

## A STUDY OF PHILIPPIANS

- I. Introduction
  - A. Philippians was one of the Captivity Epistles (also Philemon, Colossians, Ephesians)
  - B. Written while Paul was in prison in Rome (Acts 28:30), around 60-62 AD (notice references to being in prison or a prisoner in Phil. 1:7,13,14)
  - C. Paul's relationship to them (Acts 16)
    - 1. conversion of Lydia
    - 2. healing of sooth-saying girl
    - 3. imprisonment of Paul and Silas
    - 4. conversion of Philippian jailor
  - D. City of Philippi
    - 1. founded by Philip of Macedon (father of Alexander the Great)
    - 2. first major city in Europe
  - E. The church in Philippi
    - 1. Jewish, Gentile mix
    - 2. sent gifts to Paul on three occasions
      - a. in Thessalonica (4:16)
      - b. in Corinth (II Corinthians 11:9)
      - c. at place of writing (4:18)
  - F. Theme and specific matters addressed in Philippians
    - 1. Theme = Joy
    - 2. the position of Christ on earth (2:5-8)
    - 3. Timothy and Epaphroditus (2:19-30)
    - 4. Paul's pedigree and how he gave it all up for Christ (3:4-14)
    - 5. thinking things (4:8)
    - 6. contentment (4:11)
    - 7. 4:13
    - 8. consider the aspects of the letter that contribute to joy
      - a. prayer (1:4; 4:6)
      - b. fellowship (1:5)
      - c. not bearing grudges (1:15-18)
      - d. teaching the Gospel (1:18)
      - e. hope (1:21)
      - f. faith (1:25)
      - g. love (2:2)
      - h. serving others (2:3-4)
      - i. having the mind of Christ (2:5)
      - j. abiding in the truth (2:16)
      - k. self-sacrifice (2:17)
      - l. God's mercy (2:27-28)
      - m. avoiding sin (3:1-2)
      - n. Jesus (3:3; 4:4)
      - o. having the mind set on heavenly things (3:12-14)
      - p. personal mind control (4:8)
      - q. giving (4:10)
      - r. trust (4:11-13)

## II. Chapter 1

### A. Verses 1-11 - greeting and opening statements

1. verse 1
  - a. "servants" - shows humility (see I Corinthians 15:9)
  - b. "saints"
    - i. the noun of "holy"
    - ii. these saints were alive, as opposed to the Catholic doctrine of sainthood ("A person who died in the grace of God and is already in heaven is a saint. In the strict sense of the term, a saint is one solemnly declared by the Church to be in heaven and may be given public veneration. Before a person is declared a saint, rigid proof is required of a life of heroic virtue. Inquiry is made into his life, virtues and writings. The preliminary investigation is usually not made until at least fifty years after the person's death. The process goes through three stages which, if satisfied, end in papal declarations for three degrees, with titles given of Venerable, Blessed and Saint." (My Catholic Faith by Louis Laravoire Morrow, pp. 198-199)
  - c. a plurality of bishops and deacons
2. verse 2
  - a. Paul wished grace and peace to his readers in all of his epistles except Hebrews
    - i. some say this is evidence that Paul didn't write Hebrews
    - ii. rather, Hebrews simply takes on a different style which immediately goes into the subject without any greeting
  - b. he is praying for nothing but the best from God for them
3. verses 3-8
  - a. also, "every mention of you"
  - b. he thought of them often and when he did these thoughts comforted him
  - c. the reason for his thankfulness is due to their fellowship with him
    - i. monetarily
      - A. Philippians 4:15-16
      - B. II Corinthians 8:1-5
    - ii. in the defense and confirmation of the Gospel (verse 7)
    - iii. Acts 16:15,40
    - iv. they kept in frequent contact with each other (2:25)
  - d. verse 6 - Paul's confidence that God would continue to bless them throughout their lives
  - e. verse 8 - "bowels" in KJV translated "tender mercies" in ASV and "affection" in NKJV
4. verses 9-11
  - a. when he prayed for them, he also prayed for them to grow in love, knowledge, judgment, faithfulness and the fruits of righteousness
  - b. each of these feeds off the other
    - i. when we grow in love, we desire to know more about God and His will and to be righteous
    - ii. the more we know of God and His will, the more we love Him
  - c. verse 10
    - i. growing in knowledge and judgment allows us to make better decisions (we can determine the things that are excellent and the things which are not)

