

Epistle to the Philippians II Chapters One & Two

Fred R. Coulter

There's an awful lot in the book of Philippians for us because of what it pictures in our living with Christ. As we get into the second chapter we will see that it focuses in on our living together, our working together. That's going to be a very, very important thing in understanding how we're going to be getting along ruling as kings and priest with Jesus Christ during the Millennium.

Philippians 1:11: "Being filled with the spiritual fruits of righteousness (that Christian character and spiritual maturity)... [Brethren, that's what we really need, that *spiritual maturity*.] ...with the actions and conduct of righteousness, which are through Jesus Christ, unto *the* praise to God's own magnificent praise, honor and glory."

We are having a phenomena taking place that there are a lot of Christians who are getting themselves on a 'treadmill to nowhere,' who are going back and becoming as Protestant as you can believe. It's really most difficult to understand. There are people who are just giving up on God because of what a man has done or has not done.

This is so important, and I'm finding myself now having to bring many sermons that go right back to the very basic beginning. Some people who have been in the Church of God for years and years are finding themselves in a situation where that in order to understand the Word of God I have to speak to them almost like a hostile Protestant. It's really amazing. People are willing to give up on the Holy Days, ready to give up on clean and unclean meats, ready to give up on tithing and the different laws of God, though they may be minor laws, they are not major laws as far as tithing and clean and unclean meats. Now, don't anyone get all upset over that. I'm not endorsing throwing away unclean meats, or I'm not endorsing at all throwing away the doctrines and principles of tithing. Just because they've been misapplied by some people for some time, doesn't mean to throw out everything.

Paul found the same thing in Hebrews 5:12, and many people are in this category today. "For truly, by this time you ought to be teachers, *but instead* you need to have *someone* teach you again what *are* the beginning principles of the oracles of God..." Do you think that anyone is going to enter into the Kingdom of God being a lawbreaker? *Of course not!* It won't happen! It's not going to take place! But there are so many people that you have to go back to tell again that this is the commandment. Yes, God does exist! Yes, this is true! Paul had the

same problem here.

"...and have become those in need of milk, and not of solid food" (v 12). Those of us who have been in the Church of God for years and years and have taken the good fruit of God's Spirit and a good productive use of God's Word and to go back to these very basic beginnings, it's really difficult. Rather than developing the spiritual, righteous and Christian maturity that we ought to be having that Paul is talking about in Philippians 1.

Verse 13: "For everyone who is partaking of milk *is* unskilled in *the* Word of Righteousness because he is an infant. But solid food is for those who are fully grown... [spiritually mature, so that we can go on and do the things are right and good] ...who through repeated practice have had their senses trained to discern between good and evil" (vs 13-14).

Hebrews 6:1: "Therefore, advancing beyond the beginning principles of the doctrines of Christ..." In other words, let's not just stay on the basics forever, brethren. There is so much more to do; so much more to learn, so much more to grow in, in attitude and understanding:

- the Word of God
- the love of God
- the love of each other

We need those basic things to go on to learn.

- What would it be if every Sabbath you came and I gave you a sermon on why you ought to keep the Sabbath?
- What would you ever learn?

You wouldn't learn anything, except that you ought to keep the Sabbath!

- Is there more to Christianity than keeping the Sabbath?

Yes, there's a whole lot more to Christianity than that!

Philippians 1:11: "...with the actions and conduct of righteousness, which are through Jesus Christ... [constantly Christ in you] ...to God's own magnificent praise, honor and glory. But brethren, I desire that you realize and understand that the things which have happened to me have turned out for the advancement and furtherance of the good news of the Gospel" (vs 11-12). He's writing this while he was in prison. Something happened while he was in prison, and we'll see what it is.

Verse 13: "As a result, my imprisonment for the sake of Christ, it **has become well known**

throughout the whole palace, and conspicuously obvious to everyone else. And most of the brethren who are trusting in the Lord, as a result of my imprisonment, they have resolved to speak fearlessly and proclaim the Word, the message of the Gospel, more earnestly and abundantly” (vs 13-14).

This then has been a change of circumstances for the brethren. We’ve all experienced the change in circumstances for us as brethren and ministers because of what has transpired in the Church. We find ourselves not exactly in the same situation, but we call ourselves *The No Hassle, Recycled Church*. We want to help people be recycled back to Christ.

What has happened? This is exactly what has happened in the whole Church today, when things get turned upside down, when things happen that you don’t expect to happen, when trials occur that you don’t expect to occur, then what do you do? *That’s the test!*

- All of our faith is going to be proved!
- All of our love toward God is going to be proved!
- All our love toward each other is going to be proved!

That’s exactly what was happening here in Philippi.

Verse 15: “On the one hand, some are preaching and proclaiming Christ, even from spite and envy, contention and strife...” They were out there hostile toward Paul and the message of Jesus Christ. They were hostile to what he was saying. ‘Look if he’s of God what is he doing in prison?’ *He’s in there because he deserves it!* ‘I want to tell you about Christ; I want to preach to you about Christ.’

Let’s see what happened; let’s see what was already developing while Paul was still alive and not in prison. Here in 2-Corinthians is what was happening in the congregation. Absolutely amazing!

2-Corinthians 11:1: “I would *that* you might bear with me in a little nonsense; but indeed, do bear with me. For I am jealous over you with *the* jealousy of God because I have espoused you to one husband, so that I may present *you as* a chaste virgin to Christ. But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds might be corrupted from *the* simplicity that *is* in Christ. For indeed, if someone comes preaching another Jesus, whom we did not preach, or you receive a different spirit, which you did not receive, or a different gospel, which you did not accept, you put up with it as *something good*” (vs 1-4).

