



Philippians

Chapter 4

- Author: The Apostle Paul
- Recipients: The Church at Philippi
 - First church in Europe, in the region of Macedonia in northern Greece
 - Founded by Paul on his second Missionary Journey, AD 51 – predominantly Gentile
- Time and Place of Writing: Most likely during Paul's imprisonment in Rome, AD 61 or 62
- Occasion and Purpose: Acknowledging the generosity of the church, sending Epaphroditus back, urging unity in the body
- Significant Themes:
 - Joy
 - Right Thinking – knowing Christ
 - Holy Living
 - Exaltation of Christ

Background to Philippians

- I. Opening 1:1-11
 - A. Salutation 1:1-2
 - B. Thanksgiving 1:3-8
 - C. Prayer 1:9-11
- II. Paul's Missionary Report 1:12-26
 - A. Paul's Circumstances 1:12-17
 - B. Paul's Attitude 1:18-26
- III. A Call to Sanctification 1:27-2:30
 - A. Christian Citizenship 1:27-2:4
 - B. Christian Humility 2:5-11
 - C. Christian Obedience 2:12-18
 - D. Resumption of Paul's Missionary Report 2:19-30
- IV. Doctrinal Polemics 3:1-4:1
 - A. Judaizers as the Context for Theology 3:1-6
 - B. The Essence of Pauline Theology 3:7-11
 - C. Practical Theology 3:12-4:1
- V. Final Concerns 4:2-23
 - A. Exhortations 4:2-9
 - B. A Word of Thanks 4:10-20
 - C. Closing 4:21-23

Outline of Philippians

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

4 Therefore, my beloved brethren whom I long *to see*, my joy and crown, in this way stand firm in the Lord, my beloved.

- Paul starts with a statement of fact (our heavenly citizenship), followed by an expression of hope (the return of Christ and our glorification), which leads to an exhortation – in light of these truths, we must stand firm in the Lord.
- “Humble state” = *tapeinōseōs* (body of humiliation) – echoes Philippians 2:8, “He humbled Himself...” Jesus humbled Himself and became like us and now that He has been glorified, we will one day be conformed to the body of His glory.
- All of v. 21 refers to the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul is emphasizing that our hope is not ultimately in our citizenship, but in the person of the Savior.
- Paul uses six terms in verse 1 that express his close relationship with the Philippians: beloved, brothers, long to see, my joy, my crown, and beloved (again).

Heavenly Citizenship (Phil 3:20-4:1)

² I urge Euodia and I urge Syntyche to live in harmony in the Lord. 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.

- The only other instance of Paul exhorting someone by name (outside of the Pastoral Epistles) is Col. 4:17 – “Say to Archippus, “Take heed to the ministry which you have received in the Lord, that you may fulfill it.”” In both cases, Paul must have been confident enough in the believers mentioned, and those in their churches, to call them by name, that they will have the spiritual maturity to receive such an admonition.
- “in harmony” = be of the same mind. Paul has emphasized this idea of having the proper mindset, particularly to have the mind of Christ. The issue is less that they agree (that is, to have the same mind as one another) than that they both should have the mind of the Lord, and to think as those who are in Christ.
- Who is the “true companion” (*syszygos*) in verse 3? Some have suggested Epaphroditus, or a man whose name is *Syzygos*. Or, it could be that he is speaking generally to all, inviting them to help in bringing unity to the body of Christ.

Final Concerns: A Call for Unity (Phil 4:2-3)

⁴ Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice! ⁵ Let your gentle *spirit* be known to all men. The Lord is near. ⁶ Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

- Paul uses a form of the word “all” (*pan*) in each of these 4 verses. He is emphasizing that there is no exception to his instruction – and no limit to the peace that God gives to His people.
- We can rejoice in ever-changing circumstances because we rejoice **in the Lord** who never changes!
- Paul reminds the Philippians that the Lord is near – calls to mind chapter 2: Jesus came near to us in his earthly ministry, and His return is also near, so we should live our lives in light of that truth, so that our gentle spirit may be seen by all people.
- The antidote to anxiety is two-fold: Look after the needs of others (2:3-4), and trust your own needs to the Lord.
- Paul uses 4 different words for prayer in v. 6. He is not describing 4 discrete types of prayer, but emphasizing the multi-faceted nature of full communion with God in prayer.

Final Concerns: Joy and Anxiety (Phil 4:4-7)

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. 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.

- Verses 6-7 emphasize the importance of our prayer life, while these verses emphasize the need for a holy walk.
- Walking with the Lord in holiness begins in the mind – “dwell on these things” = *logizomai* (reckon, consider, conclude), used throughout Romans 4 (“it was credited to him as righteousness”), and Romans 6:11 – “consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.”
- Paul again refers to his own life as an example as he uses four terms: learned, received, heard, and seen. He knows that our learning process is most effective when we learn by example.
- The list of things Paul calls them to dwell on has three terms that are unique to this passage in the NT. Many of these terms were commonly used in Greek philosophy, and Paul may have been appropriating them into a Christian context, elevating them to their true meaning for followers of Christ.

Final Concerns: Obedience and Peace (Phil 4:8-9)

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. ¹¹ Not that I speak from want, for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. 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. ¹³ I can do all things through Him who strengthens me. ¹⁴ Nevertheless, you have done well to share *with me* in my affliction.

- Paul returns to his appreciation for the Philippians’ gift and partnership in his ministry, which he mentioned in Phil 1:5. But he includes some qualifications, almost as if he is hesitant to seem too eager in receiving it. There may be several reasons:
 - In his other letters, he makes a point of not asking that churches help him even though he had a right to their support.
 - He did not want to seem to be expecting them to give more in his appreciation for the gift. He knew they were struggling also, and may not have wanted them to continue sending money when they had real needs in their own body.
 - To emphasize that his joy was not due to material blessing.

Final Concerns: Need and Contentment (Phil 4:10-14)