- ii. alternate reading, "things that differ" (i.e., differ from truth)
  - iii. growing in these things can make us sincere ("pure") and without offense (to God or to others) throughout our lives
    - A. Luke 17:1-2
    - B. I Peter 3:15-16
  - iv. II Peter 1:3 - God has given us all things pertaining to life and godliness
  - v. we CAN be faithful unto death if we want to be (Revelation 2:10)
  - d. the fruits of righteousness ("right living") are those things that we enjoy (peace, hope, joy, etc.) and demonstrate (giving, teaching, serving, etc.) in our lives
- B. Verses 12-30
- 1. verses 12-14
    - a. turning something that Satan meant to be harmful into something that brought glory to God
    - b. other examples
      - i. Joseph (Genesis 37ff)
      - ii. Esther
      - iii. Job
      - iv. Jesus
    - c. Paul had opportunity to appear before Caesar (Acts 27:23-24) and was able to preach to his household (Philippians 4:22)
    - d. some suggest that verse 13 indicates that his trial before Caesar had taken place and that this trial helped get the word out in Rome about who Paul was and why he was on trial (recall how his trials before the Jewish council in Acts 23:1ff and before Agrippa (Acts 26:1ff) had accomplished the same ends
    - d. as well, other Christians were encouraged by Paul's faith in the face of adversity
  - 2. verses 15-18
    - a. those who were not preaching from pure motives
      - i. envious, contentious ("faction" in ASV), insincere
      - ii. were they non-Christians who were just parroting the words of the Gospel without understanding what they were saying? (no, Paul would not have rejoiced over this)
      - iii. were they Judaizing teachers, those who were Christians but also believe that the law of Moses should be observed? (possibly)
      - iv. were they Christians who were teaching the Gospel but who wanted people to follow them?
        - A. most likely
        - B. Judaizers could be part of this but not all of this
        - C. factions had already occurred in the church by this time (I Corinthians 1:11ff)
        - D. there were those who questioned Paul's authority (II Corinthians 10:1-13:14)
      - v. it's possible that they were taking advantage of Paul being in prison by keeping brethren from going to him to talk to him and instead persuading these brethren that they should follow their ways instead of listening to Paul
    - b. so the Gospel was being preached and Paul was glad of that, but some were leading new Christians into sectarianism

3. verses 19-26
  - a. "salvation" in verse 19 probably refers to his deliverance from prison and his confidence that their prayers and the work of the Holy Spirit through him as an inspired apostle would bring about this deliverance (cf. II Corinthians 1:8-11 regarding his deliverance from trouble in Asia)
  - b. verse 20 shows his commitment to faithfulness
  - c. verse 21
    - i. his life was all about one effort: serving Christ (3:8)
    - ii. whatever he had in life, when he died he would still be gaining more than he ever had here (true for every faithful Christian)
  - d. verses 22-24
    - i. as long as he lives he will bring forth fruit for Christ
    - ii. if he had a choice of staying on earth and glorifying Christ or going home to be with the Lord, he wasn't sure which he would choose
    - iii. on one hand, being with the Lord is far better (heavy emphasis in the term "far better")
    - iv. on the other hand, there was still much work left to do in life, including teaching and strengthening the church
    - v. so it would be better for him to die but better for the church for him to live
    - vi. look at this dilemma in the context of his warning to the Ephesian elders in Acts 20:29-30
  - e. verses 25-26 - as long as he was in the flesh, he would continue to serve the Lord faithfully
4. verses 27-30
  - a. regardless of whether he was with them or absent from them, alive to talk to them or already deceased, they should themselves walk faithfully
  - b. it doesn't matter what anyone else does - we should determine to live our own lives in obedience to God
  - c. "conversation" is "manner of life" in ASV and "conduct" in NKJV
  - d. here's how they should conduct themselves
    - i. be unified in Christ (verse 27)
    - ii. work together to spread the Gospel (verse 27)
    - iii. be courageous in the face of the enemy, probably the idolaters as opposed to Jews or Judaizers (verse 28)
    - iv. see suffering for Christ as a privilege (verses 29-30)