There were those who were coming around even before he was imprisoned. This is just while he was gone. He had to write this letter back to the

Corinthians and say, ‘Look, what’s going on here?’ Then he goes on saying that these are false apostles, false ministers, servants of Satan who appear as ‘angels of light.’ The same thing was happening while he was in prison, as he’s writing the book of Philippians.

Philippians 1:15—the Philippians were “...preaching and proclaiming Christ, even from spite and envy, contention and strife; but on the other hand, some also are preaching and proclaiming Christ from right and good intentions. Now those in the first instance, who are preaching and proclaiming Christ from a contentious, feuding party **spirit, not merely from pure motives, are imagining and** supposing to inflict additional distress and affliction to my imprisonment” (vs 15-16).

That’s just the way Satan is. Get him while he’s down; go after this guy. There were several different kinds of gospels that were being preached. It is absolutely amazing! It is amazing how quickly that some people are willing... I know some who have gone back to Judaism! I know some people who say we ought to follow the Pharisees! I know some people who say, ‘Look, we should keep the Passover on the 14th, but on the 15th; by the way ‘let’s have the Jewish Seder Meal with it.’ It is amazing!

Then you have, on the other hand, those who go off on the other end as Protestants and go off and start keeping all the things that Protestants keep. It’s amazing!

Verse 17: “But the others, who are preaching and proclaiming Christ from the wellspring of love, (Godly, Divine love), know that I am resolutely set for the defense of the glad tidings of the Gospel.” There is a time when we have to really defend the Gospel. There is a time when we have to take each one of these false doctrines and go through and study each one of them so that we can fully and completely understand the Word of God.

What we’re having here in Philippians is kind of a little repeat of what went on. Let’s see something that is important relating to a combination of Judaism and Christianity.

Galatians 5:1: “Therefore, stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free, and do not be held again in a yoke of bondage. Behold, I, Paul, tell you that if you become circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing!” (vs 1-2). Many people don’t even understand that.

It means that the Pharisees who were in the Church (Acts 15), the Jews who were preaching

Christ, began to preach concerning the Gospel and say that unless you are circumcised in the flesh you cannot be saved. That's what they were saying. It's not a matter of circumcising children, because that's what God required in the Old Testament, and that's fine. If you don't circumcise your children, that's fine. Circumcision is nothing! Uncircumcision is nothing! But the keeping of the commandments (1-Cor. 7). Paul says the same thing here.

Verse 3: "Again, I am personally testifying to every man who is being circumcised that he is a debtor to do the whole law"—everything under the Old Covenant; that's what you would have to do.

We're under the New Covenant, so we don't do everything within the Old Covenant. ***The covenant is the relationship between us and God!***

- Our relationship is not to a temple on earth, *but to God the Father in heaven above!*
- Our High Priest is not an earthly priest, *but a heavenly priest Jesus Christ!*

If we look to a physical thing to bring us salvation *then Christ profits nothing*, because it's by faith that we're justified! It is by faith, love and hope that we walk.

Verse 4: "You who are attempting to be justified by *works of law*..."—any law, regardless of what it may be. Only God justifies by the Spirit, through His grace, through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

If you are looking to be justified by law "...you are being deprived of any *spiritual* effect from Christ. You have fallen from grace!" (v 4). That's part of what we're seeing preached in contention.

Here is something that is also true, the accusations against Paul. When he was in prison you can imagine the accusations that were going. You can imagine the things that were said:

- He's a liar!
- All the things of Judaism!
- He's gone in to giving up the law!
- Paul, it would have been better if you got everyone to follow circumcision!

Romans 3:7: "For if, by my falsehood, the Truth of God has shown itself *to be* supremely great, to His glory, why am I still being judged as a sinner? But not, according as we are being blasphemously charged, and according as some are affirming *that* we say, 'Let us practice evil things in order that good things may come.' Their condemnation is deserved" (vs 7-8).

You can just hear what was going on when

Paul was in prison. And you know it's true, so very few people have been able to really grow in grace and knowledge enough to develop the full maturity and the spirituality in Christ that if something happened to the minister they would be able to carry on, on their own.

We're getting a little taste of this, because we've been scattered. We've gotten a little taste of it, because we have been beaten up by those who sought to take over the Church or have sought to use their authority to try and force one thing or another upon the brethren in the Church.

3-John—here's how it eventually got; it was something! It was really something what was going on in the Church. All of these occasions arose because either the apostles were gone or, in this case, Paul was in prison.

When John was old, can you imagine what went on?

- Christ died
- all of the apostles died, except John
- Jerusalem was destroyed
- the Jews scattered
- Christ had not yet returned

they were expecting Christ to return during their lifetime

- all of the false Christianity building and growing
- disruption within the Church

Here is John, maybe pretty close to 90, 95 or 100-years-old. We don't know exactly his age. Can you hear what would be said against him? *Oh, this old John, look how old he is! He can hardly walk! He can hardly talk!*

There was time that it was written that John was so old and weak that when they carried him into the Church at Ephesus all he could say, 'Little children, love one another.' Can you imagine all the young 'bucks' just waiting to get at John? *That's exactly what happened!*

3-John 1: "The elder to Gaius the beloved, whom I **love in Truth.**" {see sermon series: *Epistles of John*—the love of God, the Truth of God}

Verse 2: "Beloved, I personally am praying for you, that in all respects you may prosper and be in health, even as your soul is prospering. For I rejoiced exceedingly at the coming of *the* brethren *who* testified of you in the Truth, even how you are **walking in Truth**" (vs 2-3). Notice *love in the Truth, walk in the Truth!*

Verse 4: "I do not have any greater joy than these *testimonies* that I am hearing—that my children are **walking in Truth.**" What is Truth?

