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 found 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.