### III. Chapter 2

#### A. Verses 1-4 - Proper Attitudes

1. "if" does not suggest that these things don't exist
  - a. instead suggests "since" these things exist (cf. Colossians 3:1-2)
  - b. since these things exist, "fulfill ye my joy..."
  - c. "consolation" = "comfort" (ASV = "exhortation")
  - d. "comfort" = "encouragement" (ASV = "consolation")
  - e. "bowels" = "compassions" (NKJV = "affection")
2. verse 2 - the joy of unity
  - a. Paul knew about division in the church
    - i. I Corinthians 1:10; 11:18
    - ii. he knew the damage it could cause (Galatians 5:15)
    - iii. Ephesians 4:3-6
  - b. John 17:20-23

- c. Psalm 133:1
- 3. verses 3-4 - how to promote unity
  - a. NKJV = "let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit"
  - b. ASV = "doing nothing through faction or through vainglory"
  - c. "strife" = "ambition, self-seeking, rivalry, self-will, derived from the term meaning 'a hireling,' hence, the meaning of seeking to win followers" (Vine)
  - d. "vainglory" = compound word meaning "empty glory" (cf. Matthew 6:1ff and the way the hypocrites worked to bring attention to themselves, getting glory for themselves that was, in reality, empty or meaningless)
  - e. i.e., don't do things for the purpose of promoting yourself or drawing attention to yourself
    - i. Diotrephes (III John 9-10)
    - ii. possible reference to those mentioned in Philippians 1:15-16
  - f. "lowliness of mind" = "humility"
    - i. doesn't mean that we think of ourselves as inferior to others
    - ii. doesn't mean that we have a poor self-image
    - iii. means that we should recognize our own imperfections and be patient with others
    - iv. means that we should consider every person worthy of our attention (cf. James 2:1-9 where they honored only the wealthy but looked down on the not so wealthy)
    - v. means that we recognize as Paul did that "by the grace of God I am what I am" (I Corinthians 15:10)
    - vi. in matters of doctrine, we must stand firmly on the truth
    - vii. in matters of judgment, we must realize that one person's opinion is as valid as ours
  - g. verse 4
    - i. doesn't mean we're busybodies (II Thessalonians 3:11-12) or that we stick our noses in other people's business (Proverbs 26:17) or that we focus on the lives of others to the neglect of our own spiritual condition (Matthew 7:1-5)
    - ii. NKJV = "Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others."
    - iii. "Look to their conditions, surroundings, and the influences brought to bear upon them, and endeavor to see things as they see them, and it will enable you to sympathize more with them in their trials and troubles, and you will come to esteem them the more highly. This is what Paul meant by saying: 'I am become all things to all men, that I may by all means save some.' (I Cor. 9:22) Seek to promote the well-being of others in all things." (David Lipscomb)
    - iv. we have to take care of our own spiritual needs first (Mark 9:36; Philippians 2:12), but then we should do what we can to build spirituality in others
  - h. the more we build our faith, the better we are able to help others build theirs and the more we focus on helping others build theirs, the stronger the church becomes