- Thy Word is Truth
- Your commandments are Truth
- Your laws are Truth
- Your statutes are Truth
- Everything concerning all Your precepts are true

{note Psa. 119}

Verse 5: “Beloved, you are faithfully practicing whatever you have been doing for the brethren and for strangers.” In other words, we’re going to see the same thing in Philippians: do it out of a pure heart.

Verse 6: “Who have testified of your love before *the* Church. You will do well to send them on their way in a manner worthy of God; because for the *sake of His* name they went forth *preaching*, taking nothing from the Gentiles. For this cause, we are personally obligated to receive *those who do* such *service*, in order that we may be fellow workers in the Truth. I wrote to the Church, but Diotrephes, the one who loves to be chief among them, **does not accept us**” (vs 6-9).

Here they set up their own church organization, their own structure, and there’s an active split going right on in the Church, hostile against God, hostile against those that He is sending.

Verse 10: “Because of this very thing, if I come, I will call him to account for the actions that he is practicing with evil words—maliciously berating us; and he is not satisfied with these things, *for* he himself neither receives the brethren, *nor does he permit* those who wish to *receive the brethren*, *but* he forbids *them* and casts *them* out of the Church.” That’s how far this thing went, way back then! We’ve lived through that ourselves. We have seen it happen! That’s why the book of Philippians is so important for us.

Verse 11: “Beloved, do not imitate that which *is* evil; rather, *imitate* that which *is* good. The one who practices good is of God; but the one who practices evil has not seen God.” Then he said that Demetrius had a good report.

So, the same thing was happening when Paul was in prison. Everyone was out there, they had a ‘better doctrine’; they had a ‘better understanding’; they had better things than what the Apostle Paul brought, John brought, Peter brought, and that’s why God had the Word of God preserved so we could have the New Testament as well as the Old. That’s what I’m trying to do with this translation is to put it in such a way that we can bring to bear every one of these things that we understand in the Bible into the book of Philippians and put it together in a full inspirational study of the other Epistles of Paul.

Philippians 1:17: “But the others, who are preaching and proclaiming Christ from the wellspring of love, (Godly, Divine love)...” That’s what it needs to be.

- we need to worship God in spirit and in truth
- we need to love God with all our heart, mind, soul and being
- we need to love our neighbors as ourselves
- we need to love the brethren as Christ has loved us

“...know that I am resolutely set for the defense of the glad tidings of the Gospel” (v 17). Brethren, I tell you that’s exactly what I’m set for, too. In this whole thing, what it’s taught me as a minister, that the Word of God has got to stand fast. We have got work, study, grow and really put ourselves to it, to know and understand the Word of God. That’s the only way we can defend it.

- We have to live by it!
- We have to think by it!
- We have to run our lives by it!

That’s what all this Christian maturity is really all about. This is not a matter of just living a good life. That’s what ‘religion’ is for. This is *a way of life!* This is not a ‘religion.’ This is *a total calling from God!* This is not just something that we do because we agree with it. *This is something that we do because we love God*, and that’s the important thing.

Paul was looking at it from the best possible viewpoint considering the whole world was pagan then. The whole Roman Empire was pagan, filled with idols, statues, gods, superstitions and things like that. Anyway that Christ was preached was better than nothing. It’s just like with Protestantism today. It’s better to have Protestantism than nothing! Paul was looking at it that way then.

Verse 18: “What then is the situation? Regardless of the circumstances, in every mode and manner, whether in show and pretence, or in truth and sincerity, Christ has been preached and proclaimed; and for this reason I am rejoicing.” You know all the Christmas season I’ll rejoice myself, not that it’s Christmas, but that the pagan day of Baal has one of the most accepted pieces of music sounding through in almost every church: *The Messiah* by Handel, which proclaims the entire Gospel of Christ. ***What a witness!***

If you have *The Messiah* and go through and listen to it, it’s absolutely fantastic. I guarantee you, since it’s taken right out of the Bible, you can listen to it over and over again and it will inspire you tremendously. Isn’t that something? Here in their contention against Christ, with their Christmas tree

over here, with their Christmas carols and all of that, and here comes *The Messiah!* What an absolutely marvelous thing that God has done! **What a witness right in their very camp!** Paul was happy about it, too.

Verse 19: “Because I know that this set of circumstances shall turn into deliverance from imprisonment through your supplication and earnest beseeching, coupled with the supply and help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ.” We need to mention something here right now. One of the things that really can sort of just be neglected and we let down on and that’s is *prayer!*

- where we are supplicating God
- where we are beseeching God

Not only for the ‘gimmees,’ but for others, for the things that we can do to reach out and help others. It has been growing slowing, and bit-by-bit as God wants it to grow. I’ve said before, I’m not willing—until it becomes absolutely clear—to start running down the road saying ‘this is the work of God; brethren, give all your heart and soul, and all your mind and money to me, while I run down and do the work of God.’ *NO!* Too many different people have been doing that and it is *their work* and not the work of God!

Through supplication and earnestly beseeching, coupled with the supply and help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ—the Holy Spirit is a helper, the Spirit of Truth—and we know that God gives the Spirit **to those who obey Him!** (Acts 5:32). Absolutely important for us to know. The Holy Spirit is

- the *Spirit of love*
- the *Spirit of power*
- the *Spirit of a sound mind*

That’s what we need to have, brethren; to reach out to other people.

Let’s see a little bit more concerning the Spirit of God and for each of us with the supply of the Spirit of God that He has given us. There are a couple of warnings that Paul gives in some of the other epistles. When we have the Spirit of God, the Spirit of God *leads* us. It doesn’t pull us; it doesn’t push us. *It leads us!* So, we need to yield *to the lead* of the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit is there to help us, especially when we are yielding to God. I know there are times when I’m more yielded to God, and I know there are times when you’re more yielded to God. What we need to do is yield to God and His Spirit.

1-Thessalonians 5:19: “Quench not the Spirit.” How do you quench the Spirit?

- by not praying when you ought to

- by not studying when you ought to
- by sinning
- by neglect

All of those things quench the Spirit. We have to let the Spirit be *stirred up in us* as the Apostle Paul told Timothy, ‘Stir up the Holy Spirit that is in you by the laying on of my hands.’ Let’s see how this works in relationship

- to sin
- to overcoming
- to grieving the Holy Spirit that is in us

Ephesians 4:27—this gives us an indication how this comes along: “Neither give place to the devil.” I tell you what, this world is so filled with so many things that the devil is doing, it is incredible! It is absolutely amazing! Satan is there deceiving the whole world and he wants to have a place in your heart and mind.

Verse 28: “Let the one who stole, steal no more; rather, let him labor with *his* hands, working *at* what *is* good, so that he may impart *something* to the one who has need. Do not let any corrupt communication come out of your mouth...” (vs 28-29). I can tell you that’s one of the things that we all need to work on.

“...but that which is good and needful for edification that it may give grace to those who hear. And **grieve not the Holy Spirit of God...**” (vs 29-30). What grieves the Holy Spirit of God? *All of these things we were just talking about!* We have to put all of those aside. We have to resolve to take out that one thing in our lives and when we are able to overcome that set another goal and take another thing. Try in every circumstance to love God, love your neighbor as yourself, but at the same time be ‘wise as a serpent and harmless as a dove.’

Verse 31: “Let all bitterness, and indignation, and wrath, and clamor, and evil speaking be removed from you, together with all malice; and be kind *and* tenderhearted toward one another, forgiving one another, even as God has also in Christ forgiven you” (vs 31-32). Tremendous and wonderful things for us to grow in.

Philippians 1:20: “According to my earnest expectation and hope, that in nothing whatsoever shall I be ashamed...” Brethren, because there is no condemnation to us, we don’t have to be ashamed in anything that we do.

- Christ is there for us!
- He died for us!
- He has given us His Spirit!
- He wants us to be in His Kingdom!

There’s nothing to be ashamed of.

“...but that in all boldness and confidence, as always, also even now, Christ shall be magnified and exalted in my body—whether through life, or through death” (v 20). Paul didn’t know how long he would live. If you were in prison you wouldn’t know either.

Verse 21: “Because for me life (the purpose of living) is Christ, and to die is to gain the victory”—because he would have then overcome and ready for the resurrection. Later on when he wrote Timothy he said in 2-Tim.: ‘I’ve finished the course, I fought the fight, and now there is a crown of righteousness laid up for me,’ and not only for Paul, but all those that love the Lord Jesus Christ. He’s saying it would be ‘a victory for me.’

Verse 22: “On the other hand, if I continue living in the flesh, the Gospel is for me the fruit of my work and labor; and what I shall choose, to live or to die, I really don’t know.” Paul was just being wise and straightforward and the situation here.

Verse 23: “Because I am hard pressed and mentally burdened by the two, while having the desire to depart ([through death) and be with Christ, which for me would be very much better.” A lot of people say, ‘See, he’s going to heaven.’ But other Scriptures show that to be with Christ he was looking for and anticipating the return of Christ within his lifetime. So, if he died, then Christ would be coming and he would be with Him. That’s what is meant by it, not that he would float off to heaven; not at all!

Verse 24: “However, for your sake it is much more necessary for me to remain living in the flesh. And I have confidence and am persuaded of this: I shall remain living and continue with all of you for the advancement of your spiritual growth, and the increase of your joy and gladness of the faith” (vs 24-25).

That’s what it needs to be, brethren. That’s why the Feasts of God are so wonderful, that we can have it so that it’s going to be for joy and for gladness, and for drawing close to God, drawing close to each other, having a wonderful time together, because it’s a *love feast* from God!

Verse 26: “In order that your glorying and boasting may richly abound in full sufficiency in Christ Jesus with me, through my presence again with you. Only (regardless of what happens)...” (vs 26-28). Regardless the circumstances in our lives:

- whether we’re healthy or sickly
- whether we have an affliction or we don’t
- whether we’re young or old

- whether we’re having difficulties
 - ✓ at home
 - ✓ on the job
 - ✓ with our neighbor
 - ✓ the law
 - ✓ the bureaucracy

regardless of what it is—and Paul can say this is really true, because he was in prison, “...be ordering and conducting yourselves, living your lives, according to the principles and values which are becoming to and worthy of the glad tidings of the Gospel of Christ: so that **whether I come and see you, or be absent, I may hear the things concerning you; that you are standing fast, firm and resolute in one spirit and attitude of mind, with one soul united and vigorously striving for the faith of the glad tidings of the Gospel**” (v 27).

That’s what we need to do. What did Jesus Christ say? *When the Son of man returns, will He find faith—the faith—in the earth?* In other words, **who’s going to have enough belief at the end to be faithful to God?** That’s what Paul is saying here, and that’s why this is preserved for us.

It’s true, and there are many of you who are scattered, and many of you who do not have a minister, and the only minister you have is me by either video, audio or Internet, and some of you have to keep your Sabbath at home because you’ve been beaten, battered and bruised by ministers and brethren, false doctrine and all of this. And you’re sort of just huddled in at home to gain your senses and bearings, and hopefully I can often help you and God can inspire me to serve to you in such a way that you can grow in grace and knowledge, that you can be ordering your life whether I ever see you or not, or whether you ever see me or not. That’s what Paul is saying here. That’s the way I want it to be also.