- B. Verses 5-11 - the humility and position of Jesus
1. verse 6
    - a. NASV incorrectly translates this "existed in the form of God"
    - b. this is present tense ("being," ASV = "existing")
    - c. John 8:58
    - d. "form of God"
      - i. does not indicate a shape but instead the nature
      - ii. "the nature or essence" (Vine)
      - iii. same term used in verse 7 ("form of a servant")
      - iv. "fashion" in verse 8 is a different word indicating appearance
    - e. "thought it not robbery to be equal with God"
      - i. ASV = "counted not the being on an equality with God a thing to be grasped"
      - ii. shows His eternal nature
      - iii. "It may mean that Christ at no time ever entertained the notion of seizing equal status from the Father, for that nature was always His. Or, it may suggest that the Lord's equality with the Father was something that He chose not to selfishly 'grasp,' i.e., *hold on to* at all costs; rather, He emptied Himself of the independent exercise of some of His divine prerogatives and assumed the role of a servant." (Wayne Jackson)
  2. verse 7
    - a. ASV = "emptied himself" (not of His Deity, but of His residence in heaven to come and dwell among men as a man - cf. Hebrews 2:16-17)
    - b. keep in mind that when He came in the flesh, He would have "no form or comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him" (Isaiah 53:2)
    - c. "It would have been an infinite humiliation to have assumed humanity, even in unique and visible glory; but Christ went beyond this, by deigning to seem like other men in all things, one only of the multitude, and that too in the station which confused him with the commoner type of mankind." (David Lipscomb)
  3. verse 8
    - a. emphasis on the type of death he died (cf. Galatians 3:13)
    - b. further indication of Jesus' humanity while on earth
      - i. if He were Deity only, why would He need to obey?
      - ii. Hebrews 5:8-9
  4. verses 9-11 - the exaltation of Jesus
    - a. Daniel 7:13-14
    - b. I Peter 1:21 - given glory after His resurrection
    - c. Acts 4:12
- C. Verses 12-18
1. verse 12
    - a. we often find it easier to do right when strong influences for good are among us but then also often neglect doing right when that strong influence is gone
      - i. II Chronicles 24:1-2, 15-22, 25
      - ii. think of how some leave the faith when a faithful spouse, parent or other Godly influence dies

- b. the latter part of the verse shows how seriously we should be taking our eternity
  - i. does not suggest that we are to create our own method of salvation or that we are trying to save ourselves by works of merit
  - ii. instead shows the personal responsibility that each of us has to prepare our souls for eternity
  - iii. Acts 2:40 - "Save yourselves from this untoward generation"
  - iv. God offers salvation as a free gift (Romans 6:23) but it is up to us to respond to the offer and meet His conditions for receiving that gift
  - v. judgment is personal (II Corinthians 5:10)
  - vi. eternal life demands that we take personal responsibility for our obedience, growth in the faith and preparedness
- 2. verse 13 - we can be obedient (faithful) and continue on the road to heaven because God is on the side of the one who takes salvation seriously
  - a. Romans 8:31-39
  - b. I John 4:4
- 3. verses 14-16
  - a. verse 14
    - i. serve the Lord with joy (Psalm 100:2 - "Serve the Lord with gladness")
    - ii. I Corinthians 10:13 - He won't allow you to be subjected to anything that is too difficult for you to handle
    - iii. I John 5:3 - His commandments are not grievous ("heavy, burdensome"), or impossible for us to carry out
  - b. verse 15
    - i. in obeying God, we will be pleasing to Him
    - ii. the verse also has reference to our relationships with our fellowman
      - A. we will stand out
      - B. "harmless" = literally, "unmixed" which signifies purity or sincerity (cf. Matthew 10:16)
      - C. Matthew 5:14-16
  - c. verse 16
    - i. the word of life is that light we must hold up in the midst of the darkness of the sinful world
    - ii. we hold it up by living it and by teaching it in its purity
    - iii. Paul wants to know that all the hard work he put into the building up of the church in Philippi will not be worthless
- 4. verses 17-18
  - a. verse 17 in NKJV: "Yes, and if I am being poured out as a drink offering on the sacrifice and service of your faith..."
    - i. the pouring out of liquid (wine) was associated with many of the Mosaic sacrifices (Exodus 29:38ff; Leviticus 23:9-14; Numbers 15:1-10)
    - ii. these are generally considered to be a type of the pouring out of the blood of the Messiah
      - A. Isaiah 53:12 - "he hath poured out his soul unto death"
      - B. Psalm 22:14 - "I am poured out like water"
      - C. John 19:34 - "But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water."

- b. Paul is saying, "If my work in building your faith (through the teaching of the Gospel, causes my life to be poured out (taken away), I will rejoice that I was able to give my life for the Lord and I invite you to rejoice with me if this happens."
- D. Verses 19-30
  - 1. Timothy (verses 19-24)
    - a. verse 21 seems to help identify those mentioned in 1:15-16 (brethren who were preaching the Gospel but were trying to then get followers for themselves)
    - b. verse 23 would seem to lend credence to the idea that Paul was awaiting the outcome of his trial (cf. 1:12-14) as he is waiting for some decision that is to be made regarding him
    - c. verse 24 shows his confidence that the Lord will deliver him from this difficulty and that he will be acquitted (cf. 1:19)
  - 2. Epaphroditus (verses 25-30)
    - a. verse 26 - "full of heaviness"
      - i. ASV = "sore troubled"
      - ii. NKJV = "distressed"
      - iii. only used two other times in the Bible (Matthew 26:27 and Mark 14:33 - "very heavy" {of Jesus in the Garden})
    - b. verses 28 - Paul was eager (NKJV) to send him so that they could see that he was recovered
    - c. verse 29
      - i. ASV = "hold such in honor"
      - ii. NKJV = "hold such men in esteem"
  - 3. these verses give more insight about communications between Paul and the churches
    - a. Philippi would have been about 800 miles away on a direct route
    - b. since a direct route could not have been taken, this would have been a considerably long trip and yet these brethren willingly went
  - 4. these verses also show the depth of the relationship among these brethren
    - a. the Philippians were deeply concerned about Epaphroditus' health and he was sore troubled when he learned of their deep concern (he didn't want them to worry)
    - b. Paul had a great deal of trouble that he was facing due to his imprisonment and losing Epaphroditus would have led to greater sorrow
  - 5. David Lipscomb on verse 27 (Gospel Advocate Commentaries)
 

"The passage, over and above its interest as an example of the strong personal affection which belonged to Paul's nature, and harmonized with his deep Christian love, is noticeable in showing clearly that his power of miracle, great as it was, was not his own, to use at his own will. When it was needed to be 'the signs of an apostle' (2 Cor. 12:12), it was given; and at special times, as at Ephesus (Acts 19:11), it was given in special fullness. [But this instance, together with the case of Trophimus, of whom Paul says: 'Trophimus I left at Miletus sick' (2 Tim. 4:20), is clear proof that the power of performing cures, and of working miracles, was a power which only was given to the apostles occasionally, and did not at all depend upon their own will. He would undoubtedly have healed Epaphroditus if he could. Nor, if the power of working cures had awaited his disposal, would he have left Trophimus at Miletus sick.]"



#### IV. Chapter 3

##### A. Verses 1-16

1. verse 1
  - a. "grievous"
    - i. NKJV = "tedious"
    - ii. ASV = "irksome"
    - iii. sometimes we get tired of saying the same thing over and over again, especially if it seems people are not listening
    - iv. Paul says this is not bothersome to him
  - b. "safe" = certain or necessary
  - c. "I'll repeat this to you because you need it."
2. verses 2-3
  - a. reference to the Judaizing teachers who demanded that the law of Moses, including circumcision, be observed by Christians
  - b. "concision"
    - i. NKJV = "mutilation"
    - ii. since circumcision is not part of the law of Christ, practicing it as a religious act is no more than mutilating the body
    - iii. circumcision has no spiritual significance in the new covenant
  - c. verse 3 shows the contrast between the doctrines of these false teachers and the truth
    - i. it shows who the real "circumcision" is
    - ii. Colossians 2:9-12
    - iii. Romans 2:28-29
3. verses 4-6 - Paul's pedigree in the Jewish faith
  - a. Paul is not telling them to do something that he has not already done or give up something that he himself was not willing to give up
  - b. he most certainly would have been a leader in the Jewish faith
    - i. his circumcision on the 8th day was according to the law of Moses which shows that he was reared by faithful Jewish parents
      - A. Acts 23:6 shows that he was the son of a Pharisee
      - B. Acts 22:3 - his parents sent him far from home when he was a child so he could be trained in the law of Moses by Gamaliel
    - ii. he wasn't a Samaritan or Ishmaelite but a true Jew
    - iii. furthermore, he was of Benjamin's tribe, of Rachel's heritage rather than Leah's or one of Jacob's handmaids
    - iv. as a Pharisee, he had the utmost respect for the finer points of the law (Acts 26:5 - "the strictest {most accurate or exact} sect" of Judaism)
    - v. he fought for his belief that that the law of Moses was the only law that was to be followed and that Christianity was in violation of that law and thus should be destroyed
  - c. Acts 23:1 - "I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day."
  - d. Acts 26:9-11
  - e. Galatians 1:14
4. verses 7-14 - what he now values
  - a. these things were gain to him only because they were worldly recognition and worldly achievements
  - b. verse 8 - "knowledge" is more than just mental assent