It’s always true, what a man or woman is, is what they are when they’re alone and shut the door and they’re by themselves, left alone with only God. ***God knows!***

(go to the next track)

Philippians 1:28: “And never be terrified or in consternation... [or frustration] ...by anything done by those who are opposing (the Gospel)... [who are opposing Christ] ...in reality, it is truly a demonstration of their own destruction, but *to* you it is a demonstration of your salvation—even this is from God.”

That’s why it’s so important that we don’t get out in the world and we walk the abortion lines and all of this sort of thing. ***We cannot make the world a better place without Christ!*** We can make

a small difference in our lives and those around us. But the way this world is going, it is "...a demonstration of their own destruction..."

We're living in a time where it's just like it says in Rev. 11, that it is like Sodom and Egypt on every hand.

Verse 29: "Because for the sake of Christ, the gift and privilege... [of salvation and God's Holy Spirit] ...was graciously given to you, not only to believe on Him but for His sake to suffer." All of us have suffered in one way or the other. What we need to do is count it just like the Apostle Paul and give God the glory that we have been counted worthy of that. That's quite a different way of thinking about it that maybe we have in the past.

Verse 30: "This is the same battle and agonizing struggle, which you have seen in my life, of which you are now hearing, and which is still in my life." There he is in prison, praying, studying, growing, overcoming, and we know that that's where we see that when he was in prison the second time—this is his first imprisonment—he and Mark went through and wrote out—with Luke—all of his epistles and got them all organized, so that we can have the New Testament.

The New Testament was put together quite quickly, beginning right after the death of James. Then we have the Epistles of Paul brought together, we have Peter who took those and put in his two epistles, later they were passed on to John. John, Andrew and the rest of the apostles who were with John in Ephesus canonized the rest of the New Testament so that we can have it. That is really tremendous!

"This is the same battle and agonizing struggle, which you have seen in my life..." (v 30).

Philippians 2 becomes really a very profound chapter, and there are so many, many things that we can learn from this.

Philippians 2:1: Now then, if there be any encouragement and comfort in Christ..." Brethren, that's what it needs to be. Not a matter of being maudlin; not a matter of being just a bucket of honey and self-righteousness and oozy-goozy and pouring false love and all that sort of thing out. We need encouragement, comfort *in Christ*.

- if you can't go to Christ and be comforted
- if you can't be encouraged by the brethren
- if you can't be encouraged by going to Sabbath services
- if you can't be encouraged by hearing a sermon
- if you can't be uplifted and pointed to Christ

What good is it? *You're surely not going to be beaten into the Kingdom of God—*are you? Is that what God is going to do? *Of course not!*

"...if any comfort and inspiration of love, if any fellowship and communion of the Spirit, if any compassions and tender affections of the innermost being" (v 1). This is where Christianity really starts getting down to the nitty-gritty. What's going on in your heart, mind, soul and being. Absolutely no room for hypocrisy here—right? Absolutely no room for pretensions here! He was comparing that with all those who had their pretensions.

Verse 2: "Fulfill to overflowing my joy and happiness..." Just imagine Paul in prison writing this, wondering if he would live or die; will he be able to preach or is his mouth going to be stopped? 'What is that God wants of me? Why am I here in prison?'

So, the Philippians sent off this gift to him—the only ones who communicated with him—help, support, love, and he's saying, v 2: "Fulfill to overflowing my joy and happiness, that you be of the same attitude of mind and heart, having the same love, **joined together** in soul..." That's a very interesting Greek word. It is 'sunpsuchoi'—*the joining together of your very soul, one with another*. I can't think of anything that describes the Feast of Tabernacles any more than that. ***It describes what it's going to be when we're living with Christ!***

That is so amazing when you really stop and think of it. Just what we do with the Feast of Tabernacles and keeping God's Holy Days, ***it's not an exercise in religion***, brethren! It is to

- grow in that grace and knowledge
- to grow in that love
- to grow and have a foretaste of the kind of relations one with and another and with Christ

that God wants us to have. Here's how it's accomplished:

"...that you be of the same attitude of mind and heart, having the same love, joined together in soul, and **all be minding the one thing (the attainment of the Kingdom of God)**. Never let anything be done which is motivated by contention and strife, nor by self-exaltation or arrogant vain-glory..." (vs 2-3). We have seen it all, and experienced it all—haven't we? *Yes, we have!*

"...but in humility and lowliness of mind let each of you be esteeming others above himself. Do not be selfishly focusing and concentrating on your own things..." (vs 3-4).

- whether it be your health

- whether it's good or bad
- whether it be your own possessions—few or many
- whether it be your own job—good or bad

“...but let each of you also consider the things and necessities of the others” (v 4). That's the way to get the hassle out of the Church. Brethren, that's what we have been doing in our little church for quite a long time, and you know the value of it.

Let's review and get some other Scriptures and add it to this so that we get the full and the complete meaning and picture.

Verse 2 says that we should “...all be minding the one thing (the attainment of the Kingdom of God. This is what we need to focus in on everyday.

- God made us to have goals
- God made us to be creative
- God made us to set standards
- God made us to have something to look forward to

God's Spirit is to inspire us even when the going gets tough. The way that we accomplish that is to have our heart mind and our goals set on the attaining of the Kingdom of God.

Matthew 6:31: “Therefore, do not be anxious, saying, “What shall we eat?” or “What shall we drink?” or “With what shall we be clothed?”