- c. verse 9
  - i. "righteousness" = "right living according to a prescribed standard"
  - ii. since the law of Moses had been put away as the authority, any right living which Paul had been doing with the law of Moses as his guide was simply his own righteousness (cf. Galatians 5:4)
  - iii. he contrasts this with the right living which is accordance with the law of Christ which he now observes
  - iv. "I don't want to stand before God as one who can claim my own standard of right living as the means of salvation. I want to be found in Him living the way that He says in Christ."
  - v. some say that we can't be righteous, that Christ became righteousness for us and therefore we're not responsible for right living ourselves
    - A. they use Isaiah 64:6 as a proof text ("all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags")
    - B. I John 3:7 clears it up
- d. "attain" (verses 11,12,16) - three different words
  - i. verse 11 - "to reach, to arrive at"
    - A. of course, the resurrection will come to all (John 5:28,29)
    - B. here he speaks of the resurrection of the righteous, called to go home to be with the Lord
  - ii. verse 12 - "obtained, accepted" ("I haven't yet obtained this resurrection or fullness, perfection.")
  - iii. verse 16 - "to reach," a reference to the way in which they were currently walking when they walked by faith in Christ
- e. "apprehend" (verses 12-13)
  - i. "to lay hold of"
  - ii. "I follow God faithfully so that I may lay hold of that for which Christ laid hold of me, eternal life. Because I haven't laid on eternal life in actuality yet, I press on."
- f. verse 14
  - i. "press" - metaphor from a footrace
  - ii. "mark" - a goal, a target (word from which we get "scope")
- 5. verses 15-16
  - a. verse 15 speaks of being perfect but verse 12 says he's not perfect
    - i. NKJV is more accurate
      - A. verse 12 = "already perfected"
      - B. verse 15 = "as many as are mature"
      - C. same word but different form
  - b. for the latter half of verse 15, keep in mind that the Gospel was still being revealed
  - c. verse 16 urges unity
- 6. verses 17-21
  - a. verse 17 - follow good examples (cf. I Corinthians 11:1)
  - b. verses 18-19
    - i. there are plenty of bad examples out there
    - ii. Paul was brought to tears when he thought of the damage they had done and were doing to the church
    - iii. their influence was so prominent that Paul had to "often" warn these brethren of their evil ways
    - iv. compare to Romans 16:17-18

- c. in contrast to these who enjoy their worldly ways and live for the temporal pleasure of this earth, the Christian's conversation is in heaven
  - i. "conversation" = "citizenship"
  - ii. the Christian's real home is in heaven, we are citizens of heaven
  - iii. Hebrews 11:10,13-14
  - iv. being a citizen implies adherence to the law of the land and allegiance to its leadership
  - v. being a citizen of heaven clearly shows that we are not yet home, but that we are still on our way home
- d. verse 21 has reference to the resurrection of the righteous in judgment
  - i. I Corinthians 15:42-44, 49-48
  - ii. I John 3:2
- e. summary of verses 17-21: Follow godly examples and don't listen to the worldly-minded. They will lead you to temporal joy in this fleshly body, but ultimately to destruction. You're a citizen of heaven. Conform your lives now to the will of God and He will reward you in eternity.

## V. Chapter Four

### A. Verses 1-3

- 1. "therefore" indicates a continuation of thought from the previous verse ("Because our citizenship is in heaven and we should love things above and not things on earth, stand fast in the Lord.")
- 2. the identity of each of these individuals is not certain, but the bottom line is that their "names are in the book of life" and that's all that really matters

### B. Verses 4-7

- 1. how to rejoice
  - a. live a life of moderation
    - i. ASV = "forbearance"
    - ii. NKJV = "gentleness"
  - b. be careful for nothing
    - i. don't worry about anything
    - ii. ASV = "in nothing be anxious"
    - iii. same word translated "thought" in Matthew 6:25-34
  - c. instead of worrying, pray
    - i. supplication is perhaps stronger and more prolonged praying (see Hebrews 5:7)
    - ii. when you're praying, give thanks:
      - A. that you are able to pray
      - B. that you serve the one true God who hears your prayers
      - C. that you are able to come to Him through Jesus
      - D. even for the difficulties that you face
        - I. Acts 5:41
        - II. Philippians 1:29
        - III. James 1:2-3
        - IV. Romans 5:3-4
        - V. II Corinthians 11:10

- d. verse 7 shows the results of a joyful, moderate, worry free, prayer-filled life
    - i. more than anything else, people want peace
    - ii. the peace of God passes all understanding because the worldly mind can never fully grasp this level of peace
    - iii. these brethren needed this peace in the midst of the trouble they were suffering and in the midst of the persecution that would later come upon them
    - iv. it's a confidence, a steady assurance that no matter how hard the world may push against us, if we'll walk with God we will have eternal peace with Him
    - v. "keep"
      - A. ASV and NKJV = "guard"
      - B. military term, "to keep under guard"
      - C. I Peter 1:3-5 ("kept" in verse 5)
  - 2. verse 5 - "the Lord is at hand"
    - a. "at hand" = "near"
    - b. some have taken this to mean that the Lord's coming would be soon (II Thessalonians 2:2, although a different Greek word is used here)
    - c. context determines whether the writer/speaker is talking about time, distance or presence
      - i. John 19:42 - distance
      - ii. Matthew 26:18 - time
    - d. because he is urging a godly lifestyle in this context, it seems that the meaning here has to do with the Lord's presence
      - i. Acts 14:27 - "though he be not far from every one of us"
      - ii. "You must walk faithfully because the Lord is near, watching."
      - iii. "You CAN walk faithfully because the Lord is near and wants you to be saved." (cf. II Peter 3:9)
- C. Verses 8-9
- 1. the importance of controlling one's thoughts
    - a. "true" - grounded in the truth (God's Word is truth, John 17:17)
    - b. "honest"
      - i. ASV = "honorable"
      - ii. NKJV = "noble"
    - c. "just" - righteous
    - d. "pure" - from the same root words as "holy"
    - e. "lovely" - pleasing, agreeable
    - f. "good report" - that which is well thought of among Godly people
    - g. "virtue" - moral excellence
    - h. "praise"
      - i. NKJV = "anything praiseworthy"
      - ii. anything that will honor God and bring you closer to Him
    - i. "think"
      - i. NKJV = "meditate on these things"
      - ii. take these matters into account and carefully consider them
  - 2. Paul was not afraid for them to do as he said or do as he did (compare to Matthew 23:1-7)

- D. Verses 10-20
  - 1. verse 10
    - a. they had wanted to help him but had not been able (not sure of the reason) but now they were able
    - b. NKJV, last part of verse = "though you surely did care, but you lacked opportunity"
  - 2. verses 11-12
    - a. he did not sit around worrying about what he did not have
    - b. he knew how to act whether he had much or little
    - c. "I am instructed"
      - i. ASV = "I have learned the secret"
      - ii. NKJV = "I have learned"
    - d. whichever condition he was in at any given time, he would remain true to God
  - 3. verse 13 - the reason why he could handle these extreme situations
  - 4. verse 14 - their contributions were appreciated
  - 5. verses 15-19 - their generosity and the reward for same
    - a. verse 17 - Paul is not interested in how much he can get for himself, but wants them to be partakers in the spreading of the Gospel
    - b. verse 19 - we can't outgive God
- E. Verses 21-23 - Conclusion