- Do you believe that God loves you?
- Do you believe that God cares for you?
- Do you believe that God *can* care for you?
- Do you believe that God *can* provide for you?
- *Yes, indeed; regardless of the circumstances!*

I have a job where it is very difficult, because I work on pure commission, and unless I get out and work there isn't anything coming in. Many times I've been down to that last little teeny bit, and there's been nothing on the horizon. In praying and saying, ‘God, You know!’ Then lo and behold the phone rings and there's someone needing a real estate loan.

- I know that it is God providing it!
- I know that it is God Who is making it possible!

Same way in every one of our lives, regardless of what it is. My story is just one little blip of one little thing that should be multiplied many times over in all of our lives.

Verse 32: “For the nations seek after all these things. And your heavenly Father knows that you have need of all these things.” ***God knows! He even***

knows before you ask!

God is so loving, kind and gracious that even when you are not really seeking God the way you ought to, God is going to be merciful and do something for you to inspire you to return back to Him.

Have you ever done something that is outlandishly foolish and God turns around and does something so good for you that you just feel like a ‘crumb bum’ and a worm. I know that I have! What is God doing? *God is showing that He is there to help you!* That's what He's doing. God knows that you have need of these things.

Verse 33: “But *as for* you, **seek first...** [primary, ‘protos’] ...the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.” If not in this life, then a hundredfold in the next life. Can you imagine what it's going to be like to live in New Jerusalem? *That is going to be amazing! That is going to be tremendous!*

Verse 34: “Therefore, do not be anxious... [don't be worried] ...about tomorrow; for tomorrow shall take care of the *things* of itself. Sufficient for the day *is* the evil of that *day*.” That sure is true! When something happens that's not good, put it away, ask God to forgive you. Forget it! Tomorrow is a new day!

Why should you pollute tomorrow with the problems of yesterday that you've already been upset about and have repented over. God has put it behind, why don't you? Should you spoil today with the corruption of yesterday? *Seek first the Kingdom of God!*

Matthew 22—very important, very fundamental, very foundational, which is something that is the basis of everything that God had done, everything that God wants us to do.

- every law that God has ever given
- every statute that God has ordained
- every little thing that God has done
- every great thing that God has done

Matthew 22:37: “And Jesus said to him, **‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’**” *That's focusing in on the attainment of the Kingdom of God!*

Verse 38: “This is *the* first and greatest commandment; and *the* second *one is* like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’” What is the third commandment? *That we love each other as Christ has loved us!*

Verse 40: “On these two commandments

hang all the Law and the Prophets.” People don’t realize that when they are casting away the Law of God, *they’re casting away part of the love of God.* When they are casting away the prophecies of God, *they are casting away part of the love of God.* Everything that God does is based on love, one way or the other; even the punishment of the wicked is based on love *because you cannot live forever in sin!* The only way to get people to hate sin, to realize that sin is not right, is that there is a penalty for it. *The wages of sin is death!*

I imagine that some of those who repent when the second resurrection takes place are going to be those poor wretched souls that have died of AIDS. It’s been miserable and wretched and rotten! Their whole lives have just been totally corrupted by it. When they realize that they are resurrected and have an opportunity for salvation, can you imagine what their reaction is going to be?

Everything that God does is based on love!

This has to be in our lives as well; this kind of love coming from God’s Holy Spirit

- has got to flow
- has got to be stirred up
- we have to grow in it
- we have to focus in on it

This is what is so great about these Epistles of Paul. They’re inspirational epistles to grow in the love of God.

Romans 5:5: “And the hope of God never makes us ashamed because the love of God has been **poured out into our hearts** through the Holy Spirit, which has been given to us.” I’ll guarantee you one thing, if you go to God and say, ‘God, help me to have more love.’ You’re not going to get off your knees and just feel great and grandiose and, ‘Oh, I love the world.’ *NO!* God is going to send you a little trial to see how you’re going to react, so that you may have a chance to grow in love. *Think on that!*

It’s the same way with us together. We have that love. Some people don’t understand us, because every Sabbath when we meet we all give each other a hug. We don’t do it because we think: ‘Oh, there’s So and So, I’ve got to hug So and So.’ *NO!* We do it because we truly love God, and we truly love each other and are happy and glad to see each other, even if it is every week. That’s something!

I remember when some first came to the Feast of Tabernacles, they came back from the Midwest and they were amazed that we were such a little group. When then they came we thought, *WOW!* we’re almost twice as big as we were before. When everyone came in and we were hugging each other and greeting each other, one of them came up to me and said, ‘Are these people you haven’t seen in a long time?’ I said, ‘Oh, no, we get together every Sabbath.’ They were

amazed!

The reason is because we’re trying to apply and live by what is written in the Bible, by what God has given to us. Let’s see how we are to conduct ourselves in attaining the Kingdom of God.

Ephesians 4:1: “Therefore, I, the prisoner of the Lord... [another prison epistle that Paul wrote] ...am exhorting you to walk worthily of the calling to which you were called with all humility and meekness... [same words almost that is in Philip. 2] ...with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love” (vs 1-2). If someone does something that isn’t just right, don’t flip out, *forebear in love!* Put up with it a little bit. Maybe the person will come to their senses and say, ‘Why did I do that?’; and go home and repent and change, and everything will be just fine. *We are to forebear each other in love!*

Verse 3: “Being diligent to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.” No competition, no vainglory, no haughtiness, no arrogance, no seeking who is going to be the best, who is going to be the head, who is going to be the most, whatever. It’s such a wonderful thing to have a group where there is no politics!

I’m not a political person; that’s just the way that it is. I try not to have any politics in the Church. I don’t have to get up there and preach and say, ‘Brethren, we ought not to have any politics in the Church.’ If we preach the love of God, we won’t have it. Isn’t that simple?

Verse 4: “*There is one body and one Spirit, even as you were also called in one hope of your calling.*” That’s interesting—isn’t it?

- It’s not that some are going to heaven!
- It’s not that some are going to earth!
- It’s not that some are going to be the 144,000!
- It’s not that some are going to be first!
- It’s not that some are going to be last!

We all have one calling! Yes we do! Eternal life in Christ!

Verse 5: “One Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, Who *is* over all, and through all, and in you all. But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of the gift of Christ” (vs 5-7). That’s what makes everything so worthwhile and makes the Feasts of God wonderful, and makes the Word of God rich, fulfilling, teaching, helping and we can grow in grace and in knowledge and understanding in ways that we have never even thought of.

What I want to do is show you how consistent the Apostle Paul was in his writings; how

consistent his teachings were. I get papers all the time, doctrinal this and that. A person wrote in and said, 'Did you know that there were two Pauls?' This is presented from a Judaism point of view. 'There was Paul who was for law—that's the true Paul. And there was Paul for grace over here and that was not the true Paul. That was another Paul.' *No so!* You read all of the Epistles of Paul and they all preach the same thing.

Romans 12:9: "*Let love be without hypocrisy... [with being special to one and avoiding the other] ...abhorring that which is evil and cleaving to that which is good.*" Isn't that exactly what Paul is teaching in the book of Philippians? *Yes!*

Verse 10: "*Be kindly affectioned toward one another in brotherly love. Let each esteem the other more highly than himself.*" That is so tremendous! See how that just fits in with Philip. 2—almost word for word.

A little more instruction, v 11: "*Be not slack in business....*" I just might mention here that it sure is true, and I have seen it happen many times, that yes, you'll pay people in the world, but if you owe something to a brother, you don't pay them back at all. Don't be slothful, take care of those things.

"...*Be fervent in spirit. Be timely in serving. Be rejoicing in hope. Be patient in tribulation. Be steadfastly continuing in prayer*" (vs 11-12). It's almost like reading Philip. 2—isn't it?

Verse 13: Contribute to the needs of the saints, *and* strive to be hospitable. Bless those who persecute you; bless, and do not curse" (vs 13-14). Isn't that what we cover in part 1 of this series about loving your enemy and praying for those who spitefully use you? The same Gospel as Christ was preaching. Exactly identical; absolutely no different.

Verse 15: "Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep."

- Share in the happiness!
- Share in the sadness!
- Pray for one another!

That's what he's saying here.

Verse 16: "*Be of the same mind toward one another....*" We're going to see that we're to let the mind of Christ be in us. If there is any one thing that really fulfills the Feast of Tabernacles, that is understanding what it's going to be like to be a spirit being, because of what God has done to make that possible for us to attain.

"...Do not set your mind on high ambitions... [don't get high flatulent and lofty and all carried away in your own vain thoughts]

...rather, be accommodating with those of low estate...."

I never will forget this man, when we had a Spokesman's Club in Salt Lake City. He was little, short man, from Mexico, and he couldn't speak too good of English, but if you listened you could follow along and understand him. I remember one man who was really good and fluent speaker who was to evaluate the speech of this man. He got up there and said, 'You need to work on overcoming your accent.' That really made me furious! Here's a man who was speaking a language that was hard for him to understand, but he's up there trying and doing a pretty good job of it.

When I got up to evaluate the evaluator. I said, 'Now, you need to understand something. How many languages do you speak?' He said, 'English.' I said, 'Well then, this man is doing better than you because he speaks two. If he has an accent, so what? Listen to what he has to say. When you can speak Spanish as perfectly, then you can tell him that maybe he ought to work on his English accent, but in the mean time, don't put the man down.'

"...Do not be wise in your own eyes".... [*Knowledge puffs up, but love edifies!*] ...Do not render to anyone evil for evil..." (vs 16-17). Regardless of how bad it has come against you, don't go back and render evil for evil. You might pray that they could be converted. *Try that!* If not, let God take care of it.

- Is God able to fight that battle?
- Is God able to render back to a person what they do?
- Do you not think that God is going to fight for His saints?
- Do you not think that God is going to take care of them?

Yes, He is!

- *even if they die*
- *even if you die or I die*

God is able to take care of us!

"...*but be prepared to do what is right in the sight of all men. If possible, as much as is your part, be at peace with all men*" (vs 17-18). That's a challenge sometimes. It doesn't mean to lay yourself out and get run over. But if all possible, as much as lies within you, *live peaceably with all men.*

Verse 19: "Beloved, do not avenge yourselves; rather, leave *this* to God's wrath..." Stand aside! Don't let your anger be the sword of the Lord. Let the sword of the Lord be the sword of the Lord.

"...for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine! I will recompense," says *the Lord*" (v 19). If your

situation is so bad—I've had them that way; I've just had to say,

- God, You know how to do this!
- You know how to handle it!
- You have said that You would repay!

I don't need to go out there and get myself in the middle of this and become such a horrible part of it that it's a bigger mess. God is able to do it!

Verse 20: "Therefore, if your enemy is hungry, feed him..." If there's any spark of decency in him, he will be amazed!

"...if he is thirsty, give him drink; for in doing this you will be heaping coals of fire on his head. Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good" (vs 20-21). Isn't that fitting, right in exactly with what we have read in Philippians?

It's absolutely amazing how consistent Paul's writings really are!

Romans 15:1: "Now, we who *are* strong in the faith are obligated to support the ones who are weak..." Paul said, what we just read in Philippians 2, *don't be looking on your own things, but everyone looking on the things of others.* Here's exactly the same thing that he's teaching those at Rome.

"...and not to please ourselves. Accordingly, let each one of us please *his* neighbor for good, unto edification" (vs 1-2). Not tearing down, no criticizing.

- We need to preach against the world!
- We need to preach against sin!
- We need to be on guard against that!

But with each other we need to do what we do for edification! For up-building, not tearing down.

"...for even Christ did not please Himself... [Isn't that an amazing statement?] ...rather, as it is written, 'The reproaches of those who are reproaching You have fallen upon Me.'" (vs 2-3)—referring to Christ.

- He was bruised for our iniquities!
- He was crucified for our sins!
- By His stripes we are healed!
- By the very power of His Holy Spirit through God the Father we're going to be resurrected!

Christ took all of that upon Him. We're going to see in part three of this series the absolute and tremendous and overwhelming humility that Jesus Christ had and how that is for us and salvation and overcoming.

Verse 4: "For all the things that were written before were written for our instruction, so that

through patient endurance and encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope." How anyone can want to throw away the Scriptures of the Bible is beyond me.

Verse 5: "Now, may the God of patience and encouragement grant you to be likeminded toward one another according to Christ Jesus, so that with one accord and one mouth you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" (vs 5-6). That is absolutely amazing, how those fit so closely together.

- Look at all the inspiration that is there.
- Look at how much Paul has done here to help lead and encourage the brethren
 - ✓ in hope
 - ✓ in faith
 - ✓ in love
 - ✓ in coming together
 - ✓ in unity
 - ✓ in understanding of God
 - ✓ in pointing toward Christ Jesus
 - ✓ in letting God fight your battles for you

Absolutely tremendous!

When did Paul at any time ever say, 'Take up your sword and go out and kill those dirty sinners'? *Never once, brethren! Never once!* Once again, let's see the humility of Paul, the humility of Christ, and the reason that God has called us.

1-Corinthians 1:23: "But we proclaim Christ crucified..." That means all that there is about it:

- why He came
- why He did what He did
- why He died
- the nature of His flesh
- the nature of His crucifixion
- the nature of His resurrection
- the kind of human nature that Jesus Christ had

That's all involved with preaching *Christ crucified!*

"...To the Jews *it is* a cause of offense... [a stumbling block even to this day] ...and to the Greeks *it is* foolishness" (v 23)—because they were 'wise and intelligent' and had philosophy and religion, and all of that.

Verse 24: "But to those who are called—both Jews and Greeks—Christ *is* God's power and God's wisdom"—because all things reside in Christ.

- He is our *power*
- He is our *wisdom*

And in that wisdom, there are important things that I want everyone to do constantly, and that is:

- Fill your mind with the Word of God and be able to *think* with the Word of God.

- To be able to take what you put in your mind and use it for your thought process.

Verse 25: “Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God... [if there be any weakness] ...is stronger than men.... [than the strength and power of men] ...For you see your calling, brethren, that *there are* not many who are wise according to the flesh, not many who are powerful...” (vs 25-26).

We can look around here with our little congregation and see that that is true. The great brains of the intelligent are sitting here. It's by work, sweat, prayer, study, by weakness and all the things that we have that we have been called. Not because of what we are, but because of what God is!

“...not many who are highborn *among you*. Rather, God has chosen the foolish things of the world...” (vs 26-27). That is so absolutely true! ***Even though He's called us foolish, we're to be wise in Christ!***

“... so that He might put to shame those who are wise and God has chosen the weak things of the world... [It's not great wonder that we have our aches and pains and infirmities—we're weak! *He's called the weak things of the world to confound that which is mighty!*] ...so that He might put to shame the strong things. And the lowborn of the world, and the despised has God chosen—even the things that are counted as nothing... [that don't even exist] ...in order that He might bring to nothing the things that are; so that no flesh might glory in His presence” (vs 27-29).

And say, ‘God, You had to call me, because I am so good.’ *Not so!* All you have to do is ***remember Job***. He was wise, he was rich, he was righteous, and his boasting before God got him absolutely nowhere! Once he understood the glory and the power of God, he realized that he was just nothing but dust and ashes. That's why God has not called the mighty, wise and the rich. “...so that no flesh might glory in His presence.”

Verse 30: “But you are of Him in Christ Jesus, Who was made to us wisdom from God, even righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.” Made wisdom, because there's nothing more wise than the inspired Word of God. That's why we need to learn to think with it. The righteousness of God imputed to us, given to us, is the very righteousness of Jesus Christ.

By sanctification we have been made Holy, the consecrated called out ones in Christ, and redemption—bought back; we are bought with a price and *that price is the life of Jesus Christ*.

Verse 31: “So that, as it is written, ‘The one

who glories, let him glory in *the Lord*.”

Philippians 2: 1: “**Now then, if there be any encouragement and comfort** in Christ, if any comfort and inspiration of love, if any fellowship and communion of the Spirit, if any compassions and tender affections of the innermost being. Fulfill to overflowing my joy and happiness... [and yes, **your** joy and happiness] ...that you be of the same attitude of mind and heart, having the same love, joined together in soul, and all be minding the one thing (the attainment of the Kingdom of God). Never let anything be done which is motivated by contention and strife, nor by self-exaltation or arrogant vain-glory; but in humility and lowliness of mind let each of **you be esteeming others above himself**. Do not be selfishly focusing and concentrating on your own things, but let each of you also consider the things and necessities of the others” (vs 1-4).

That is, brethren, how we can have the love of God!

Scriptures in Philippians from *The Epistle of the Apostle Paul to the Philippians, An Inspirational Bible Study; A New Expanded Amplified Translation* by Fred R. Coulter

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